

Literature, &c.

From the London Punch.

A FEW WORDS TO THE BRITISH LION.

THEY'VE roused thee up at last,
Thou old majestic beast;
Did they think thy strength was past
Because thy roar had ceased?
By St. GEORGE! despite thy dose,
(And a long one it has been,)
Few would care to rub thy nose,
Or to get thy paws between!

After years of tranquil life,
Gnawing calmly at thy bone,
Thou art loathe to wake to strife
In a quarrel not thine own;
But the cause of the oppress
Has been thine from day of birth,
And you cannot tamely rest
While a despot walks the earth.

Boldly walked he, noble brute!
While he fancied that you lay
Too torpid and too mute
To care to cross his way.
In features so benign,
In attitude so still,
He marked no latent sign
Of defiance to his will.

You have undeceived him now,
And aghast he stands before
The anger of thy brow
And the thunder of thy roar;
For he feels that thus irate,
Both the power and will you bring,
To fix at once his fate
If he tempt thee to thy spring.

Stand up then for the right,
And in war, if it must be,
Strike out with all thy might
Till thy foe is on his knee.
Then take thy rest again,
Leaving safe the Russian Bear,
Tethered by too tight a chain
Too break it—if he dare.

From the Dublin University Magazine.

CAPTAIN M'CLURE,

THE DISCOVERER OF THE NORTH-WEST PASSAGE.

Drake was then in the Spanish Main. When satiated with plunder there, he passed through Magellan Straits, boldly resolving to try whether he could not reach home by the Pacific, eastward to the Atlantic. So he bore up northward, but reached no further than California, his crew being unable to bear the colder latitudes; and thus sailed away across the Pacific, reached the Moluccas, and thus home to England, being the first Englishman who circumnavigated the globe. On this effort to find a passage on the Pacific side, Barrow says with singular prescience, "Drake's attempt is one of the most daring on record, as not a ship of any nation had as yet the opportunity; and perhaps it had never entered into any man's head to search for a passage on the west side of America, though it is most likely that by taking such a course it may be found. It will be done" and so it has, but till two centuries and a half after Drake's splendid failure.

Great was England's enthusiasm at the return of Drake. His ship the Golden Hind, became the resort of crowds, and the cabin was a complete banqueting-room. The Queen herself dined on board with the brave commander, and there did Knight him, and advanced him to the rank of admiral, who preferring the Honor of his country before his own life, with magnanimity undertook unwonted adventures, and went through the same with wonderful happiness. The Queen likewise ordered the ship to be laid up in the dock as a trophy; and afterwards, when it fell to pieces from decay, a chair was made from the wood and presented to Oxford. If such were the honors lavished on the Golden Hind and her brave commander, what may we expect when M'Clure and the Investigator return, after having achieved what Drake could only attempt?

Still unbroken continued the succession of martyrs in the cause of Arctic discovery. Sir Humphrey Gilbert first wrote a treatise on "The practicability of a north-west passage," then set forth with Sir Walter Raleigh to search for it. The expedition failed, and Gilbert went alone upon a second voyage. The Queen to evince her interest, gave him one of her maids of honor in marriage, sent for his picture, and presented him with a gold anchor guided by a lady. Thus, high in hope he set sail, but never returned. Ship, commander, and crew were seen no more. Raleigh led the next brave band, but steered southward to avoid the polar dangers, and so fell with the whole line of American coast, from which resulted, not the discovery of the north-west passage, but the colonization of America, and the upspringing of a great nation—Saxon and Irish in blood, and of English tongue.

Davis meanwhile, whose name has become part of our geography, was grinding his ships amongst the ice up as high as seventy-two degrees; and great service he accomplished—discovering that great highway, Davis's Strait, all have traversed since, and through which he affirmed "the passage would certainly be found."

Terrible must the untried frost-kingdom have appeared to the early navigators in their frail vessels, none of which exceeded a hundred tons. No wonder that we hear of how men prepared themselves for the fearful north-west passage, as if preparing to enter eternity. Davis complains of "the loathsome view, and the irksome noise of ye ice." He named Greenland the Land of Desolation, and the place where he found unhoped-for anchorage, "The Bay of God's Mercy," yet he never wintered in those regions. Human courage had not reached that point of endurance; but, strong in faith, he made three voyages, helped on by the worshipful merchants of London, until men could no longer lend him money,

"This Davis," they said, "hath been three times employed, why hath he not found the passage?"

