

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.

O MATCHLESS master of the strength of song,
On whom a mightier than Promethean fire
Descended at thy birth from heavens higher,
And more divine than lucent realms, where throng,
All crowned, bright spirit singers, that belong
To fame's serene immortal splendid choir :
We hail thee as the prophet, priest, and sire
Of ultimate art, clear-voiced, triumphant, strong.

All jewels in thy crown of song do blend
With glamour which no night of time may mar.
Yea, even when thy spirit shall reascend
To the soft vales of that ethereal star
Whence first it surely flew, on earth shall reign
The imperial echo of thy resonant strain.

FREDERICK DAVIDSON.

ENGLAND AND HER EUROPEAN ALLIES,
PAST AND FUTURE.

IT was once a favourite boast with Englishmen that they were perfectly indifferent to the opinion of foreigners. When Hanover dissolved partnership with England, at the accession of her present majesty, many rejoiced because they imagined that we might now leave the continental powers, with their intrigues and ambitions, to fight out their differences by themselves. It was asserted that hence forward, as we had no longer a stake in the continent except the impregnable rock of Gibraltar, we need no more mix ourselves up in a general European War, as we had done for the benefit of Hanover rather than of England on every occasion, when there was an opportunity, since the first Elector of Hanover ascended the throne of the Stuarts. The subsidy, which England paid to Frederick the Great during the Seven Years' War up to the accession of George III., was, doubtless, chiefly because he was the nephew of George II., and the double great-grandson of the old Electress Sophia, rather than the reason alleged, that the Protestant interests of Europe would be endangered by the success of Roman Catholic Austria. A British contingent had also been cut to pieces under Prince Ferdinand, of Brunswick, near Wesel, two months after the death of George II., which probably not a little disgusted Englishmen with the alliance. As a relative of the writer was killed in the last engagement, he has a reason for remembering this generally forgotten event. But if it is inevitable, as our military writers seem to think, that we must some day have another war with Russia, and that we shall require allies, foreign public opinion becomes of the utmost consequence and should be studied on its own ground; not simply in the books of excited writers, who, as Lamartine once observed, are the worst advisers which any cabinet can consult. "The policy of an exile," he adds, "is always a policy of chimeras, and good sense is forgotten in dreams." The exile never realizes that things have been changed in his own country or in others since he last saw them, and his knowledge is warped by the press of the land in which he is domiciled, or by a wish to make himself agreeable to it.

At the beginning of the Crimean War, when there was some hope of involving Austria actively in the struggle, an Englishman who had resided thirty years in Warsaw, and from the reign of Alexander I., was consulted by Lord Palmerston as to the aid which might be expected from the inhabitants of Russian Poland, if an Austrian army joined by an English contingent marched into Russia through that route. The Englishman had married a Polish lady, and was imbued with the feelings of the Polish aristocracy; but he frankly answered that he could hold out no hope of any assistance. He said that the enemy in the eyes of the Polish peasants were their own nobility, the most of them in exile, and that they had not forgotten the bitter slavery in which they had been held for centuries. They looked upon the Russians, from whom they had received their first recognition, as human beings, as the avengers of that slavery, and would assist them with all their might to resist the return of the nobles. Not very long after the futile insurrection of 1863, a leading German Socialist told a friend of the writer that its failure was due to the want of co-operation from the Poles themselves, and that the German Socialists had imagined that things were more ripe for a Revolution in Poland than they had proved to be. It was the work of a junction between the Polish nobles and the Socialists, for the note of insurrection was distinctly stated by Mierostawski, one of the leaders, to be the decree of the Russian Government for the emancipation of the serfs.

No part of the Russian population was more indignant than the Polish gentry at this edict which embraced Poland. The result of it on the Polish peasants' mind was exemplified, when the Russian Governor of Poland chose Polish peasant proprietors to guard the line between Warsaw and Alexandrina, on the Russian frontier, the last time that Alexander II. met the late Emperor William for a few hours' consultation on public affairs in 1880. That Prussian Poland is completely Germanized, as a recent military writer (Colonel Maurice) seems to imagine, was not the opinion of Prince Bismarck a year ago, and he, of all people, ought to know. If it were, why the expulsion of Poles from Prussia, why the suppression of the Polish language in Posen, or why should the Empress Frederick, when she visited the inundated districts in 1888, have received an address from the Polish ladies in French,

