

## BREAD IN THE WILDERNESS.

BY MRS. LYDIA H. SIGOURNEY.

A voice amid the desert !

Not of him,  
Who in rough garments clad, and locust-fed,  
Cried to the sinful multitude, and claim'd  
Fruits of repentance, with the lifted scourge  
Of terror and reproof. A milder guide,  
With gentler tones, doth teach the listening throng.  
Benignant pity mov'd him, as he saw  
The shepherdless and poor. He knew to touch  
The springs of every nature. The high love  
Of Heaven, he humbled to the simplest child,  
And in the guise of parable, allur'd  
The sluggish mind, to follow truth and live.  
They whom the thunders of the Law had stunn'd,  
Woke to the Gospel's melody, with tears,  
And the glad Jewish mother held her babe  
High in her arms, that its young eye might greet  
Jesus of Nazareth.

It was so still,  
Tho' thousands cluster'd there, that not a sound  
Broke the strong spell of eloquence, which held  
The wilderness in chains : save, now and then,  
As the gale freshen'd, came the murmur'd speech  
Of distant billows, chafing with the shores  
Of the Tiberian sea.

Day wore apace,  
Noon hasted, and the lengthening shadows brought  
The unexpected eve. They linger'd still,  
Eyes fix'd, and lips apart :—the very breath  
Constrain'd lest some escaping sigh might break  
The tide of knowledge sweeping o'er their souls,  
Like a strange raptur'd dream. They heeded not  
The spent sun, closing at the curtain'd west  
His burning journey. What was time to them,  
Who heard entranced the Eternal Word of Life ?  
But the weak flesh grew weary. Hunger came  
Sharpening each feature, and to faintness drain'd  
Life's vigorous fount. The holy Saviour felt  
Compassion for them. His disciples press  
Care-stricken to his side. "Where shall we find  
Bread, in this desert ?"

Then, with lifted eyes  
He bless'd, and brake, the slender store of food,  
And fed the famish'd thousands. Wondering awe,  
With renovated strength inspired their souls,  
As gazing on the miracle, they mark'd  
The gather'd fragments of their feast, and heard  
Such heavenly words, as lip of mortal man  
Had never utter'd.

Thou, whose pitying heart  
Yearn'd o'er the countless miseries of those  
Whom thou didst die to save, touch thou our souls  
With the same spirit of unflinching love :  
Divine Redeemer ! may our fellow man,  
Howe'er by rank or circumstance disjoint'd,  
Be as a brother, in his hour of need.

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## KOCK'S REVOLUTIONS OF EUROPE.

This standard work forms the first number of another enterprising speculation to supply the classes below the wealthy, and indeed the mass of the people, with solid literature at a low price and in a compact form. The distinguishing feature of the "Popular Library of Modern Authors" is, however, to publish *copyright editions*, at a price but little if at all exceeding the more elegant reprints of older writers, so as to furnish the people with works before the gloss of novelty is worn off, or any of their matter is superseded or become obsolete. An excellent plan, if it be carried out with spirit and discrimination; the first regard being had to the nature of the book and its probable demand, instead of the copyrights the publisher may have in his possession.

This proper judgment has been exercised in the choice of the first number; for Kock's *Revolutions of Europe* is not only a valuable work in itself, but one whose absence cannot readily be supplied: presenting, in a brief space, a compendious narrative of the events of European history from the fifth century, as well as an investigation of the causes which produced them and of the results to which they gave rise.

The period treated of by Kock extends from the downfall of the Western Empire at the beginning of the fifth century, till the time immediately preceding the French Revolution. This time is divided into eight epochs, each of which the author conceives to mark some change in the state of Europe. Prefixed to his work is a brief introduction, containing a precis of ancient history; and Kock's editor, M. Schœll, has affixed a ninth period, containing European events of the French Revolution and the Empire, till the expulsion of Napoleon in 1815.

