

LE CARRE DES MORTS.

account, a strong power over the emotion, and even the affection of our souls. Do we not lament even death as a parting from the light of day? This simple, primary, and inevitable influence, to which every living spirit is subject, enters essentially into the feelings we are now considering, and makes the presence of light in itself, and in all it shows of colour, beautiful to our eyes. This, then, is an elementary conception and feeling of beauty, which seems prepared for us by the hand, and in the midst of the primary blessings of Nature, in a manner independent of any cultivation of our minds, and carried as it were irresistibly into the very heart of our sentient being. Further, it is observable that these emotions, thus deep-laid in our very living sensibility, have in such instances as those which we have now selected as examples of visible beauty, an immediate and deeply blended connexion with some important feelings which may be called of a spiritual kind.

For these shows of light and colour are spread over the infinitude of Nature, over Earth and Sky; and are disclosed to us from orbs which are the most remote and wonderful objects on which we can look. This most expansive feeling of our soul, that of boundless space, mixed with wonder at the mystery of power in these beings, and in the whole frame of nature, concurs with the vivid affection of delighted sense; and thus our whole being, that which is most deep and spiritual, and that which is sentient in the living frame, is united in the feeling of such beauty in these great appearances. These are elements of an emotion entirely different from those pleasures which are derived by association from a direct and conscious reference to the past: for though the past has been necessary indeed, to form the spirit to its present capacity of such feelings, there is no reference in the mind whatever to the past, or to any thoughts personal to itself. These great and beautiful appearances, at once, as soon as they are beheld, invade the Soul with a sudden emotion of delight, in which they seem to carry all their power of beauty in their immediate presence: there is no knowledge of time gone by to which these feelings have reference, or from which they may have their derivation; but in the more glorious appearances of this kind that are revealed to us, the soul is swallowed up, entranced, and lost in the consciousness of its mere beholding.

By the various Cultivation of the Mind in other kinds of Beauty, advancing in high and refined Intellectual Perception, exercising itself in the pure delight of Moral contemplation, and conversant with all the forms of beauty which the happiest spirits of men have snatched from decay, and preserved in the works of their inspired and delightful Arts, by all this various Cultivation, the Mind seems to have opened up in itself new Capacities of admiration and love:—and when it returns to contemplate that Nature on which it once looked in simple and untutored joy, it now finds a world spread out in infinite adaptation for its passionate feelings, and for its earnest, solemn Meditation. In the mighty forms that tower up from the surface of the Earth, guarding and enclosing the regions of human habitation, in the rivers that embrace and divide the land, in seas that flow around it, in all the variations and adornings of the Earth, vale, and champaign, and wide-skirting woods, and in the overhanging Sky,—he now sees a world over which a spirit may range in the might of its joy, gathering heavenly thought from terrestrial scenes, and drawing in from all appearances and voices around, the breath of adoration. Delight and love now come to him no longer unmingled with intelligence. He sees in all the forms of things characters that speak to him of Wisdom, Goodness, and Power. It is not that in every moment of delight breathed from the beauty of nature there is a conscious reference to the design of its benign Creator,—But this conviction is habitual and pervading; and the mysterious principle of life in all things around us is not more universally present to the human mind than the delighted gratitude with which it is recognised. When Milton describes the sorrow of our first Parents at the thought of leaving Paradise, he makes the lamentation of Adam sublime, by the regret that he must no more inhabit scenes hallowed by the immediate presence of God.

"This most afflicts me, that departing hence,
As from his face I shall be hid, deprived
His blessed count'nance; here I could frequent
With worship place by place where he vouchsafed
Presence divine, and to my sons relate,
On this mount he appeared, under this tree
Stood visible—among these pines his voice
I heard—here with him at this fountain talked;
So many grateful altars I would rear
Of grassy turf, and pile up every stone
Of lustre from the brook, in memory,
Or monument to ages, and thereon
Offer sweet-smelling gums and fruits and flowers;
In yonder nether world where shall I seek
His bright appearances, or footstep trace?"

But in this nether world these bright appearances are to be traced now, as they were in the happy youth of the Earth: And if the beauty of the material world is then most beautiful, when such footsteps are seen by the human soul, the Earth now with all the fierce agencies that have been let loose to trample over it, it is a Paradise still, to those whose spirit knows how to enjoy it.