instead of in German, which it seems that these ladies were all acquainted with? That no pains have been spared, either by politicians or Socialists in Western Europe, to keep up a friction between Poland and Russia, is well known; and a Polish General, who, after serving Turkey for twenty years, gave in his adhesion to Russia in 1874, declared that without them Poland might now have been the Scotland of Russia. Some years ago a well-known German Socialist published two articles on Russia, chiefly about the late Emperor Alexander, in a first-class English magazine. Anyone at all conversant with history or acquainted with the Emperor could see at once that they were full of such absurd errors that they seemed hardly worth contradicting. Among other things it was intimated that the Emperor had hurried both his parents out of the world, in short, murdered them, the only proof given being, that he had dutifully sat up alone with his mother (who had been dying for years) during the last night of her existence; and that he had spent a long time alone with the Emperor Nicholas during his last illness. The late Emperor's greatest enemy could not seriously have believed these accusations, but it became obvious why they were published. They were translated into Polish and Russian, to be smuggled into Russian Poland, as the most ignorant peasant abhors a parricide. Is it strange that travellers should now be detained at least an hour on the Russian frontier, while all the books they carry with them are carefully examined?

Those Englishmen who look upon a revolutionized Poland as part of the programme of a war with Russia hardly realize what mischief they do to the interests of the many thousands of English settled there, nor what have been the horrors of Polish outbreaks, from the Polish peasant mode of warfare. Only the other day in Austrian Poland, I heard a recapitulation from a Polish lady of the details of what used to be called the Austrian massacres in Galicia in 1846. The peasants are supposed to have been instigated by the Government of Metternich to murder the landlords, and fearful scenes ensued. The dismal, barren State of Galicia still corroborates these stories, the villages without wells, and water obtained from muddy drains as we often see in Turkey, and no funds available to make the country more healthy by draining the swamps. The Russians have drained an area as large as Great Britain and Ireland, in their part of Poland, and have converted it into good arable land and canals; but the Austrian Government is expending all available money in building fortresses and increasing its army, and is very backward in its sanitary views. It is not so very long since a Viennese member of the municipality objected to a proposed sanitary improvement, on the ground that since it had been introduced elsewhere the rate of mortality had diminished so that an excess of population was to be feared.

The fortress frowning upon Cracow, and built on the mound raised by the citizens to the memory of Kosciuszko, whose bones were brought from Switzerland at the expense of the Emperor Alexander I., keeps green in the memory of the city the fact of how, contrary to treaties, Austria took possession of the little Republic, the last relic of an independent Poland. We must not count on differences between the Roman and Greek Catholics keeping Russians and Poles apart, as any Austrian can confirm. The Russian takes off his cap or makes a reverence before every crucifix or sacred picture which he comes across in Polish territory, and where is the Prussian or Austrian who does the same? In Odessa, Cracow, and at Jerusalem, I have seen a Russian enter Romanist and Anglican Churches and bow and cross himself in the same manner before their altars as before his own; and in the instance of the Anglican Church the altar was quite unadorned, nor was there the chief emblem of Christianity or a sacred picture in the whole building. Austrians remember, if everyone else has forgotten it, how the Poles fraternized with the Russian Army in 1848; and how General Paskievitch put a Russian-Polish regiment into Cracow to protect it, when the Austrian Commander-in-chief had given orders that the little city should be sacked. Then it was that the fear of Pan-Slavonianism first entered the Austrian brain, and the "enormous ingratitude which would some day astonish the world" was first conceived by Metternich's successor. If Hungary is to dictate our policy to us, which was the idea dominating the official mind in 1876, this portion of history should be studied. The Magyars revolted in 1848, because they would not accept a constitution in which the oldest inhabitants of the country, their Slavonian fellow subjects, were granted equal privileges. Yet, except the Turks, they were the last comers into Europe, and are described by the old historian, Speed, as showing their Scythian origin by their barbarous manners and ignorance of the polite arts.

There is no doubt, whoever may be our European ally in the future, we shall pay heavily for the honour as we have done in past times. It is, therefore, as well to consider what our former allies have done for us, and how far we may hope to see them stand by us in the case of disasters; for disasters may occur in the form of unusual floods, cholera and drought, which all the foresight in the world could not prevent. Italy is, at present, practically untried. Since the days of the Romans the Italian states have only defeated each other. Commerce and the arts were her strong point till the present century, not war. I find a young military student imagines that Murat obtained his fame at the head of Italian cavalry. This extraordinary mistake arises from the use of condensed histories for cramming purposes, and the neglect of details. The only