The mode of execution varies, of course, with the nature of the materials and the taste of the author; but the general character of the work is rather to point out the effects of events than to narrate particular actions. A battle, a siege, and similar deeds, are often compressed in a sentence, with the brevity of a chronological table; but the rise of municipalities, for example, the liberation of the serfs, the great inventions of linen paper, printing, gunpowder, &c., are narrated at comparative length. Again, the origin and especially the results of the Crusades are dwelt upon; but the exploits of the Crusaders are dismissed briefly. Although neither the merit of Kock nor the value of his work is to be judged of piecemeal—for which exhibition the *Revolutions of Europe* is not at all adapted—we will take an extract as a specimen of his exhaustive manner, and the information he crowds into a small space. And we select the invention of gunpowder and the mariner's compass, because they are important discoveries, whose origin is very much misapprehended in common compilations.

"Next to the invention of printing, there is no other that so much arrests our attention as that of gunpowder; which, by introducing artillery, and a new method of fortifying, attacking, and defending cities, wrought a complete change in the whole art and tactics of war. This invention comprises several discoveries which it is necessary to distinguish from each other. 1. The discovery of nitre, the principal ingredient in gunpowder, and the cause of its detonation. 2. The mixture of nitre with sulphur and charcoal, which, properly speaking, forms the invention of gunpowder. 3. The application of powder to fire-works. 4. Its employment as an agent or propelling power for throwing stones, bullets, or other heavy and combustible bodies. 5. Its employment in springing mines and destroying fortifications.

"All these discoveries belong to different epochs. The knowledge of saltpetre or nitre, and its explosive properties, called detonation, is very ancient. Most probably it was brought to us from the East (India or China), where saltpetre is found in a natural state of preparation. It is not less probable that the nations of the East were acquainted with the composition of gunpowder before the Europeans, and that it was the Arabs who first introduced the use of it into Europe. The celebrated Roger Bacon, an English monk or friar of the thirteenth century, was acquainted with the composition of gunpowder, and its employment in fire-works and public festivities; and according to all appearances, he obtained this information from the Arabic authors, who excelled in their skill of the chemical sciences. The employment of gunpowder in Europe as an agent for throwing balls and stones, is ascertained to have been about the commencement of the fourteenth century; and it was the Arabs who first availed themselves of its advantages in their wars against the Spaniards. From Spain, the use of gunpowder and artillery passed to France, and thence it gradually extended over the other states of Europe. As to the application of gunpowder to mines and the destruction of fortified works, it does not appear to have been in practice before the end of the fifteenth century. The introduction of bombs and mortars seems to have been of an earlier date (1467). The invention of these in Europe is attributed to Sigismund Pandolph Malatesta, Prince of Rimini; but in France they were not in use till about the reign of Louis the Thirteenth. Muskets and matchlocks began to be introduced early in the fifteenth century. They were without spring-locks till 1517, when for the first time muskets and pistols with spring-locks were manufactured at Nuremberg.

"Several circumstances tended to check the progress of fire-arms and the improvement of artillery. Custom made most people prefer the ancient engines of war; the construction of cannon was but imperfect; the manufacture of gunpowder bad; and there was a very general aversion to the newly-invented arms, as contrary to humanity, and calculated to extinguish military bravery. Above all, the knights, whose science was rendered completely useless by the introduction of fire-arms, set themselves with all their might to oppose this invention.

"From what we have just said, it is obvious that the common tradition which ascribes the invention of gunpowder to a certain monk named Berthold Schwartz, merits no credit whatever. This tradition is founded on mere hearsay; and no writers agree as to the name, the country, or the circumstances of this pretended inventor; nor as to the time and place when he made this extraordinary discovery.

"Lastly, the mariner's compass, so essential to the art of navigation, was likewise the production of the barbarous ages to which we now refer. The ancients were aware of the property of the magnet to attract iron; but its direction towards the pole, and the manner of communicating its magnetic virtues to iron and steel, were unknown even to all those nations of antiquity who were renowned for their navigation and commerce. This discovery is usually attributed to a citizen of Amalfi, named Flavio Gioia, who is said to have lived about the beginning of the fourteenth century. This tradition, ancient though it be, cannot be admitted; because we have incontestible evidence that, before this period, the polarity of the loadstone and the magnetic needle were known in Europe; and that, from the commencement of the thirteenth century, the Provençal mariners made use of the compass in navigation.

"It must be confessed, however, that we can neither point out the original author of this valuable discovery, nor the true time

when it was made. All that can be well ascertained is, that the mariner's compass was rectified by degrees; and that the English had no small share in these corrections."

