

unconsciously, met and attended by an unseen supernatural Power.

When the door of the room closed behind her, it seemed to its inmates as if the few lingering hopes yet left to them had suddenly vanished, and angle-like, were hovering around the retreating form of the girl, as if for the purpose of ministering succour and cheer in the loving errand on which she sped.

For a long season after the sound of her footsteps had ceased, no voice essayed to break the suspensive silence that ensued; every heart was busy communing with its own gloomy forebodings, until at length the unquiet phantasms of their brain seemed to assume shape and substance before their eyes; and a dark, shadowy, menacing form began to frown awfully upon them, from the fireless grate, from the foodless cupboard, from the midst of the ruined loom, from the desolate walls, and from out the obscure corners of that wretched lair. Whether this terrible apparition was anything more than the projected shadow of their own black thoughts, we cannot undertake to say. Whether they could have given it any recognisable name we know not: for convenience, then we will designate it the SPIRIT OF DESPAIR.

(To be continued.)

From Hogg's Instructor, for January. RUSSIAN SHORES OF THE BLACK SEA.

The work that bears this title has appeared most opportunely. Mr Oliphant, the author of it, is not a young and untried traveller. He has traversed other portions of the earth; and has published at least one book of travels before, namely, 'A Journey to Nepal.' He is a good observer; and, from what he sees and hears, deduces conclusions which we cannot but think both discriminating and sound. On Russia and Russian affairs there prevail at present varied and contradictory reports; this work will go far to correct those erroneous impressions, especially in regard to her military and naval power. We wish to give our readers the means of judging for themselves, and shall, therefore, extract freely from the volume.

Mr Oliphant started from St. Petersburg, of which city he records nothing that calls for particular notice. Nor does anything transpire in the journey to Moscow on which we may dwell. Railways in Russia, it is obvious from our author's experience have room for great improvement; and we opine he is not far from the truth, when he asserts that they are chiefly intended by the Autocrat for the speedy transmission of troops, and not either for the purposes of travelling or commerce. Well, it is some consolation to the friends of liberty and good government, and social progress, to know that railroads and steamboats are incompatible with the permanent existence of despotism. They shall yet work immense changes in this rude and semi-barbarous empire. The journey of four hundred and fifty miles was completed in twenty two hours, through a country tame and uninteresting.

Arrived at Moscow; and, after renovating themselves, Mr Oliphant and his travelling companion were in a condition to commence a survey of the town; accordingly they sallied forth to delight their eyes with the lovely and unique views from the Kremlin, and to explore the wonders of its far-famed precincts.

I was puzzled to decide which was the most striking—the prospect stretching before us as we stood upon the terrace under the shadow of the great bell, in which green roofs and tapering steeples, or gilded domes and star-spangled cupolas, met the eye on every side—while the river spanned by two picturesque bridges, all covered with boats from distant provinces, flowed smoothly at our feet: or whether, whilst leaning against the parapet of the wooden bridge beneath, and gazing upwards at the confused mass of buildings enclosed by the quaint old tarretted wall, I was not still more fascinated with that vast assemblage of cathedrals and palaces. Here were the remnants of a barbaric age, which had escaped an almost universal destruction, mingled with the elaborate productions of modern art still unfinished, in style and architecture so strangely dissimilar yet here placed side by side, while seeming to bear as much affinity to one another as the Taj and the Tuileries; the whole, nevertheless, so happily grouped that the combination far from leaving any painful impression on the mind from its singularity, seemed absolutely necessary to the composition of a picture altogether unrivalled in its novelty.

Though the streets and vehicles of Moscow, if possible, more execrable than those of St Petersburg, and the former far less handsome, the city itself is much more interesting than the modern metropolis. Our travellers did not make a long stay here, but pushed on to Nijni Novgorod, where the great annual fair in Russia was held. There is no railroad in this centre of commerce (another illustration of our author's opinion); but the journey is performed in a diligence, roomy and comfortable, which

is more than can be said of many of the conveyances between towns of even greater importance. It occupies two days and two nights. This part of the country was much more interesting than that which stretched between St Petersburg and Moscow. The road passed through whole seas of oats and buckwheat, than over tracts of pasture, on which were scattered large herds of cattle, and through which meandered considerable streams, and then finally plunged into a vast expanse of pine forest, thence again to emerge upon fresh fields. Villages, built of wood, with the houses detached and rudely ornamented, and the church with its green cupolas occupying the centre, occurred at intervals of eight or ten miles. Still the scene is rather monotonous; and it was with joyous feelings that they caught the first glimpse of Nijni, with its golden domes glittering in the first ray of sunshine that they had rejoiced in for many days.