time that Murat, though King of Naples, ever led Italian troops in a campaign was when a reinforcement arrived during the retreat from Moscow, scarcely in time even to add to the confusion; and again when he led them against the Austrians in 1814, and they were put to flight. The other Italian corps were not cavalry, and were mixed up with the French, not exclusively under Murat, so they were no more distinct in their defeats or their success than the peasants of Auvergne. The Austrians were driven out of Italy by the French, assisted a good deal by anti-Papists from different parts of Europe; and the so-called Battle of Tchernaya in the Crimea proved, according to the Franco-Polish General, Charzanowski, that the Italians were nothing without an ally to keep up their courage; for that in fact it was only a sortie of a small portion of the half-starved ragged garrison of Sebastopol before which the Italians retreated till rallied and brought up in a line to face the enemy, by the French. It was made into a battle, said the same eyewitness, by the despatches, to encourage a young nation. This story is rather confirmed by the Italian disasters in Abyssinia. Here we have a semi-barbarous nation, which had been considered as under the protection of Russia, who has helped her to build a very fine church in Jerusalem; so by way apparently of giving Italy a point where she could inflict a blow on Russia, as otherwise none of their interests came in contact, she was advised by a great European statesman to go to Massowah. We had guaranteed the integrity of Turkey, which claimed Massowah as part of her territory and in return for assistance in the Sudan we had formed a treaty with Abyssinia, giving her the right of access to the sea through Massowah, and this access Italy at once closed. But, except with Russia, who must be made to keep her treaties, the rupture of a treaty seems no longer of any account.

France had protected Rome for some years with a garrison, till she withdrew it during the war of 1870, having obtained a promise from Italy that she would not occupy the Papal dominions with her own troops. As soon as France seemed involved in difficulties, Italy broke her promise, and the anti-Catholic world applauded her. At the present day Italy's want of good faith led us to break our own treaty with the late King of Abyssinia. As to making the defeat of Italian troops by Ras Alula (on the ground that it was a massacre) the excuse, that was childish. The Italians knew perfectly well that their despatches were a romance to conceal a signal defeat, and that the Abyssinians simply showed themselves the better soldiers of the two. As to being of any service to us, Italy has, on the contrary, added to our difficulties in the Sudan, by engaging our allies in war. She aspires to regain some of the colonies held by the ancient Genoese in Macedonia, and the Caucasus; but before acquiring fresh territories infested with brigands, Italy should learn how to keep down her own brigands at home. It is not so many years ago since she sent an impertinent answer to the remonstrances of the British Government, when an English subject was seized close outside one of her towns, although with a military escort, and put into thumb screws till he had offered a large ransom for his release.

When the preliminaries of the Congress of Berlin, in 1878, were being discussed, our Secretary for Foreign Affairs wrote to Lord Odo Russell, that England would be glad to do something for our ancient ally, Austria; and in short it was proposed to give her Bosnia and Herzegovina, instead of letting a great part of Bosnia be added to Serbia, according to a provision of the Russian Treaty of San Stefano, and the other part to be added to Herzegovina, which, by that treaty, was to enjoy semi-independence. We searched history in vain to find out how Austria could with any propriety be termed an ancient ally. In the last century we joined with Frederick the Great in his war with the Austrian Empress, Maria Theresa; and we stopped Joseph II. in the midst of a campaign in conjunction with Russia, which, if they had been left alone, would probably have proved fatal to the Ottoman Empire. Joseph compensated himself by falling upon Poland. Was he then our ally? In 1799 Austria was professedly in alliance with England and Russia, but with the ulterior object of gaining possession of Lombardy and Savoy; and because the veteran Swatton, in obedience to the policy of the Emperor Paul, which was to restore the kingdom of Sardinia intact, delivered up his conquests to the Sardinian officers instead of to the Austrians, he was led into a snare by the Arch Duke Charles, which nearly proved fatal to him and to his whole army. Owing to the Austrian army having at one time been a favourite resort for the Romanist aristocracy of Great Britain and Ireland, who were prohibited from entering the British army, it has been a received axiom that the sins of Austria must only be repeated in whispers, while those of Russia are proclaimed from the housetops.

Again, in 1806 and 1809, Austria was in receipt of British subsidies, but made peace and an alliance with France after a mere farce of resistance. In 1812, she was distinctly fighting against Great Britain, for she composed the right flank of Napoleon's army, when he invaded Russia. As the fertile provinces of Podolia and the Ukraine fell to her share her army did not suffer from starvation and exposure like the centre and left wing, but she was defeated in every battle with the Russians, who, on the Austrian retreat, proceeded to join their main army before Moscow. It is on record that in both 1806 and 1809 some leading Austrians, including the Emperor's brother's wife, were heard to say, "The sooner we are defeated the better, for then we shall have peace and an alliance with France, and