And now comes the mournful story of Barentz, and the first recorded sufferings of human creatures in a polar winter. He commanded an expedition sent by Holland in 1594 to try the north-west passage by Nova Zembla. On the first voyage they stopped by the ice and had to return, first signing a declaration before God and the world that they had done their best to penetrate by the north to China and Japan. A second and a third time they ventured. On the last voyage the ice encircled and imprisoned them. There for eight months they strove as desperate, dying men against all the horrors of darkness, cold and famine. At last a boat was built with the remnant of the Saip. As they left the shore the spectral leader of the ghastly crew bade them lift him in the boat that he might gaze once more on the scene of his daring and his suffering, and so died. A few of his men reached home to tell the tale. This was the first Arctic winter Europe heard of.

A century had now passed of trial and failure, yet the hope remained. Five thousand pounds were offered by the merchants of London to the successful discoverer. Enterprise was stimulated, and an expedition set forth under Weymouth; but scarcely had they made Greenland when the terrified crew mutinied, and bore up the helm for England. Weymouth, coming forth from his cabin, demanded, "Who bore up the helm?" "ONE AND ALL," they answered; and so they turned back to go home-ward.

Still the merchants were undismayed, and they sent out Hudson, who opened the seventeenth century bravely. With one vessel and a crew of ten men he sailed due north, to try the passage across the pole, and reached Spitzbergen; then made an attempt to sail around Greenland and home by Davis's Strait but failed. A second and a third time he led his ship up to the ice barrier between Spitzbergen and Nova Zembla, and was forced to return. The north and north-east passage was therefore considered hopeless, and he set out on his last and fatal voyage to the north-west, sailed up the straits that now bear his name, and though he beheld the Pacific in the broad waters of the bay. The winter approached; the ship was frozen in—the first British ship obliged to winter there. Cold and famine came upon the crew, with all their untried horrors. Hudson wept out of pity for their hardship; but there was no pity for him amongst men who thought he led them out to die. They plotted dark deeds throughout the long frozen winter; then when spring came, and the open water, they thrust Hudson forth, along with his son and six others, in an open boat, without provisions, and sailed away for England, leaving them to starve and die. Nothing more was ever heard of the murdered leader, who thus perished in the bay that preserves at once the memory of his name, his daring, and his doom.

Still the merchants continued their expeditions telling their captains to steer straight for Japan and bring home one of the natives as a sample, and the usual record of failures follows, till we are arrested by the name of Baffin, memorable ever after as the discoverer of the finest bay in the world. He sailed round it, named Smith's Sound and Lancaster Sound; but did not explore either, though suspecting the latter was the true portal to Japan.—Baffin, who accomplished this discovery in one season, never wintered in the ice, and appeared to think it would for ever prove an impassable barrier to the Pacific. The best chance, he said, would be to try the passage from the Asiatic side. So, for twenty years we hear no more of merchant expeditions.

But the Danes, meanwhile were seeking and suffering, starving and dying in the cause. Of a crew of sixty four who wintered in Hudson's Bay, all perished, dying one by one, of famine, disease and despair. Yet men are not deterred; they seem even to be growing familiar with the idea of an Arctic winter. To others are ready to attempt it—Luke Fox and Captain James. Charles I. gave them a letter from him, to be delivered to the Emperor of Japan, in case of success. But they only reached Hudson's Bay, where they wintered, and with such excellent arrangements, that they returned home without the loss of a single hand. These two commanders did good service searching Hudson's Bay, and, like others, commemorated their discoveries by names expressive of fear and terror, hope and comfort, death and starvation, by which the Arctic map becomes the mental history of the Arctic heroes. Here, frozen forever in the eternal ice, are these successive records of human emotion; grotesque names, too, at least to our ears. Thus we have "Gibbon's hole," after Gibbon, who was blocked up there twenty weeks; "Briggs's mathematics;" "Fox his bestest." But many are the records of sudden comfort vouchsafed, hope realised, God's mercy acknowledged, for they were Christian men, as all brave men mostly are; and from first to last, from the time when Sir Humphrey Gilbert stood on the deck of his sinking vessel, and called out to his crew, as they drifted in the darkness to death, "We are as near to heaven by sea as by land," to the hour when Franklin and Richardson sat starving in the desolate fort of the Coppermine river by the unburied bodies of their dead companions; or M'Clure, in that frozen winter in the Bay of Mercy, two thousand miles from all human aid, thanks "a benevolent Providence for his blessing," we have no record of a time when the daily prayer was omitted, or the daily trust in God grew faint.

