

From Hogg's Instructor, for January.

RUSSIAN SHORES OF THE BLACK SEA.

The third extract shows how this pernicious system cripples and destroys commerce:—

Perhaps the most serious impediment to the successful prosecution of commercial enterprise in Russia, is the impossibility of finding employees upon whose honesty any reliance can be placed. All Russians are so much in the habit of cheating their government, that they are unable to divest themselves of this propensity where the pockets of private individuals are concerned. Nor do rank or station offer any guarantee, since greater responsibilities only afford greater facilities for successful peculation. The experiences of the Volga Steam Company amusingly illustrate the truth of this. It was found that, while the affairs of the company were managed by some Russian gentlemen resident at Nijni, there was a heavy annual loss; and, notwithstanding the certain prospect of remuneration which the speculation had originally held out it became apparent that, unless an entire change took place in the circumstances of the Volga Steam Company, that respectable association would soon be inevitably bankrupt. Some Englishmen were consequently deputed to enquire into a state of matters so extremely unsatisfactory. They at once discovered that a system of wholesale robbery had been practised by the agents, to such an extent that the deficiencies were easily accounted for. Among other ingenious contrivances resorted to for appropriating the company's funds, the most highly approved was that of sharing the demurrage obtained by the owners of cargo upon those barges which were detained beyond a certain time upon their voyage. It was easily arranged between the merchants, the captains of the steam-tugs, and the managers at Nijni, that these delays should frequently occur; and as the amount of demurrage was regulated by the length of their duration, the company was mulcted of large sums, and these worthy associates divided the spoil. Since then the affairs of the company are managed by Englishmen, who are rapidly making up the losses sustained under the Russian administration.

The fourth extract is connected with the custom-house, and brings under our notice the before-mentioned official, who unlike his class, asked no bribe. But, after all, the reader may be disposed to think that he is only negatively pure in the present instance. 'He manifested no anxiety to receive a bribe.' This is rather a doubtful expression. But here is the passage:—

'In the very teeth of a most unsatisfactory-looking custom-house official, in the garb of a Russian soldier, we landed, and prepared for the ordeal which, though we were only going from one Russian town to another, seemed inevitable. We were immediately commanded to deposit ourselves and our luggage under an old wall, and there to remain until the head of the custom-house should awake, for he was not to be disturbed on any account. As it was only 6 A. M., and Russian officials are not very conscientious in their punctuality to business, we took the liberty of disobeying the soldier, in spite of his fierce injunctions to the contrary, and walked to the house of the grand personage whose slumbers were so religiously protected. A knock brought a tall man to the door who, with an agonised expression of countenance, and walking on the tips of his toes, made violent gesticulations expressive of silence. It was evident that his master was a most ferocious personage; for, when we whispered into his ear an order to awake him immediately, he started back in horror and amazement at the temerity which could suggest such a rash proceeding. Finding that our entreaties were useless, and that the man was becoming insolent, I suddenly beat a double rap with my cane, which would have done honour to a London footman, upon which his face assumed a persuasive expression, and he said something, by which I understood him to mean that he would wake his master for a ruble. This was, however, unnecessary, for in a few moments an exceedingly mild-looking person appeared in a dressing-gown, who very benignantly glanced first at our passports, then at our luggage, and intimated that the ceremony was over, without manifesting the slightest displeasure, or anxiety to receive a bribe. Of course, the insolent soldier who insisted on our waiting under the wall, and the servant who refused to awake his master without being paid for it, were very urgent in their request for vodka after such services.'

The last extract we give on this head at present is exceedingly curious, and, but for our perfect faith in the narrator, could scarcely have been credited. The steamboat was nearing Odessa, and the day previous there was a death on board. This much is necessary to make the extract intelligible:—

'I was not in a position at that time, from my ignorance of the true circumstances upon which our destinies depended, to sympathise fully with the alternations of hope and despair which agitated the breasts of my

fellow-passengers. Those trembled for our fate who knew that the person who supplied the quarantine with provisions was also the lessee of the Odessa theatre. As this Odessa theatre pays very badly, it is a government regulation that the same man who obtains the lucrative contract for supplying the quarantine, shall also rent the theatre. The consequence is, that no opportunity is lost of discovering the infectious nature of the diseases which may exist on board any of the ships in the harbour, while the number of persons thus imprisoned, the long duration of their quarantine, and the exorbitant prices charged, produce more than is sufficient to set off against the losses incurred by a bad season; and so it is evident that in proportion to the increase of sickness in the year, is the company at the Odessa theatre improved, and the enjoyment of the Odessa public heightened. Indeed, it was rumoured that, in the event of another unusually severe plague at Constantinople, the manager had expressed his intention of engaging Rachel.'

THE MIXED RACES IN THE WEST INDIES.