The horrors of war have been detailed in almost infinite variety—affording themes of inexhaustible abundance for the moralist, the poet, the historian and the romancer. Yet it may well be conceived that the whole is, as yet, very far from being told; that the capabilities of the subject have, by no means been worked out in all their frightful and wonderful extent. Much there must be of suffering—of mortal anguish on the battle-field—which never has been and never can be told, because the sufferers have found relief from their torments only in death. I can imagine such, among the wounded wretches left to perish on the plain of some great contest, when the tide of strife has swept far from the spot where it commenced; when the flight for life and the hot pursuit have whirled away the surviving thousands, and the silence of the war-field is broken only by the shrieks and groans of those who have been struck down, and who cast around their dying eyes in vain for the approach of succour, with hope that struggles against disappointment to the last, nor yields until the life is yielded too. I can imagine agonies of mind and body, at such a time and place, the like of which has never been recorded; and for the record of which, words are wanting to human speech. Their terrible reality can be conveyed only by the looks and tones of actual suffering, and mocks the feeble efforts of the pen to give them utterance.

Abundant in such detail of suffering must have been the disastrous campaign of Napoleon in Russia, or rather, the most disastrous portion of that campaign, the retreat from Moscow. The published narratives of the retreat are full of them; but how many and more horrible incidents must have occurred, and found no chronicler! Of the thousands and tens of thousands who miserably perished on those icy plains, there was not one, perhaps, who, if he had survived, might not have described some peculiarity of misery the voice of which is now stilled forever.

I have been led into these reflections, by conversing, not long ago, with a highly-intelligent French gentleman who served in that dreadful campaign, and had large personal knowledge of the horrors that attended the retreat. Of these he described to me a great number, surpassing, in painful interest, all that I had ever heard or read, and some of so appalling a nature, that I should be reluctant even to repeat them among friends—much more to give them publicity in the columns of a periodical, which aims chiefly to give pleasure to its readers. There was one, however, not less remarkable than any of the others, yet so much less strongly marked by the purely horrible, as to create no painful sensation in the mind of the reader, more acute than that which always accompanies the knowledge of human suffering and death, when we have no personal interest in, or relation to, the sufferers.

It is known to all who have read of the campaign in Russia, that the ordinary disasters of a retreat through an enemy's country were, in this instance, fearfully aggravated by the intense severity of the cold; and that of the multitudes who perished, there were thousands who sank beneath its rigour, for hundreds that fell beneath the lances of the Cossacks. Yet the assaults of these roving warriors of the desert were fearfully destructive. Hovering in small bands around the divisions of the retreating Frenchmen, and never failing to strike whenever a small party of the enemy became separated from the main body, on its march—and such separations were daily becoming more frequent, through the relaxation of discipline, and the increasing want of provisions—there was no possibility of either resisting or escaping their attacks. Well mounted on their fleet and hardy coursers of the Ukraine, such was the rapidity of their movements that they seemed to spring up from the earth—always appearing when least expected, and, if repulsed, scouring away with a celerity that defied pursuit, even if the worn and harassed Frenchmen had been able to attempt it. For them, indeed, there was but one resource. To keep as closely as possible together—when attacked by the Cossacks to form in solid squares, and meet the shock—and above all, to pursue their march with the least possible intermission; for those who halted died.

Thus were the remains of Napoleon's great army toiling back across the frightful wastes of that inhospitable region, but daily leaving thousands of their number stiffening on its snows; the troops of Cossacks sweeping around them, and bringing up their rear, ready to pick up every straggler, whom fatigue or the hope of greater safety in isolated progress had separated from his fellows.

The main body had passed on; and there was solitude on the vast and naked steppe which they had traversed. The cold was dreadful; and a driving storm of snow was whitening the ground, to which that intense frost had given the rigidity of marble. Afar off, in the remotest verge of the horizon, a dark object might be seen, dimly, through the snow; and from another quarter comes whirling up a troop of Cossacks, with many a wild hurrah. Their leader points to the dark object in the distance, and away they scour across the plain in the direction of his spear. As they approach, they see with grim delight that a band of Frenchmen is before them—but these, it seems, are prepared for the attack. The square is formed—the bayonets at charge. The Cossacks gallop round and round, as if seeking for a point of vantage to at-