After the Restoration, we find Prince Rupert taking warm interest in the cause; and through his exertions a charter was granted to certain merchants giving them the trade and territories of Hudson's Bay, by which jurisdiction was obtained over a district one-third larger than all Europe, under the name of "Rupert's Land." For nearly two hundred years the Company have now been enjoying the enormous rights conceded by their charter; and civilization, with all its gaiety, wealth, grace, and beauty, fills the region where Hudson found only ice, silence, and desolation, two centuries ago. The absolute rights granted to the Company checked individual enterprise. So, for fifty years, from Charles to George II, we hear of no more north-west expeditions, except a fatal attempt made by Knight, one of the Company's servants, who perished with his whole crew in Hudson's Bay; though not till fifty years afterwards was their fate known, when an old Esquimaux related how they had all perished, one by one, of cold and famine, till the last died, while trying to dig the grave of his last companion. The new Company were even suspected of discouraging enterprise in fear of rivalry; and it was of vast importance to solve the doubt—say yes or no as to the existence of a polar sea communicating with the Pacific—Parliament, in the reign of George II., decreed a reward of twenty thousand pounds to the fortunate discoverer of the north-west passage. This act remained on the statute-book for eighty-two years, and then, the chances of success appearing almost null, it was repealed in 1825; but the great achievement being at length accomplished,

parliament will, no doubt consider the right re-established.

In consequence of the impulse given by Government, fresh aspirants for fame arose. Ten thousand pounds were raised by private subscriptions; and, in addition to the legislative grant, premiums were offered, in case of success—five hundred pounds to the Captain, two hundred pounds to the Lieutenant, and a proportionate reward to each officer and seaman. Two vessels went out—the *Dodds* and *California*—with orders to seek the passage through Hudson's Straits. At Wager River they were stopped by the ice, and wintered in a log-house, marveling much at the new experience of their prisoned life. The ink froze, the beer froze, all that was good in the brandy concentrated in a little lump of ice in the middle of the bottle, and the rest, when melted, was mere water; the bedclothes froze to the wall, their mouths froze to the blankets; their fingers to the iron they touched; their lips to the glasses from which they drank, so that the skin was torn by the separation.

Yet they wintered on bravely in the "dismal dark weather" and the "terrible black fogs," till summer came, when they got back to England, fully convinced of the existence of the passage, but unable to claim the reward; and no other north-west expedition was attempted after this failure for above half a century, till we reach the times of Ross and Parry.

[To be continued.]

CRONSTADT AND THE BALTIC FLEET.

We have elsewhere referred to a paper in *Fraser's Magazine* on this subject. The following article from the *Spectator* gives what may be called an abstract of the document in question:—

Those who anticipate a "dashing blow" at Russia in the Baltic would do well to read the first paper in *Fraser's Magazine* for May, which simply describes the naval and military geography of that twisted sea. The paper, indeed, is much more than an ordinary magazine article. Composed by one who has an intimate and detailed knowledge of the ground, who has been able to survey it, too, from the historical point of view, and from the most advantageous position accessible to an Englishman in Russia, it possesses an authenticity commonly allowed only to official papers; it is thoroughly practical in its purpose, clear and graphic in its language.

