

THE SON OF AN EMPEROR AND A NAVY



Canadian Literary Gem.

HUMANITY, TEMPERANCE, PROGRESS.

VOL. IV.

TORONTO, C.W. FEBRUARY 19, 1854.

NO. 7.

SONG OF THE WINTER CAPTIVE.

BY JOHN WESLEY WHITFIELD.

Oh I sigh for the bright days of summer,
For the sweet balmy mornings of June,
When all nature is smiling in beauty,
And the birds in the groves are in tune.

Oh I sigh to go up on the mountain,
Look down on the wide-spreading plain,
And be kissed by the pure air of heaven,
And forget all my sorrows and pain.

Oh I sigh for the walk by the river—
For the music that murmureth there,
Coming up from the lips of the waters,
Speaking peace to the bosom of care.

But the wild, howling winds of the winter
Sing a song of sad bondage to me,
And I sigh for the warm breath of summer,
As a captive that longs to be free.

There are fetters of frost on the river,
And the blossoms have fled with affright,
And the tall trees are naked and lonely,
And the cold-frightened cloud-tears are white,

And the ice-chains have fetter'd my feelings,
And my low fretting pulse beateth sad,
And I sigh for the bright days of summer,
When 'tis rampant, and joyous and glad.

Oh the winter's a tyrant with fetters,
And he throws round the feeble his chain;
And he robs them of all the sweet odors
That the Spring scatters free o'er the plain.

Come again, come again, gentle summer,
Come again balmy mornings of June;
With your sunshine and blossoms and beauty,
And your breezes wealth-laden with tune!

Bridge-water, N. Y., Jan. 1854.

—Tactotaller.

BAYARD TAYLOR ON THE ARABS.

Bayard Taylor, Esq., the celebrated traveller recently delivered a lecture upon the "Arabs," before the members of the Mechanics' Society and a large audience at New York. He spoke in substance as follows:—Those who have only associated with their own race have but a little knowledge of human character. The human race is capable of great varieties. The man who lives among mountains has native freedom in his air. The brine of ocean sticks to the mariner. So inevitably does man partake of his native climate, that we ask whether it is possible to judge all men by the moral standard. This should teach us charity to all. No people have suffered more than the Arabs from one-side judgment. We have been taught to consider them as an outcast race, whose hands are against every man and every man's hands against them. The Arab of our schoolboy days is a fierce being, with a scimitar in his hand, ever ready to do the work of death. Burchard and Layard claim for respect, as the only travellers who associated and fraternized with this people. In their steps I followed and never treated them as enemies. I learned to love them, and desired to be their advocate. To know the Arabs one must know the East. The intensity of the sunshine is reproduced

the East. After fifty days of desert travel I left it fascinated by the variety of its scenes. In its solitude it resembles the ocean; but it is sweet and refreshing. Providence leaves none of the desert places of the earth without some atoning quality. God hath breathed upon the desert his sweet and cleansing breath. I could point out many traits of resemblance between the sailor and the Bedouin. Each is free and roving in his tastes. Among either you will hardly find a coward. I prefer here speaking of the wandering Arab as the type of the race. The Arab dialect, in which the Koran is written, is still spoken in its pristine purity in the oases around Mecca. The Arab is brave, and his sense of honour is irreproachable. He is devoted to the muses. I have no doubt that Christian knights first learned their sense of honour and chivalry among the Saracens at the time of the crusades. The law of protection is held in as much respect among the Arabs as the Koran. The pride of the Arab is his birthright, and dignity is his natural manner. The Arab is generous, and his hospitality is universal—the guest confers an honour upon his host, and the name of stranger is sacred. The records of generosity among the earlier Arabs seem almost fabulous to those who are unacquainted with the race. Mahomet is a fair example. Mr. Taylor related here several anecdotes of the generosity of the Arabs. He proceeded to say that the decline of Eastern commerce has taken from the race the wealth it once possessed, and though instances of magnanimous generosity were difficult to find now, yet the spirit still remained. Though fierce by nature and revengeful, the Arab is not cruel nor blood-thirsty. As a simple enemy he is chivalrous and humane, but as an avenger he is terrible in the last degree.

The meaner crime of stealing is rare among the Arabs, and though it is allowed among some tribes yet detection is always followed by punishment. Their greatest frailties are cheating and lying; but they seem to look upon these as amusement. As this propensity is one of the first to strike a stranger, many travellers go home under very erroneous impressions of the people. They lie generally through malice, carelessness, and the natural tendency to exaggeration which is characteristic of the Arab tongue—and this latter is almost universal. It is a language of roots, and abounds in bold and brilliant images. The Arab tongue belongs to the childhood of the world. When I commenced to converse in Arabic I found the habit of exaggeration growing fast upon me; but I am happy to say that with the loss of the language, the power of veracity has returned, and I am now strictly speaking the truth. It would require a separate lecture to treat upon the literature of the Arabs. I would only say a few words on this branch of my subject. The ear of the Arab is delicately sensitive to the rhyme and melody of poetry, which with us is only appreciated by highly cultivated minds. The works of Arab poets display daring flights of imagination. The songs of the Arabs are wild and full of monotonous cadences. The boatmen of the Nile even laugh in unison—their songs are like the notes of the nightingale. Painting and sculpture are unknown; but the Arab