The terrace on the summit of the hill overhanging the Volga, on which the town of Nijni is situated, commands a most singular and interesting view of the fair and the two rivers, upon which a swarm of human beings seems to have hived, whose dwellings, aquatic and terrestrial, cover both land and water for a considerable distance. Immediately below us was the crowded bridge of boats; while from the tops of hundreds of masts, on each side of it, fluttered vanes, and often gay-coloured flags. At the junction of the Oka and Volga, were warehouses and primitive-looking temporary wharves, near which, however, were six or eight business-like steamers and loaded barges; on the low flat beyond, one hundred and fifty thousand people, crowded into the smallest possible space, ply their avocations. This human hive is only in existence six weeks in the year, during which time it is visited by upwards of three hundred thousand people. The town of Nijni is interesting, chiefly, from its position on the brow of an abrupt hill, in a country where hills of any sort are scarce, and from its containing a genuine old Kremlin, and a few handsome churches. The hill is composed of soft clay soil, which has been run into gullies and ravines, rugged and abrupt enough to give a wild character to the scene; while the thick wood which clothed the steep bank, and from which pretty cottages peep out, softens it into one of great beauty.

To us, as strangers, the earnest, business-like appearance of the people was especially striking. There was evidently no time to be lost in merry-go-rounds or penny-shows.—Here fortunes were to be lost or won in a few short weeks. The rich merchant had brought valuable wares from distant lands at an enormous expense; the poor pedler had trudged many a weary mile with his heavy pack: both had staked their all on the results of their transactions in the allotted time, and were in no humour to trifle with it. It had evidently never struck them that Nijni fair was a place to which people would resort either for pleasure or instruction, or for anything but gold; and certainly, interesting though it was, some such motive as the last would be required to induce a second visit.—The fair is held on a low sandy spot of land, formed by the junction of the Oka and the Volga, and which is subject to constant inundation in winter. The substantial part of it, inhabited by the wealthy merchants, is arranged in twelve parallel streets, composed of neat two-storeyed brick houses, the lower part forming the shops and warehouses, which are protected by covered varandabs. Each street terminates at one end in a pagoda, indicating the Chinese quarter; while at the other it is connected with a square, where the governor's house and public offices are situated. This respectable nucleus is encompassed by a deep border of temporary wooden huts, inhabited by an indescribable swarm of ragged Tartars, Tchouvasses, Kirghees, and Calmucks, besides the peasantry of the neighbourhood, who frequent the fair with provisions, fruit, and all sorts of farm and country produce. A long bridge of boats across the Oka connects this busy peninsula with the hill on which is situated the town of Nijni, commanding an extensive view of the whole scene.

Both rivers are covered with every conceivable shape and description of boat and barge; some from the distant Caspian, laden with ironware, Persian shawls, Georgian carpets, and Bucharian skins, or dried fruits: these vessels of square, unwieldy construction, are elaborately painted and ornamented, and on their decks are erected curious wooden babbingtons from the peaked roofs of which flutter gaudy flags, while out of the carved window peep Eastern maidens. Others rude and strongly built, have come down the Kama with Siberian iron or tea; while the more civilised appearance of a few denotes their Western origin, as these have threaded their way from the shores of the Baltic, laden with the manufactured goods of Europe. On board this singular mixture of craft, is found as singular a mixture of inhabitants, whole families coming from their distant homes to take some share in what—now that the Exhibition exists no longer in that capacity—may resume its old title of the World's Fair. Having now reached the Volga, down which

magnificent river Mr Oliphant and his companion resolved to sail, after a stay of five days at Nijni, they embarked on board the Volga Steam Navigation Company's steamer-tug Samson, bound for Astrakhan. As they were subjected to vexatious delays, because of the government officials requiring some considerable time to draw in the bribes which they invariably receive, we shall pause the meanwhile, and take a rapid survey of the moral condition of the people, and especially of the government employes. The system of corruption reigns in all departments; and government officials, from the lowest to the highest, are tainted by its debasing influence. Individual cases there may be where the hands are pure, but these are rare in the extreme.—By and by we shall make the reader acquainted with one such; but his purity will only make the corruption of all around him the more dark and damnable. It is, of course, quite impossible even to imagine the deplorable condition to which the body of the people is reduced. All above them are corrupt; all around them are untruthful, deceptive, and debased. They must stand low in the moral scale. Some state reasons may operate to keep the people ignorant and enslaved; but what confidence can be placed in a population abject and brutalised? Let them get a glimpse of the dignity of their nature, and the rights which God wills them to enjoy, and how will it fare with their masters? Let the spirit of antagonism be fairly roused between Liberty and Despotism, as some day it will, and they will be found but a poor defence.