An English fleet entering the closed sea will not encounter its only trials at the intricate entrance.—The difficulty which our fleet had in venturing to pass the Sound with its shallow waters, the necessity for taking the more circuitous route by the Great Belt, formed only a foretaste of the obstructive navigation which increases as the capital of Russia is approached. Passing by the cliffs of Holstein, the sandy shores of Prussia the granite rocks of Sweden, leaving out of account the ice which walls up the water-way to the upper part of the Baltic the greater part of the year, let us take only what might be considered the more vulnerable points. We need not dwell much upon Riga and the entrance to the Duna, strongly fortified, though imperfectly manned, and not at present armed enough against attack to be without terror at the name of Napier. The two parts of Russia that would seem to invite the desired blow are Finland, for its supposed disposition to return to Sweden, and its importance in a military point of view for approaching Russia by land; and the Gulf of Finland, the road to St. Petersburg. As Sweden in 1808, *a priori*, it might be supposed that the inhabitants, whose ethnological sympathies with the Muscovites are small, would be ready enough to shake off the yoke, and return to their original fealty; but it will not do to trust in war to *a priori* reasoning. The Fins have a constitution secured to them for fifty years after the cession; they have several privileges; and there is no positive evidence of their Swedish tendencies. Moreover, the approaches are fortified by nature and the Czar. The entrance to the Gulf is gated by that group of eighty islands which go by the general name of the largest, Aland; an archipelago of islands, straits, reefs, bays, and banks, which laugh at the entrance of any craft but the galleys and the gun-boats of old north warfare. To the East, on the Finnish coast, lies Helsingfors, and the fortified works which pass by the general name of Sveaborg; and here lies a prize which might tempt the approaching Napier, eight sail of the line, a frigate, a corvette, and three steel mers of the Russian Baltic fleet. But how to get at them? Through the single passage of Helsingfors bay, between Langern and Vester Svart, a passage two hundred yards in width, raked by a fire from the two islands, with other batteries to be passed; and commanded by the great works of Sveaborg, a pile of battery upon battery, such as Sir Archibald Alison, says the writer, can alone describe; such, it would seem, as John Martin alone could paint, under the inspiration of some military furor. Each series of works is complete in itself as regards stores of all kinds, and bomb-proof cover. The batteries are formidable, both because they are unassailable in the baldness of the rocks from which they are carved, and because they have the heaviest ordnance. Between Sveaborg and Revel lies the narrow entrance to the Gulf of Finland, whose shores recede from each other to meet again nearer Cronstadt, at the entrance of the Neva.

Well, if the fleet lying in the Bay of Helsingfors cannot be seized, let the blow be struck upon St. Petersburg itself; and the Scandinavians of the Baltic provinces, taught to know that their Czar is not invulnerable, may be shaken from their allegiance by that one vigorous set of Napier'sque daring. But how to get in? There is, no doubt, the choice of two channels; but the northern is closed with a double or triple row of piles, five or six miles in length, which renders it accessible only to small craft. It is Hobson's choice, therefore; and, taking the other channel, the adventurous sea-captain, on invasion bent, will have to steer his ship between Fort Alexander on the left, and Kisbank on the right, each 800 yards distant, each built of granite and bristling with heavy guns; then come Fort Peter and the timber fort Cronstott, the last of no formidable character; but then again the adventurer enters "the middle road," a passage 250 yards wide, commanded by Cronstott and Mole Head, and the cube granite-built Fort Menzikoff, with a very large number of guns. Beyond in the narrowing channel, lies a vista of land fortifications not practically important; no fleet in goose's file is likely to enter there, save the Russian admiral effected his entrance into Helsingfors, when a Swedish admiral capitulated, by force of golden artillery. Here, then, is the strength of Russia. She is a great hedgehog. Her means of offence is not alarming; her seventy-two ships of all sizes in her Baltic and Euxine fleets, commanded by generals, with captains who wear spurs, and gunners who place less than one shot in a dozen—a Napier could easily put such a fleet under his arm, and present it to the British museum. But, to be conquered, Russian ships must come out, and

they show no impatience to be conquered. Russian fleets steal victories from English fleets by stopping in-doors; and it is a winning game for the spurred sailors. A mammoth hedgehog, with a more than rhinoceros' hide of granite, Russia cannot be easily made to feel blows. Perchance she may be locked up and starved, until her very intestines rebel; but this is tedious work even to those to whom victory is promised in reversion. The only strength that can conquer inert, dogged, shameless obstinacy, is unflagged patience, actively persevering patience in officers and men, tranquil, passive patience in a public, guarded against harrassing its own servants by expecting and demanding impossibilities.

DEATH OF THE POET, JAMES MONTGOMERY.

JAMES MONTGOMERY the Poet, breathed his last on Sunday afternoon, at his residence, the Mount, Sheffield, aged 82. He presided at the weekly board of the infirmary as late as last Friday, and walked home more than a mile afterwards.

