

particulars of his early life, and of that youthful passion which, formed in boyhood for one little more than a child, gave a colouring to his whole after-life; and, we think it probable, had also some effect on the imagination of other poets, and aided to create that fantastic exhibition of love which we find in many of the Italian poets and romancers. The "Laura" of Petrarcha and the "Fiammetta" of Boccaccio, with the perpetual quibbling about the Nurel and the flame (which would be trifling, if in love anything can be trifling,) are, in truth, but repetitions of Beatrice, whose name runs, in Dante's verse, into the thought of blessing, bliss, heaven, and all such thoughts as can be associated with the word Beatrice. Even in what would appear to be direct narrative, there seems to be mingled something of imitative fiction, as, while we cannot admit Biscioni's and Rossetti's inferences, that the ladies are, in all cases, mere allegories, it certainly seems impossible, except something in the Italian manners and habits of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries may explain it, that in so many cases these platonic lovers should have actually met all in the holy week, at church, at the first hour of the day, ladies, each of whom marries another, and each of whom dies before her adorer; each of whom, too, is transferred to the same third heaven. Rossetti regards the mysterious female, the lady of the mind, as the type of a perfect monarchy; as a something, the thought of which exists to animate and inspire, but which, if it is to be supposed as ever having had existence on earth, is now passed away, and has no other reality than its ardent worshippers themselves can give it, by fixing their imagination on a phantom. That the shifting cloud of allegory may now be like a whale, now very like an elephant; that the same outward reality, more especially if it be a young lady, may, just as her lover fancies, symbolise poetry, or philosophy, or theology; be the Old Babylon or New Jerusalem of the religious or political enthusiast; is, we think, not only very conceivable, but is in the drama of life acted every day by everybody, a character perpetually reappearing. All that we love, and feel, and wish, we associate in thought with the one being, for whom alone—such is evermore the dream of youthful passion—we live. To infer, as these commentators do, that these men did not love—that there were no Lauras, no Beatrices, nothing in actual outward life to which their thoughts referred—is, we think, not alone inconsistent with all the evidence which we have, or can have, on the subject, but with the nature of man. That in these loves there was much that was fantastic, much, as there is in the whole relation of the sexes to each other in every country, dependent on arbitrary and conventional manners, we can entertain no doubt. The old devotional attentions of the young knight to his mistress; the solemn courtesies and strange formalities of the courts of love; the peculiar relation in which it would seem that at all times in Italy married ladies receive attentions from admirers, which in our country, would imply more than it would be just to infer from them in Italy, remote in some degree the kind of surprise which we cannot but at first feel when reading the love verses of the great Italian poets. Yet how much must be allowed for the habits of the time, will perhaps be more felt when it is remembered what indulgent interpretation is required from the reader of such poems in our own literature; as, for instance, Sir Philip Sydney's sonnets, most or all of which were addressed to a married woman. We are too apt to think of poetry as if it were the direct language of present passion. If a great poet be right, it never is. It is not the language of assumed passion, but the language of a passion which has passed away; the language of a state of feeling which, having been experienced in all its turbid strength, is recalled in a state of calm. If this be so, there is no insincerity

in these poems, even though there may be much that can be shown to be inconsistent. We should anticipate much of romance to mingle with every statement, nay, we should not feel surprised, in any of these cases, to find the poet, for the purpose of showing that all sensual thoughts had passed away, describing the lady as married, as passed into religion, as dead. In fact, we should as soon ask Donne, or Cowley, or any of our own "metaphysical" poets to swear to the truth of their songs, as except entire truth from the Indian poets in revelations of the kind. That the maiden whom the poet calls his first love, should, as he passes through the successive stages of life, be still a part of his dream, is what every one will recognise as in the ordinary experience of mankind. This is beautifully illustrated in Coleridge's "Garden of Boccaccio." The image of the lover's earliest dream is with him in every stage of life, re-appearing ever in some new aspect:—

And last, a matter now, of sober men,
Yet radiant still, and with a child's sheen,
Whom as a fairy child in childhood wooed.
Even in my dawn of thought—*Philosophy*;
Though then unconscious of himself parable,
She bore no other name than *Poetry*.

Article: Dante and his Translators.