Our first extract is general:—

Nothing bears looking into in Russia, from a metropolis to a police-office; in either case, a slight acquaintanceship is sufficient; and first impressions should never be dispelled by a two minute inspection. No statement should be questioned, however preposterous where the credit of the country is involved; and no assertion relied upon, even though it be a gratuitous piece of information—such as, that there is a diligence to the next town or an inn in the next street. There is a singular difficulty in getting at the truth, probably originating with subordinate officials, whose duty it seems to be to deceive you, and whose support is derived from bribes which you give them for their information. Whatever may be the cause, the effect certainly is, that a most mysterious secrecy prevades everything; and an anxious desire is always visible to produce an impression totally at variance with the real state of the case.

The second extract refers to the population found on the banks of the Volga:—

Whatever may be the morals of the peasantry in remote districts, those living in the towns and villages on the Volga are more degraded in their habits than any other people amongst whom I have travelled; and they can hardly be said to disregard, since they have never been acquainted with, the ordinary decencies of life. What better result can indeed be expected from a system by which the upper classes are wealthy in proportion to the number of surfs possessed by each proprietor? The rapid increase of the population in no less an object with the private self-owner, than the extensive consumption of ardent spirits is desired by the government.—Thus each vice is privileged with especial patronage. Marriages, in the Russian sense of the term, are consummated at an early age, and are arranged by the steward, without consulting the parties—the lord's approval alone being necessary. The price of a family ranges from £25 to £40. Our captain had taken his wife on a lease of five years, the rent for that term amounting to fifty rubles, with the privilege of renewed at the expiration of it.

(To be continued.)

DREAMS OF YOUTH.

CLOUDS weave the summer into the season of autumn and youth rises from dashed hopes into the sturture of a man.

Well it is even so, that the passionate dreams of youth break up and wither. Vanity becomes tempered with wholesome pride, and passion yields to the ripper judgment of manhood; even as the August heats pass on and over into the genial glow of a September sun. There is a strong to respect others. The hardened sinners who now pollute the earth by such misdeeds will, ere long, be called to their great account. Let England see that the generations now rising do not follow in their footsteps.

DICK said a 'Hoosier' one day to his companion in a sleigh-ride, 'why don't you turn that buffalo-skin to other side out? Don't you know that the hair-side is the warmest?'

Bah! Tom, not a bit of it,' was the reply: 'do you s'pose that the buffalo didn't know how to wear it himself? How did he wear his hide? You got out! I follow his plan!'

MYSTERY.—In the beauty of form, or of moral character, or of the material creation it is that which is most veiled which is most beautiful. Valleys are the mysteries of landscapes.—Lamarine.

Legislative News.

Extracts from the Journals.

Wednesday, 15th February.

ABSTRACT OF DUTIES COLLECTED.

Dalhousie,	£2,711 10 2
Bathurst,	1,688 12 7
Caracquet,	321 14 9
Shippagan,	238 3 11
Miramichi,	9,846 4 10
Richibucto,	2,286 16 24
Buctouche,	212 11 5
Shediac,	544 6 5

The Honorable Mr Street, by leave, presented a Petition from the Justices of the Peace for the County of Northumberland, praying aid towards finishing the Landing of the Ferry Slips at and opposite Chatham; which he read. Ordered, that the said Petition be received and referred to the Committee of Trade to report thereon.

Thursday, 16th February.

Mr Read by leave, presented a Petition from John Ferguson, John Meaban, G. and A. Smith, and twenty five others, Merchants and Inhabitants of Bathurst, in the County of Gloucester, praying aid towards erecting a Public Wharf at that place; which he read. Ordered, that the said Petition be received and referred to the Committee of Trade to report thereon.