tack—the Frenchmen stand firm, presenting everywhere a bold and steady front, which seems to dash the courage of the assailants. Meantime the snow comes down in wreaths, and is fast gathering in white masses on the dark uniforms of the brave Frenchmen. Round and round the Cossacks wheel, approaching nearer every moment—yet not a hand is stirred in that human citadel; not a musket is fired, although every shot might tell. At length the leader of the Cossacks shouts "forward to the charge;" and with a rush they fling themselves upon the—dead. At the first shock, the foremost rank of Frenchmen falls, a row of stiffened corpses on the plain. They had been frozen to death, where they stood; and there, perhaps, they would have stood, until the next summer's heat had given relaxation to their rigid muscles, but for the wild attack of the fierce desert warriors.

FASHIONABLE BELLES.—'How superior,' thought I, 'is the love of this young girl, unaccustomed to the world, to that of the heartless and false doll of dress, whose every word is for effect, and every thought a desire for admiration; who can sacrifice all domestic pleasures, and follow fashion and vice—vice of thought; who lives only in crowds, and is miserable alone; who loves self supremely, and takes a husband for his carriage and house, and enters into matrimony for the liberties it allows her.' There are such women; the idols of the ball room, and the belles of watering-places. They enjoy a butterfly celebrity, and then decay early, in mind and body; the victims to fashion, or worse. What thoughts must linger around the bosoms of such women, on their dying beds, as they think of their neglected children, their neglected God! Young men know not what they follow, as they glide on in the wake of the plumed syren of the dance. They are the false lights which meteors hold out to draw the tumbling ships upon the rocks. They lure us on with music, and the pattering of tiny feet, and their jewelled fingers, and false smiles, and falser hearts; and when the victim is caught, like the veiled prophet, they display their awful hideousness. No, no! Love is found in gentle hearts. It dwells not amid the riots of pleasure; it dies in the glare of splendor, and cannot live in the heart devoted to dress, and weak follies. It is more nurtured in quietness, than in loud applause, or the world's praise. Give me the hardly defined feelings of a young and timid girl, and I leave to you the confessions of the gaudy coquette. Give me the beaming glance of a liquid eye, and I yield the bright and flashing blaze of the proud beauty to others. I would not trust a belle nor a blue. They are each too philosophical in their own way.—Knickerbocker.

A WOMAN OF TASTE.—A female of cultivated taste, has an influence upon society wherever she moves. She carries with her that secret attractive charm which operates like magic upon the beholder—fixes the attention and softens the feelings of the heart like those benign influences over which we have no control. It is impossible to be long in her presence without feeling the superiority of that intellectual acquirement which so dignifies her mind and person. Her words and actions are dictated by its power, and give ease and grace to her motions. The cultivation of a correct taste is so joined in affinity with the social affections, that it is almost impossible to improve the one, without affecting the other. For it is seldom that we see this resplendent qualification attached to minds under the influence of moral principles, neglectful of those social feelings which cement society together, and preserve it from jarring innovations. It is needful in every department of life; and more of our happiness is derived from this source than we are often aware of.

Look at domestic scenes with a discerning eye, and see the movements of a woman of taste. If she is the head of a family, order appears to be the first law which governs and controls her actions. All her affairs are planned with wisdom; confusion and discord never disturb her mind. Her house is the seat of social happiness, where the stranger and friend can repose with delight, for neatness and order are the inmates of her habitation.

PERVERSION OF RELIGION.—How much of injury has been done to the cause of true religion, by the austere and gloomy associations which have been connected with it by bigots and enthusiasts! How often do we see children brought up to discover nothing but what is harsh and repulsive in a faith, which is essentially the source of a divine and constant cheerfulness. Is it not natural that, under such circumstances, they should imbibe a distaste for what, rightly understood, would be their joy and their refuge? Instead of teaching us to regard our Creator as that benignant and gracious Being, which natural and revealed religion assures us that he is, how many would set up the phantom of their own diseased, or frightened fancy, and have us bow down to it as the only true God? Oh, human frailty and human inconsistency! that, professing to hate idolatry, art subject, unconsciously, to a more degrading idolatry than that which prostrates itself before images of wood and stone! Let no man argue against religion from its abuses; for truly has it been said, that "religion and priests have the same connexion with each other, as justice and attorneys."