

(ORIGINAL.)

FRANCIS THE FIRST IN CAPTIVITY.

BY MRS. MOODIE.

AH France! my native—my beloved France!

My heart beats quick as memory turns to thee :
This swordless belt—my gaoler's watchful glance—
Speak all the horrors of captivity :
On thought's free wings, my restless spirit soars
O'er time and space, to view thy fertile shores.

They talk of freedom! who have never known
But half the value of the good they prize ;
Oh! they must feel, like me, their hopes o'erthrown,
Their native land forbid their longing eyes :
All liberty, save that of thought, denied,
To gratify a crafty tyrant's pride.

When pleasure wove around my regal brow,
Her balmy coronal of honied flowers,
Ah, little did I think 'twas mine to know
A captive's fate—to count the lingering hours,
To watch impatiently the sinking sun,
And sighing, wish, like his, my journey done.

In these dull, gloomy walls, condemned to pine,
And feel my mental energies decay,
I think how brightly he was wont to shine
When rung the trumpet on the battle-day,
And spear and helm reflected back the light,
Which saw me still the foremost in the fight.

The chase, the tournament, the tented field,
The midnight revel, and the minstrel's song,
And beauty's glance, in turn, could transport yield,
While the deep adulation of the throng
Veiled the dark crimes and follies of the past,
And bade the present joys for ever last.

How many captives I have doomed to groan,
And see, in life's fair morn, their hopes decay,
On whom yon setting sun has never shone,
Or rising glory of the coming day,
Their lonely dungeon visited, or shed
One ray of comfort round the living dead.

Torn from the wife to whom he fondly clung,
The husband shook in agony the chain ;
While round his neck his weeping children hung,
In speechless woe, yet knew not half the pain
That rent the captive's bosom, when his eyes
Looked their last farewell to the earth and skies.

The lover's sigh, the parent's gushing tear,
The stern reproaches of the injured brave,
Unheeded fell upon the royal ear,
That had the power—but mercy lacked to save :
Their fate is mine!—the voice that will not rest,
Transplants their anguish to this tortured breast.

Ah, glory! where is now the quickening spell,
That erst thou wor'st around thy votary's heart!
Had I in battle nobly, bravely fell,
Like Bayard, acting an heroic part,
Fame o'er my mouldering ashes would have cried,
The royal Francis here, unvanquished, died.

And thou, dark politician, who hast bound
The kingly lion in thine iron thralls ;
For thee a day of vengeance shall be found—
A voice shall echo through these gloomy halls ;
France shall demand her monarch at thy hands,
And beard thee here, amidst thy armed bands.

Ah, no!—on Bragrasse and Pavia sleep,
The chiefs who for their king the strife had dared,
These massy walls their sullen trust will keep :
By no brave friend my prison will be shared ;
And hope grows sick, and withers in the gloom,
That gathers round me in this living tomb.

All, all is lost!—but honour still is mine ;
The conqueror cannot rob me of that gem,—
Her bright undying wreath did never twine
Around the brows of cold unfeeling men ;
Invidious Charles! thy crooked policy
May bind a slave—it cannot chain the free!

SKETCH OF SYRIAN MANNERS.

THE interview we had with the Emir Bsechir, of Prince of Lebanon, and in which, to a certain extent, we may have intruded upon his privacy, could not be regarded as a picture of his ordinary mode of life. I was, therefore, glad when Major Napier proposed to me to accompany him on a visit of ceremony to that chieftain, to whom he had a letter of introduction from the Commodore. We found the Emir at Hammah. We were directed to a large house, something in the Swiss style, and apparently set apart for the transaction of public business. The court-yard, in which we alighted, was crowded with retainers. A buzz of curiosity and surprise soon passed round, occasioned, no doubt, by the Major's appearance in full uniform, and the no less captivating figure of Giorgius, his dragoman. We were conducted up a flight of steps, and along a corridor of some length, still making our way through a crowd of armed men. I was not a little surprised, at this stage of proceedings, to hear my own name frequently called out—"Ah! Houtor! Houtor! keef hahleck?" (*Anglice*, How do you do?) The salutations proceeded from a number of mountaineers, who were present in the late reconnaissance, though I am not aware of any particular circumstance which may account for their remembrance of me. After a short time we were ushered into the presence of the Emir. He arose to receive the Major, expressing the most flowery Eastern