James Montgomery was born as long ago as November 4, 1771, at Irvine, in Ayrshire. His father was a Moravian missionary, who leaving his son in Yorkshire to be educated, went to the West Indies where he and the poet's mother both died. When only twelve years old, the bent of the boy's mind was shown by the production of various small poems. These indications could not save him at first from the fate of the poor, and he was sent to earn his bread as assistant in a general shop. He thirsted for other occupations, and one day set off with 3s. 6d. in his pocket to walk to London, to seek fame and fortune. In his first effort he broke down, and for a while gave up his plan to take service in another situation. Only for a time, however, was he content, and a second effort to reach the metropolis was successful, so far as bringing him to the spot he had longed for, but unsuccessful to his main hope—that of finding a publisher for a volume of his verses. But the bookseller who refused Montgomery's poems accepted his labour and made him his shopman. Fortune however, as it generally does, smiled at last on the zealous youth, and in 1792 he gained a post in the establishment of Mr. Gales, a bookseller of Sheffield who had set up a newspaper called the *Sheffield Register*.

On this paper Montgomery worked *con amore*, and when his master had to fly from England to avoid imprisonment for printing articles too liberal for the then despotic government of England, the young poet became the editor and the publisher of the paper, the name of which he changed to *Sheffield Iris*. In the columns of this print he advocated political and religious freedom, and such conduct secured for him the attentions of the Attorney-General, by whom he was prosecuted, fined, and imprisoned; in the first instance, for reprinting a song commemorating "The Fall of the Bastille;" in the second case, for an account he gave of a riot in Sheffield. Confinement could not crush his love of political justice, and on his second release he went on advocating the doctrines of freedom as before, in his paper and in his books. In the lengthy periods between those times and the present, the beliefs which James Montgomery early pioneered in England have obtained general recognition, and, as men became more and more liberal, our poet gained more and more esteem. He contributed to magazines, and, despite adverse criticism in the "Edinburgh Review," established his right to rank as a poet. In 1797 he published "Prison Amusement;" in 1805 the "Ocean;" in 1806 the "Wanderer in Switzerland;" in 1809 "The West Indies;" and in 1812 "The World before the Flood." By these works he obtained the chief reputation he has since enjoyed. In 1819 appeared "Greenland," a poem in five cantos; and in 1825 "The Pelican Island, and other Poems." In 1851 the whole of his works were issued in one volume, 8vo., and of which two editions are in circulation; and in 1853 "Original Hymns for Public, Private, and Social Devotion." This venerable poet enjoyed a well-deserved literary pension of £100 a-year.

ODESSA.

The town of Odessa was founded by Catherine II. after she had extended her dominions, in 1792, to the banks of Dniester, and in 60 years it has become the emporium of the trade of Southern Russia. Its population, exclusive of the garrison, exceeds 70,000, and the total amount of its export and import trade was valued in 1849 at about four millions and a half sterling. The town is built on cliffs, which rise to a considerable height above the sea, and form a sort of amphitheatre round the bay. It is fortified according to the modern principles of defence, and the citadel, on the east side of the town commands the port. The port itself is formed by two large moles, one of which is regularly defended by a parapet, with embrasures for cannon. The anchorage in the bay is good, and the water so deep that vessels of the first class may lie within reach of the shore.

BEAUTIFUL EXTRACT.

Do trees talk?—Have they not leafy lungs—do they not at sunrise, when the wind is low and the birds are caroling their songs, play a sweet music? Who has ever heard the soft whispers of the green leaves in spring time on a sunny morning, who did not feel as though rainbow gleams of gladness were running through his heart? And then, when the peach blossoms hang like rubies from the stem of the parent tree—when the morning-glory, like a nun before the shrine of God, unfolds her beautiful face, and the moss-rosea open their crimson lips, sparkling with the nectar that falls from heaven who does not bless his Maker?

The only people that hope are the poor. The rich live in fear. Reduce a man to one pair of breeches, and his view of futurity will be as buoyant as a cork. Make him a millionaire, and he will worry from year's end to year's end. Every gale of wind not only sinks his vessel but his spirits; and the same configuration that only breaks the nap of the fearless leader, fills the mind of the rich man with fear and trembling for the stock he owns in some insurance company.

"The beautiful have vanished and return not," and the thought that it is so will sometimes overwhelm the living with deep sadness! When we reflect that so many are called away in the midst of their years and usefulness, the profound mysteries of life and death will crowd oppressively upon the mind, and we feel that, indeed, all is "vanity." In view of life's uncertainty, the chief of our pursuits appear sadly trivial; and yet we trifle, though the proofs of its utter vanity have been multiplying since the disastrous days of Adam.

"Teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom."