

were all then basking in the sunshine of an unexpected but happy peace, which had been but a few months concluded. The British Empire was then enjoying that thankful repose which a combatant is expected to find when, having entered the lists against a powerful adversary and overthrown him, he puts off his armour and wipes his sword. After thanking Almighty God for the victory, men's minds were, I suppose, chiefly occupied in speculating upon the time it would take Russia to recover from her exhaustion, of the strength of the repaired bulwarks which our policy sees necessary to have raised round Turkey, and of the general permanence of those European relationships which the war had stretched and broken, and which the peace had professed to rebind. The men of business were calculating the effect of the removal of an influence which had disarranged their markets, restricted their operations and increased their burdens, and were probably picturing (and here there was no delusion) the rebounding advances which commerce and industry would make now the squadrons and battalions had been called off the field. But the silence of peace was broken before we had felt the full of the impression. A heathen would perhaps have said that old Janus was angry, because the gate of his temple, accustomed to move on rusty hinges, had been slammed too violently. At any rate, if it had been shut with unexpected suddenness, it was opened with still more unexpected determination. A celestial hand—if you will permit a phrase imported from Canton—first wrenched the door ajar, and then, while we were mustering a lilliputian force to push it back again, this Indian arm of violence burst it wide open, and then poured through the portals all the furies in a crowd, to dash away the cup of tranquil enjoyment which the angel of peace had placed in our hands,—to tear the face of human nature into the most awful disfigurement,—and especially to wound the heart of Old England with the deepest agony and remorse.