FREDERICK WILLIAM I. OF PRUSSIA.—Frederick William was most outrageously rude and insulting in speaking and writing. The epithets of "villain, rascal, scoundrel," were constantly on the royal lips. If he was displeased with a report or a petition, he used to draw on the margin asses' heads and ears. The noble ministers, who used to consider idleness as an aristocratical privilege, he ordered about like a parcel of non-commissioned officers. Any minister who, without leave of the king or the excuse of illness, was one hour too late for the sitting, had to pay a fine of one hundred ducats; if he was absent from the whole sitting, forfeited, in the first instance, the salary of one half year; if the same thing happened a second time, dismissal from office was the unalterable consequence. In his autograph instructions for the General Directorate, he said, "The gentlemen are to do the work which we pay them for." One of his valets, one evening, had to read prayers to him. Arriving at the words, "The Lord bless thee," the silly man, in his habitual subservience, thought he must read, "The Lord bless your majesty," on which the king at once cut him short, "You rascal, read as it is in the book: before God Almighty I am a rascal like yourself." The servants were never safe to his presence. He had always two pistols, loaded with salt, lying by his side, which, if they blundered, he would fire at them. In this manner one man had his feet dreadfully injured, and another lost an eye; notwithstanding all which, he was quite offended that he should be generally considered a tyrant. Terror might be said to go before him. A functionary who was once unexpectedly summoned to his presence, fell down dead from fright. His cane he applied so unreservedly to everybody, that one day he maltreated with it a major in front of his regiment; on which the officer at once drew his pistols, fired one before the feet of the king's horse, and with the other shot himself through the head.—*Dr. Fichte's Memoirs of the Court of Prussia.*

VALTARA HINTS TO TEACHERS OF CHILDREN.—"Ruth says they are not so very amiable, or things; children will be children, as a rule," said Matty. "To be sure, she makes a lot of everything, even noisy little terrors she makes out to be not so bad, if they're teased well, and talked to." "The most troublesome child may be made more docile by patience," said Ruth; "the most giddy, the most mischievous, the most silly, the most obstinate may be taught better, if you have but sufficient patience. The only thing with children, is

never to lose your patience or your temper." "Very difficult to preserve either, in dealing with them, when they are really troublesome," said Kate. "Not so much so as you might imagine, perhaps," said Ruth. "The thought that they are ignorant, that they err more from this than from wilful misbehaviour, that you have to forgive them seven times in a day, if seven times in a day they repeat, and to forgive them, chiefly, for that they know not what they do, will be a sufficient guard upon yourself, and once children find you capable of self-control, they insensibly learn to curb themselves." "The most formidable thing you must have to contend with, Ruth, are the perpetual din and clamour of tongues, the close confinement, and the want of fresh air," said Kate. "It is curious how you may become accustomed to the most unpleasant things by patience, by habit, and by comparing them with still worse," answered Ruth. "The recollection that the noise of a factory—the buzz of wheels and machinery—is worse than the hum of young voices, the thought that many innocent persons have been pent in narrow dungeons for years, the remembrance that hundreds of people, of their own will, undergo a nightly stifling in the foul, noisome air of a gas-lighted theatre, or crowded assembly, render tolerable these few hours a day, shut up in a schoolroom. Besides, I'm only too glad to have them. I wished for the situation particularly, as one I could fill, and one which would give me the means of earning an honest livelihood."—*From Mrs. Cordell Clarke's Novel, "The Iron Cousin."*

THE RUSSIAN POLICE.—During my stay at Odessa, two French booksellers, the only good ones in the place, were visited one evening by the officials of this department, and, in a winter's night, with the thermometer at sixteen degrees below zero of Reaumur, were ordered into a sledge which was ready for them at their own door, and, in perfect ignorance of their crime, were posted off, night and day, to Kief—a distance of 600 versts, about 400 miles. On reaching their destination, the governor ordered them into the fortress, where they were confined in a damp casement near the ditch; there they were kept in a wretched state of filth with nothing but straw to lie upon, and their money having been taken away on their arrival, they had to put up with the prison fare, black bread and water. All communication was cut off, even from their families. Having been in the habit of dealing with one of them, a quiet, inoffensive man, I went several times to his nephew, who carried on the business, to inquire after his uncle, but no tidings did he receive for the space of five months. The prisoners were then released from their dungeon, and the affair ended by their being conveyed at a gallop over the Austrian frontier by some Cossacks, and turned loose like wild beasts, with rather an unnecessary recommendation never to recross it.—*Captain Jesse's Russia and the War.*

LUXURIES OF THE EAST.—A few frogs, of various sizes, hopped about a damp corner of my room, near one of the windows that was marked off by a brickwork ledge, three inches high, to do duty as a bath-room. The frogs were by no means alarmed at my presence; they were quite at home, although the apartment was on the second story. A lot of larger breed than I had been hitherto accustomed to, gyrated about the room noiselessly, somewhat confused by the light upon the table. There was too much light for him, and too little light for me. We were both puzzled in consequence, but he now and then tipped with his silent wing the glass shade upon the oil-burner, making the tiny bell sound singularly clear, which sent miniature echoes towards the rafters, among which they seemed to struggle and become confused. I noted these tricks more strictly than another might have done. They did not appear to be such trifles, and, if they were, they for the time, put