They believe that the spirits of murdered people haunt the places where they lived. Finally, I must allude to the prominent trait in the Arab character—his devotion to God, and his unbounded faith in Providence. Religion is a vital power with him, which leaves its impress of its whole spiritual being. There is as much sincere religious feeling among this people, as a race, as among Christians. The Arabs are not intolerant. Among the Turks there is much less tolerance. The latter are far below the former in morality and hospitality. The subjection of the Arabs to the Divine will is not fatalism: it is the resignation which controls after the blow is struck. Patience and resignation are the great lessons of the East; and we might study and benefit by it.

THE CZAR OF RUSSIA.

The Czar has lived 57 years—reigned 28. His name is Nicholas Paulovitch; he is the 14th sovereign of his dynasty, and the eighth of his family. He is more a German than a Russian, but as the Germans are to the Russians an odious race, he ignores his German blood and so do the Court historians. Nicholas was not the heir to the throne, but his brother Constantine refused to reign, and after an interregnum of three weeks, Nicholas was proclaimed Emperor. Nicholas, previous to his accession to the throne, had displayed the talents of a drill sergeant. He was an inflexible and punctilious disciplinarian, and an unpopular man, with the army and people. But an insurrection bravely suppressed and the insurgents clemently treated, his authority was established.

The Czar comes within an inch or two of equaling in stature his royal brother, the King of the Cannibal Islands, who stood six feet six inches in his moccasins. His figure is of herculean dimensions and symmetry. "The expression of his countenance," says one of his admiring subjects, the Prince Kolofaski, "has a certain severity which is far from putting the beholder at his ease. His smile is a smile of complaisance, and not the result of gaiety or abandon. There is something approaching the prodigious in this Prince's manner of existence. He speaks with vivacity, with simplicity, and the most perfect propriety; all he says is full of point and meaning—no idle pleasantries—not a word out of its place. There is nothing in the tone of his voice, or the arrangement of his phrases, that indicates haughtiness or dissimulation; and yet you feel that his heart is closed." "The Emperor," says another writer, not his subject, and not his admirer, "is of a great height, and is very proud of it, too proud perhaps, as he has acquired the habit of certain airs, which often gives him a strong resemblance to a peacock when about to spread his tail. It is a fact well known in St. Petersburg, that every well grown man newly recruited for the guard, is called into the Emperor's presence, who measures heights with him. His air is serious, his glance wild—even a little savage; his entire physiognomy has something harsh and stern in it; his gestures are abrupt; and he cuts his words in pronouncing them. The Emperor never shows himself but in military

Hardly, laborious, indefatigable, simple in his tastes, the faithful "husband of one wife," he has striven to introduce order and honesty into all branches of the public service. Arrogant he may be, conceited, tyrannical, but not effeminate, not weak. We quote a few sentences from M. Bouvet, who seems to write from a personal knowledge:—

"Already 45 quarto volumes of the *Scod*, or Russian Digest, have been published, and regulate the decisions of the Russian tribunals.

"During a long period, Nicholas passed all his nights and days in superintending these arduous labours, and in bringing them to a satisfactory result, in spite of the dumb resistance of the bureaucrats. It often happened that the gentle Empress, seeing her husband with red and sunken eyes, went to him in the midst of his *collaborateurs*, and said to them: "Now, gentlemen, let my husband enjoy a little repose,—come and take a cup of tea with us."

The Emperor has directed his legislation to the question of serfdom: he has not dared to deal with the great problem of general emancipation, which has now more than ever become a necessity, but he has prepared the way for it. He has endeavoured, by degrees, to make the peasants conceive the hope of becoming free.

"The Emperor Nicholas leads a life of the most feverish activity. He rides, walks, holds a review, superintends a sham-fight, goes on the water gives a *file*, exercises the navy, and all in the same day. He travels incessantly; passes over at least fifteen hundred leagues every season; and all those who are attached to his person have to share his fatigue.

"The Empress, who will follow him everywhere, loses her health by doing so; and it is said that the young Grand Duke Constantine will fall a victim to the mode of travelling adopted by his father. Nicholas is in the habit of travelling not less than seven leagues an hour, in an open *alack*."—*State of Maine* (paper).

HUMBOLDT, THE AGED PHILOSOPHER.

Humboldt is unquestionably the most conspicuous man of these times, if not the most learned and the most honored among his fellow men.

Professor Silliman saw him last year. This is a sketch of Humboldt:

"His mansion is a plain edifice, situated in a retired part of the city; and he would not have been now at home had not the King gone to Königsberg, for his residence is generally with the King at Potsdam, who keeps him near his person as his father did before him, not only for his society and conversation, but, no doubt, also as a councillor, wise so; his many years and his large experience in the world. We passed through his library, which fills, on all sides, a room of considerable size; and he issued from a door on a remote side of the apartment, opening, apparently, from his private room. He met us with great kindness and perfect frankness, and with a pleasant and