The variations are startling. A soft blue eye with long black lashes, such as I saw yesterday over a pair of tawny lips curved with the Alhambra's own model of Castilian scorn, looks strangely contradictory; and the singular persistence of Nature in preserving faultless teeth and raven hair to the dark. Hebe, whatever other variation of feature she may have, makes them all comparatively beautiful. We think we must go to Athens or Napoli to see the straight Grecian nose, with its thin nostril, in perfection; but no sculptor could better mould one, than from the models of tan and torange which he could beckon to him from every corner of St. Thomas's. The short upper lip of high descent, and the delicate small oval of the chin are equally common. And these gifts, priceless to princesses, are here held in careless unconsciousness by fruit girls, subject to none but municipal laws the Mustis and Pustis, whose merry eyes never saw alphabet, and whose brown ankles never knew stocking. * * Every female is trained from childhood to carry burthens upon the head. From a teacup to a water-pail, everything is placed on a small cushion at the top of the skull. The absolute erectness of figure necessary to keep the weight where it can best be supported by the spine, the nice balance of gait to poise it without it being steadied by the hands, the throwing forward of the chest with the posture and effort that are demanded, the measured action of the hips, and the deliberateness with which all turning round or looking aside must be done, combine to form an habitual demeanour and gait of peculiar loftiness and stateliness. A prouder-looking procession than the market-woman as they come and go with their baskets on their heads across the square below our verandah, could not be found in the world. They look incapable of being surprised into a quick movement; and are, without exception, queenly of mien—though it come, strangely enough, from carrying the burthens of the slave.—*A Health Trip to the Tropics, by N. P. Willis.*

TURKISH COSSACKS.

A letter from Constantinople gives the following:—A century of Cossacks from the borders of the White Sea arrived here on the 30th Dec. These are descendants of the Cossacks who, under the command of Stenko Razin and Jbna Neckrass, fought against the Russians in the time of the Empress Catherine I., for the maintenance of their religion as old believers, and for their independence. They were at first over-matched and retired to the Kurban, whence they afterwards sallied forth against Russia, under the flag of Khans of Crimea. After the fall of the Tartar Empire they withdrew to Anassa, and took military service under the government of that province. At a latter period they took refuge in Turkey, where they found hospitality, liberty, privileges, and protection or their ancient faith. In all the wars of Turkey against Russia, and against the Greek insurgents the Kuban Cossacks fought in the Ottoman ranks with courage and devotion. These Cossacks are now armed and equipped at their own charge, and have brought with them to Constantinople their ancient flags. Among them are Yessimoffs, Orloffs, Vlassoffs, Yefremoffs, Boutouks, Hahols, and other noble families of the Cossacks of the Don. They are all "old believers" in the fullest sense of the term, and preserves to this day the manners, customs, language, and costume of their ancestors.

The best piece of criticism I ever heard was by Allan Cunningham, who said of Moore's songs that 'they might all have been written in a coffee-house.' Beautiful as they are, they are certainly artificial, and want the salt of more nationality and earnestness to make the matter savoury. No man, however, understood the expression and meaning of good old melodies better than Tom Moore; in this respect his "Irish melodies" are perfection;—Burns' not better.

The Politician.

THE BRITISH PRESS.

From Willmer and Smith's European Times, February 25.

THE EASTERN QUESTION.