The history of the ninth period, written by M. Schœll, is probably more readable, and certainly more rhetorical, than the work of Kock, but wants his matter and his solidity.

## WOMAN'S WIT.

The following dramatic passage is concerning Gustavus Vasa, when that distinguished monarch took refuge from the Danish usurper in Dalecarlia, to mature his plan for the deliverance of his country:

On the little hill just mentioned, stood a very ancient habitation of so simple an architecture, that you would have taken it for a hind's cottage, instead of a place that, in times of old, had been the abode of nobility. It consisted of a long farm like structure, formed of fir, covered in a strange fashion with scales, and odd ornamental twistings in the carved wood. But the spot was hallowed by the virtue of its heroic mistress, who saved by her presence of mind, the life of the future deliverer of her country. Gustavus, having, by an evil accident, been discovered in the mines, bent his way towards this house, then inhabited by a gentleman by the name of Pearson, whom he had known in the armies of the late administrator. Here, he hoped, from the obligation he had formerly laid on the officer, that he should at least find a safe retreat. Pearson received him with every mark of friendship; nay, treated him with that respect and submission which noble minds are proud to pay to the truly great, when robbed of their external honors. He exclaimed with such vehemence against the Danes, that instead of awaiting a proposal to take up arms, offered unasked, to try the spirit of the mountaineers, and declared that himself and his vassals would be the first to set an example, and turn out under the command of his beloved General. Gustavus relied on his word, and promising not to name himself to any, while he was absent, some days afterwards saw Pearson leave the house to put his design into execution. It was indeed a design, and a black one. Under the specious cloak of zealous affection for Gustavus, the traitor was contriving his ruin. The hope of making his court to the Danish tyrant, and the expectation of a large reward, induced him to sacrifice his honor to his ambition, and for the sake of a few ducats, violate the most sacred laws of hospitality, by betraying his guest. In pursuance of that base resolution, he proceeded to one of Christiern's officers commanding in the province, and informed him that Gustavus was his prisoner. Having committed this treachery, he had not the courage to face his victim, but telling the Dane how to surprise the Prince, who, he said, believed himself under the protection of a friend, he proposed taking a wider circuit home, while they, apparently unknown to him, rifled it of its contents. "It will be an easy matter," says he, "for not even my wife knows that it is Gustavus." The officer, at the head of the party of well armed soldiers, marched directly to the lake. The men invested the house, while the leader, abruptly entering, found Pearson's wife, according to the fashion of those days, employed in culinary preparations.

At some distance from her, sat a young man in a rustic garb, chopping off the knots from the broken branch of a tree. The officer told her he came, in King Christiern's name, to demand the rebel Gustavus, who he knew was concealed under her roof. The dauntless woman never changed color; she immediately guessed the man whom her husband had introduced as a miner's son, to be the Swedish hero. The door was blocked up by soldiers. In an instant she replied, without once glancing at Gustavus, who sat motionless with surprise, "if you mean the melancholy gentleman my husband has had here these two days, he has just walked out into the wood, on the other side of the hill. Some of these soldiers may readily seize him, as he has no arms with him." The officer, not suspecting the easy simplicity of her manner, ordered part of his men to go in quest of him. At that moment, suddenly turning her eyes on Gustavus, she flew up to him, and catching the stick out of his hand, exclaimed, in an angry voice, "unmannerly wretch! What—sit before your betters? Don't you see the King's officers in the room? Get out of my sight, or some of them shall give you a drubbing!" As she spoke, she struck him a blow on the back with all her strength, and, opening a side door, "there get into the scully," cried she, "it is the fittest place for such company!" and giving him another knock, she flung the stick after him and shut the door. "Sure," added she in a great heat, "never woman was plagued with such a lot of a slave!" The officer begged she would not disturb herself on his account, but she, affecting great reverence for the King, and respect for his representative, prayed him to enter her parlor while she brought some refreshments. The Dane civilly complied; perhaps, glad enough to get from the side of a shrew; and she immediately flew to Gustavus whom she had bolted in, and by means of a back passage, conducted him in a moment to the bank of the lake, where the fisher's boats lay, and giving him a direction to an honest curate across the lake, committed him to Providence.