Friday, 17th February.

Read a third time as engrossed, a Bill to incorporate the South West Boom Company. Resolved, that the Bill do pass.

Saturday, 18th February.

Read a second time, the following Bill, viz:—A Bill to restrain certain provisions of the fifth Section of an Act intitled "An Act for the support of the Civil Government of this Province," and to make other provisions for the sale and disposal of Timber Berths.

Resolved, that there be granted to His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor or Administrator of the Government for the time being, £10,000 towards the encouragement of Parish Schools, agreeably to a Law of this Province.

To the Commissioners of Light Houses in the Gulf of St. Lawrence £— to provide for the Salary of a Keeper for the year 1854 at the Light House on Point Espuminee. This Resolution being sustained—it was moved—that the Blank be filled up with the sum of £55. And upon the question, the Committee divided as follows:—Yeas 6. Nays 18. Whereupon it was decided in the negative. A motion was then made to fill up the Blank with the sum of £160. And upon the question, it was carried in the affirmative, and the Blank to be filled up with that sum.

February 21.

Mr Kerr, by leave, presented a Petition from Richard Hatch son, on behalf of the Miramichi Immigration Society, praying that a Grant may pass to defray the expense of sending a competent person to the Mother Country, to diffuse correct information respecting the Province, and to encourage immigration into the same; which we read. Ordered, that the said Petition be received and lie on the Table.

Mr Kerr moved for leave to bring in a Bill to authorize the granting of Portage Island, in the County of Northumberland, to the Justices of the Peace for the said County, for public uses. Leave granted. The said Bill being brought in was read a first time.

Mr. Read moved for leave to bring in a Bill to establish Polling places in the County of Gloucester.—Leave granted. The said Bill being brought in was read a first time.

February 22.

Mr Johnson, by leave, presented a Petition from John M'Dougall, Alexander Leducq, and sixty three others, Merchants and other inhabitants of Miramichi, in the County of Northumberland, praying that an Act may pass to prevent Saw Dust and Mill Rubbish from being thrown into the Harbour; which he read. Ordered, that the said Petition be received and referred to the Committee of Trade to report thereon.

Mr Williston, by leave, presented a Petition, from John Frazer, Alexander M'Laggan, Richard Hutchison, Thomas C Allan, and Richard Sutton, Esqrs., together with sixty five others, of the County of Northumberland, praying that the present Liquor Law may be repealed, and the former one revived; which he read. Ordered, that the said Petition be received and lie on the Table.

Mr Williston, also by leave, presented a Petition from the Justices of the Peace for the County of Northumberland, setting forth the injurious effects the present Liquor Law has had in the said County, and praying to be reimbursed for loss sustained by the operation thereof; which he read. Ordered, that the said Petition be received and lie on the Table.

February 23.

Mr Kerr, by leave, presented a Petition from Charles L. Hawbolt, Henry Cunard, W. J. Frazer, and three hundred and seventy others, Merchants and other inhabitants of the County of Northumberland, praying the repeal of the present Liquor Law, and the revival of the old Licence Law; which he read. Ordered, that the said Petition be received and lie on the Table.

Mr Botsford, by leave, presented a Petition from the Northumberland Straits Fishing Company, praying for a further amendment in their Act of Incorporation; which he read. Ordered, that the said Petition be received and lie on the Table. Mr Botsford moved for leave to bring in a Bill to amend an Act intitled "An Act to incorporate the Northumberland Straits Fishing Company." Leave granted. The said Bill being brought in was read a first time.

Mr Cutler, by leave, presented a Petition from John Coates, Joseph Doherty, Mercurius Atkinson, and twenty six others, Mill owners and Lumbermen, at Buctouche, in the County of Kent, praying Legislative interference with the existing monopolies of Timber Berths in the said County; which he read. Ordered, that the said Petition be received and lie on the Table.

February 24.

On motion of Mr Cutler, Resolved, that an honorable Address be presented to His Excellency the Lieutenant Governor, praying that His Excellency will be pleased to direct the Clerk of the Peace for the County of Kent, to furnish with as little delay as possible, Copies of all Returns or Awards from Juries selected to investigate any Road in Dorset, in the said County, together with all orders for assessment thereon, since the first day of January 1852. Ordered, that Mr Cutler, Mr M'Phelim, and Mr Pickard, be a Committee to wait upon His Excellency with the Address.