The debates in Parliament on the Eastern Question have put the country fully in possession of all that can be urged in favour of the course which the British Government has pursued; and as war is now inevitable it is well that we should enter upon it with a full knowledge of the circumstances under which it has made its origin, and of the imperative necessity which exists for bringing it to a speedy and triumphant close. In this respect the conduct of the Government has been all but blameless. During the whole of the protracted negotiations which have terminated so fruitlessly, one object has been apparent throughout, namely, the preservation of peace, if peace could be secured by honourable means; and the moral force which this fact gives to the executive, now that it is committed to a warlike policy, must prove of incalculable service in vigorously carrying on the contest. The first Napoleon, great warrior as he unquestionably was, used to say that the moral power was even superior to the physical power in warfare,—in other words, that soldiers would fight more bravely, and put forth their military skill and ardour more determinately in a just than in an unjust contest. Such an admission, coming from so high an authority, has evidently made no impression on the mind of the Emperor Nicholas, whose trickery and falsehood pending the negotiations which are now closed, have been so open and barefaced that our Ministers have been compelled to brand him in the face of Parliament as a man unworthy of being trusted. If the Western Powers can be fairly taxed with a fault in conducting the diplomacy which is now at an end, it is that they placed implicit faith in the professions of the Czar; believed that he sincerely meant what he said; and gave him credit, in fact, for being an honest man. This generous interpretation of the conduct of the old ally, exposes the English Ministers to the sneers of the opposition leaders, who charge them with having been overreached by Russia,—with incapacity to negotiate with so accomplished a thimble-rigger as the Czar,—and with the blindness of molds is not long ago seeing his ultimate aims. Sir James Graham finely retorted by saying that all unworthy jealousy of a Power with which we had been connected by the ties of friendship and reciprocity for so many years would have been unworthy of England, and that we lost nothing in dignity, and sacrificed little in point of time, by treating Russia as though we believed her to be honest and straightforward in desiring the continuance of peace. It is this very ingenious conduct on the part of the Western Powers, and this disgraceful duplicity on the part of Russia, which gives to the contest we are now commencing all the moral grandeur which belongs to it; which has detached the German Powers from the Russian alliance; and leave the Czar alone in his infamy. As to the assertion that Russia would not have seized the Principalities if we had sent the fleet into the Baltic Sea when her soldiers passed the Pruth, this convenient assumption, on which the Tory papers have been incessantly harping during the last eight or ten months, if disproved by the fact which has now come to light, that from the moment of Menchikoff's mission to Constantinople, down to the present hour, Russia has been preparing for war; from which it is clear that the whole affair, from first to last, has been systematic dissimulation. It is the old story over again of the wolf and the lamb. When they came to the stream to drink, the wolf complained of an insult which his defenceless neighbour had put upon him six months previously. The lamb moderately answered that there must be some mistake, as he didn't happen to be born then; to which the wolf replied that the offender must have been his father, which was just the same thing; and so he commenced tearing the unfortunate animal to pieces. This, in substance, is the policy which Russia has been steadily pursuing from the commencement of this Turkish dispute, and the dishonesty of the negotiations on her part is seen by keeping the real motives in the dark ground until the time had arrived for avowing them; and putting forward hollow and false ones, just as wreckers on the Cornish coast are said to exhibit false lights in order to lure the confiding mariners to destruction.

It is very lamentable that this war should be forced upon us at the present time, for we were inclined to hope that crowned heads had seen the folly of sacrificing thousands and tens of thousands of human victims to gratify their lust of power; and in this sense the Autocrat is the common disturber of the peace of Europe, and has arrayed against him all who have respect for the rights of treaties and the independence of Sovereign States. Besides, the war has been forced upon us, we could not avoid it. Once in possession of Constantinople, the Levant and the Mediterranean would be in the hands of the Czar, and Western Europe would be constantly menaced by a Power which knows no respect for civil or religious liberty, and trends under the hoofs of a military despotism the least semblance of personal freedom. Although nominally fighting for the Turks, we are in reality fighting to curb the arrogance of a despot, whose ambition and progress threaten to swallow up the rest of Europe, to extinguish all civilization and advancement, and to throw the world back into the darkness of the past. The time for doing this is most opportune, with France for our ally, and with the German Court giving us at least their good wishes,—if they give us nothing more. Amongst the many fine sentiments to which the debate gave existence in the House of Commons, assuredly not the least so was the touching allusion made by Lord Palmerston to the union of England and France in this struggle,—so different to the hostile attitude which for centuries they have been accustomed to assume towards each other.—However much this rupture may be deplored, and with the certainty that it will cost many lives and absorb endless treasure, yet it is something pleasant to see the fraternity which it has produced between the English and French nations, and it is novel to hear Liberal British statesmen proclaiming the honour and good faith of the present ruler of the great people on the other side of the straits of Dover.

It seems to be pretty clear, from all that is passing around, that Russia mainly relies for success in this nefarious attack on the liberties of Turkey and the independence of Europe on her success in fomenting insurrection amongst the Christian subjects of the Sultan; and the intelligence which has come to hand this week from Albania and elsewhere shows that this desperate game has already commenced through Muscovite agency. The Christian subjects of the

Sultan may not have been treated hitherto with the consideration to which they were entitled; but it is equally clear that if they had been exposed to the brutality and injustice which it is now the fashion in certain quarters to depict, they would long since have shown some sympathy of enthusiasm for their professing deliverers; whereas, the fact is, that although they may not cling very fondly to the Mahomedan rule, they dread that of the Russian still more; and not the least gratifying feature in the present war is the pledge which the Western Powers have exacted from the Sultan, that he will place the Christian portions of his subjects in such a position for the future as shall afford them every right and privilege enjoyed by the Mussulman population. These privileges, Lord John Russell stated, would be placed under the guarantee of the Four Great Powers, and Russia might become a party to them,—if she liked. Of course it was only reasonable that England and France should exact a pledge from Turkey, at the outset, that she would not make peace with Russia without their consent; and this pledge the leader of the House of Commons intimated his belief that Turkey would not hesitate to give.

