

MR. VATTEMARE.

*"Aut agitur in scænis, aut acia refertur.—Non
tamen intus
Digna geri promes in scænis; multaue tolles
Ex oculis; quæ mox narret faciundia præsens."*
Hor. Ar. Poet.

THE numerous testimonials which Mr. Vattemare has received from the most eminent personages of the age, must have struck those who have had the good fortune to see even a title of them with surprise, no less by their value and variety, than as proofs of the talent and good conduct which alone could have elicited them. Indeed, the utmost ingenuity seems to have been displayed in discovering how to bear testimony to the grandeur and magnificence of the plan, and the disinterested labours of its inventor. Nor have these testimonials been bestowed alone by the great and noble of the earth—they, indeed, have offered of their abundance—but the poor, also, of their penury.

*"Te pauper ambit sollicitâ prece,
Ruris colonus, te domina æquoris."*

The emperor of half the world sends his jewelled and costly offering; the working man, the fruit of his self-denial and toil. The mitred Roman or Episcopal bishop unites with the rigid Calvinist, and the simple-minded Quaker in a common eulogy. The legislator lifts up his voice in the council chamber, and then, with the eloquent fervour of a disciplined and experienced mind, commits his thoughts to a more durable record, and there his offering lies, and by its side the more touching tribute of woman's admiration for disinterested and laborious effort. Here is the direct business-like letter of the merchant, and the more aspiring brief-like testimonial of the lawyer. Youth writes with a heart overflowing with enthusiasm at a scheme which realizes more than his excited imagination had ever conceived; the ordinary expressions of congratulation and panegyric are all too formal and cold for his burning zeal; in his eyes, instead of the laborious pioneer in a new, but rich and promising department of philanthropic enterprise, Mr. Vattemare appears exalted above the failings of humanity, a beneficent visitor from a purer region, a star like that which shone upon the shepherds of old, when the voices of innumerable angels chanted in the mid-heaven: "Peace on earth, good will to men." With such feelings, is it wonderful that difficulties vanish, and melt away like the dew? He considers the prize of victory as already won—he sees the productions of science and art already scattered over all lands, and man united into one great brotherhood—and his heart glows with gratitude and admiration, as he pours forth his feelings in a eulogy which shrinks from the cool criticism of experience and reality.

Books have been presented by hundreds, and rings, medals, crosses, portraits. Tributes there are, voluntary and well earned tributes of admiration and sympathy, which Mr. Vattemare has received from the first poets of the day, as well as from many an unknown, though not uninspired follower of the Muse. Artists of all nations have employed their best powers in the cause, happy in being allowed to contribute to the World's Album, and of extending their own renown, or at least their name, to the end of the earth. A thousand productions from a thousand different pencils, have already been pressed into the service, as the first fruits of the glorious harvest which art, united and purified by the communication and free intercourse of her followers throughout the world, will, one day or other, pour into the common treasury, for the common benefit of the race.

From the mass of testimonials thus various and valuable, there is one which is worthy of particular notice, as the most singular contribution ever made to a private individual, or to the cause of science. It consists of a collection of autographs, nineteen in number, and written in nineteen different languages, by as many persons, natives of the different portions of the Russian dominions, where these languages are in use. This unique collection was presented to Mr. Vattemare, at St. Petersburg, in 1834, by Count Nesselrode, then Chancellor of the Russian empire, and Prime Minister of Foreign Affairs. By the aid of a French translation, we propose to give a slight sketch of these various specimens; to the readers of the *Garland*, who may not have had an opportunity of seeing the originals, although all the interest arising from the beautiful execution, the singularity and variety of the different and uncouth characters of the languages must necessarily be lost by a mere description.

*"Segnius irritant animos demissa per aurem,
Quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus."*

The collection begins with the nineteenth Psalm, in the Slavenski language, said by the learned, to have been the literary language of Russia, until the beginning of the last century. The manuscript is in imitation of print, and the initial letter of each verse is red. The characters are many of them like those of the Greek, and not a few like those of the English alphabet, some of them in appearance identical. The whole is surrounded by a bordering of paint like gold-leaf.

The second is a specimen of that wonderful language which has attracted the reverence and admiration of all ages, ancient and modern, for its plastic power, and fitness to express, with ease and fidelity, alike the most delicate and almost unappreciable shades and distinctions of philosophic thought