

John Mass

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SPECIMENS OF ENGLISH POETS.

MARVELL

[This writer was a cotemporary of Cromwell. We subjoin two extracts, the first of which depicts the Summer Isles in the glowing language of praise which was common among the old voyagers.]

BERMUDAS.

Where the remote Bermudas ride,
In the ocean's bosom unespied;
From a small boat, that row'd along,
The list'ning winds receiv'd this song.
What should we do but sing his praise.
That led us thro' the wat'ry maze,
Unto an isle so long unknown,
And yet far kinder than our own?
Where he the huge sea-monsters wracks,
That lift the deep upon their backs.

He lands us on a grassy stage,
Safe from the storms, and prelates' rage.

He gave us this eternal spring,
Which here enamels every thing;
And sends the fowls to us in care,
On daily visits thro' the air.

He hangs in shades the orange bright,
Like golden lamps in a green light.
And does in the pomegranates close
Jewels more rich than Ormus show.

He makes the figs our mouths to meet;
And throws the melons at our feet.

But apples, plants of such a price,
No tree could ever bear them twice.

With cedars, chosen by his hand,
From Lebanon, he stores the land.

And makes the hollow seas, that roar,
Proclaim the ambergrease on shore.

He cast (of which we rather boast)
The gospel's pearl upon our coast.

And in these rocks for us did frame
A temple, where to sound his name.

Oh! let our voice his praise exalt,
Till it arrive at Heaven's vault:

Which, thence (perhaps) rebounding, may,
Echo beyond the Mexique Bay.

Thus sung they, in the English boat,
An holy and a cheerful note;

And all the way, to guide their chime,
With falling oars they kept the time.

THE GARDEN.

How vainly men themselves amaze,
To win the palm, the oak, or bays;
And their incessant labours see
Crown'd from some single herb, or tree,
Whose short and narrow verged shade
Does prudently their toils upbraid;
While all the flow'rs, and trees do close,
To weave the garlands of Repose.

Fair Quiet, have I found thee here,
And Innocence, thy sister dear!
Mistaken long, I sought you then
In busy companys of men.
Your sacred plants, if here below,
Only among the plants will grow.
Society is all but rude
To this delicious solitude.

Here at the fountain's sliding foot,
Or at some fruit-tree's mossy root,

Casting the body's vest aside,
My soul into the boughs does glide:
There, like a bird, it sits and sings,
Then whets, and claps its silver wings;
And, till prepar'd for longer flight,
Waves in its plumes the various light.

How well the skilful gard'ner drew
Of flow'rs, and herbs, this dial new:
Where, from above, the milder sun
Does through a fragrant zodiac run:
And, as it works, th' industrious bee
Computes his time as well as we,
How could such sweet and wholesome hours
Be reckon'd but with herbs and flow'rs.

THE LAST RECOLLECTIONS OF NAPOLEON.

(Abridged from Blackwood's Magazine.)

There are few things more striking than the analogy in civil and physical changes of the world. There have been in the history of man periods as distinctive as in the history of nations. From these periods society and nations have alike assumed new aspects, and the world has commenced a new career. The fall of the Roman Empire was the demarcation between the old world and the new. It was the moral deluge, out of which a new condition of man, new laws, new forms of Religion, new styles of thought, almost a totally new configuration of human society, were to arise. A new settlement of the civil world took place: power absorbed by one race of mankind was to be divided among various races; and the development of principles of government and society, hitherto unknown, was to be scarcely less memorable, less unexpected, or less productive, than that voyage by which Columbus doubled the space of the habitable globe.

It is evidently a law of Providence, that all the great changes of society shall be the work of individual minds. Yet when we recollect the difficulty of effecting any general change, embracing the infinite varieties of human interests, caprices, passions, and purposes, nothing could seem more improbable. But it has always been the course of things. Without Charlemagne, the little principalities of Gothic Europe would never have been systematized into an empire;—without Luther, what could have been the progress of the Reformation?—without Napoleon, the French Revolution would have burnt itself out, vanished into air, or sunk into ashes. He alone collected its materials, combined them into a new and powerful shape, crowned this being of his own formation with the imperial robe, erected it in the centre of Europe, and called the nations to bow down before a new idol, like the gods of the Indian known only by its mysterious frown, the startling splendor of its diadem, and the swords and serpents grasped in its hands.

That the character of Napoleon was a singular compound of the highest intellectual powers with the lowest moral qualities, is evidently the true description of this extraordinary being. This combination alone accounts for the rapidity, the splendor of his career, and the sudden and terrible completeness of his fall. Nothing less than pre-eminent capacity could have shot him up through the clouds and tempests of the Revolution into the highest place of power. A mixture of this force of mind and desperate selfishness of heart could alone have suggested and sustained the system of the Imperial wars, policy, and ambition; and the discovery of his utter faithlessness could alone have rendered all thrones hopeless of binding him by the common bonds of sovereign to sovereign, and compelled them to find their only security for the peace of Europe in consigning him to a dungeon. He was the only instance in modern history of