Looking at this subject in all its bearings, it is difficult to see what object the Czar proposes to himself in thus throwing down the gauntlet to England and France. His navy will be annihilated the moment it shows a flag in the Baltic or the Black Sea; and, judging by the impotency of the Russian forces in the Principalities to cope with the Turks, the latter, reinforced by the troops of the Western Powers, will find little difficulty in driving the Muscovites beyond the Pruth when the struggle in reality begins. This seems to be Lord Palmerston's view. His Lordship held that the cause of Russia would be desperate if opposed by Turkey and either England or France; but with the triumvirate to contend against, her chance of success, he contended, was hopeless. One thing is certain, that this country never commenced a more popular war; and the unanimity which now exists may be traced to the discretion evinced by her Majesty's Government, and to their evident reluctance to draw the sword until every pacific course had been exhausted.

From the same.

EUROPEAN AFFAIRS.

The speeches of Lord John Russell and of Lord Palmerston on the army estimates and the manifesto of Louis Napoleon, published in the *Moniteur*, are pretty decisive declarations of war. The royal proclamation, also, issued prohibiting the export of warlike stores, and of such machinery as may be adapted to the construction of marine steam-engines, leaves no doubt that a blow will be struck at Russia as soon as British subjects and British property in the Russian territories can be placed out of danger of detention or requisition. The tone of Lord John Russell and his noble colleague betrayed great indignation at being so completely deceived by the Czar as they have been, and the outspoken declaration by the latter noble lord, "that the Russian government, by itself and its agents, has, throughout these transactions, exhausted every modification of untruth, concealment, and evasion, and ended with assertions of positive falsehood," leaves no door open for reconciliation or retraction. Louis Napoleon's language in the *Moniteur* is equally decisive. After announcing that the Czar's reply to the Emperor's last appeal leaves no chance open for a pacific solution, and France must therefore be prepared to maintain the cause of Turkey by the most effective measures, the Emperor goes on to say, "while, therefore, he undertakes to defend with greater energy the rights of Turkey, the Emperor reckons on the patriotism of the country, on the close alliance with England, and on the sympathies of the governments of Germany." The Emperor of France adds that he has every confidence in the trustworthiness and chivalrous character of the Emperor of Austria, whose interests are in fact identical with those of France. All this is perfectly true, and, as we have invariably expressed an opinion that when the case was pushed to extremities, Austria and Prussia must fraternise with England and France, we are very glad to find, in spite of Russian intrigue in the city of Vienna, that in consequence of the earnest representations made by England and France, the young Emperor Joseph is more and more inclined to co-operate with us. His ruin is sealed if he joins with Russia. The patriots of Poland, Hungary, and Italy will fly to arms, and, countenanced by England and France, the Austrian monarchy would crumble to dissolution. The people of Greece, that is of Epirus, Thessaly, and Macedonia have already broken out into an organized insurrection, the effect of which will be to require increased energy on the part of the Western Powers, and it must, we think, demonstrate to Austria that no time is to be lost.

We are certainly not surprised that the Paris politicians should view the article in the *Moniteur*, which contains the expressions "tortuous policy" and "doubled-faced policy," and which in idea cannot be separated from Austria and her proceedings, as a menace to that power. All the better. The Emperor Joseph must be taught from the commencement that no shilly-shally policy would be tolerated in the present exigency. He that is not for us is against us, and we to that power which plays false to England and France. The march of the French troops is not noticed in the French Journals; but 70,000 men will be sent, and we have no doubt that the French Emperor is now waiting for the consent of the Emperor of Austria, who, if he joins the Western Powers, must allow the French soldiers the facility of proceeding across his dominions by railway. We have a strong impression that this will be the course pursued, and if, fortunately for the world, Austria and Prussia go heart and hand with us in the coming struggle it will tend very much to shorten its duration. The English expedition has been increased from 12,000 to 26,000 men, it will be seen in another column that the Guards and regiments of the line selected are fast proceeding to the East. From Southampton, Liverpool, Dublin, Plymouth, and Queenstown, the embarkation has been effected with order and celerity, and the troops have been cheered onwards to proceed "where glory awaits" by the universal shouts of the multitudes who continue "to live at home at ease." The alacrity with which the military and naval recruits flocked to the service is a pretty plain proof of the general popularity of the war. When Mr Joseph Hume approves of the war, and says that "resistance to a barbarous aggression is a good object," and, above all, "that the estimates are very moderate and proper," nothing more need be said upon the subject. Mr Cobden, at the risk of his popularity, persists in offering regrets that we should go to war with the very power which a few years ago he threatened to crumple up. All the news from the Danube tends to show that the Russians are pressing their forces towards Kalafat, with a view to force Omer Pacha's position. We trust, however, that that able general will contrive to keep his ground until the allied army reaches the spot. The very news of the departure of the troops of the Al-