

## THE FOOTSTEPS OF DECAY.

The following is a translation from an ancient Spanish poem, which, says the *Edinburgh Review*, is surpassed by nothing with which we are acquainted in the Spanish language, except the "Ode of Louis de Leon."

Oh, let the soul its slumbers break—  
Arouse its senses, and awake,  
To see how soon  
Life, in its glories, glides away,  
And the stern footsteps of decay  
Come stealing on.

And while we view the rolling tide  
Down which our flowing minutes glide  
Away so fast,  
Let us the present hour employ,  
And deem each future dream a joy  
Already past.

Let no vain hope deceive the mind,  
No happier let us hope to find  
To-morrow than to-day;  
Our golden dreams of yore were bright,  
Like them the present shall delight—  
Like them decay.

Our lives like hastening streams must be  
That into the engulfing sea  
Are doomed to fall—  
The sea of death, whose waves roll on,  
O'er king and kingdom, crown and throne,  
And swallow all.

All like the river's lordly tide,  
All like the humble rivulet— glide,  
To that sad wave!  
Death levels poverty and pride,  
The rich and poor sleep side by side  
Within the grave.

Our birth is but a starting place;  
Life is the running of the race,  
And death the goal;  
There all our glittering toys are brought—  
That path alone, of all unsought,  
Is found of all.

See, then, how poor and little worth  
Are all these glittering toys of earth  
That lure us here;  
Dreams of a sleep that death must break;  
Alas! before it bids us wake,  
We disappear.

Long ere the damp of death can blight,  
The cheek's pure glow of red and white  
Has passed away;  
Youth smiled, and all was heavenly fair—  
Age came and laid his finger there—  
And where are they?

Where is the strength that spurned decay,  
Those steps that roved so light and gay,  
The heart's blithe tone!  
The strength is gone, the step is slow,  
And joy grows wearisome and woe  
When age comes on!

## SLAVERY ON THE GOLD COAST.

(From the London Times, Dec. 3.)

The African royal mail steamer *Elmina J. S. Rattray* commander, has arrived in the Mersey from the West Coast of Africa with the mails, passengers and specie. A palaver had been held at Accra about the household slave question, and the natives had agreed that their slaves should be under British protection, in accordance with the Governor's proclamation

## THE ENGLISH GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS TO THE ASSEMBLED CHIEFS.

A meeting of all the kings and chiefs of the western and central portions of the Gold Coast was held at the Castle of Cape Coast, in the Palaver Hall, on the 3rd day of November, 1874, when His Excellency, Governor Strahan, spoke as follows:

KINGS AND CHIEFS—I am pleased to meet you. Most of you present have been old allies of the Queen, and some were allies of His Majesty the King of the Netherlands. In times past there were disputes between you. If I speak of those it is to tell you

that all these disputes must cease for ever and be at an end. Now, all of you are under one flag, the flag of England. The Queen desires me to inform you of her wishes and those of her people in England; but before doing so, I will first speak of what has transpired in your history and which has brought about the relations at present existing between you and her government. Few of you, probably, can remember how your country was disturbed by Ashantee before Sir Charles McCarthy's time. King Osai Totoo Quamina made war on you. Your armies were defeated, your women and children taken captive to Ashantee, and you had to pay much gold as tribute. You know that then Sir Charles McCarthy was sent from England. You also know he pitied your condition and gave you arms and ammunition and supported you in every conceivable manner. Though he lost his life, in the end the Ashantees were defeated, and were forced to retire from your country, and Osai Totoo Quamina was forced to make peace, and you had peace during the remaining years of his reign. I will not say much of what occurred during Quacoa Duah's reign, though you still stood in fear of Ashantee and its might. But at the beginning of last year an army of 40,000 Ashantees invaded your country under a general who was a member of the royal family. This army defeated and scattered your forces, and devastated the country around with fire and with sword. This army attempted to attack the English forts on the coast. Of course it would have been easy for Her Majesty's land and sea forces here to have driven back the enemy, but your country would have still been at their mercy. As your forefathers were scattered and troubled by the Ashantees, so were you by Koffie Kal calli. Then the Queen sent out a general with officers and an army composed of some of her land and sea forces to deliver you from ruin. The General attacked Ashantee on the one side and another Captain on the other. The Queen's General and army fought your battles for you. The force drove the enemy out of your country, followed them into theirs, beat them in three large battles, took Commassie and burned it, and forced the king to sign a treaty. In this way you were relieved from defeat and misery. The Queen accomplished all this without your assistance. Her Majesty sent out these men in ships from England at a cost ten times greater than all the gold there is in Ashantee, Akim and Warsaw. Some of those officers and men died in battle and others from disease. Now, why do I tell you all this? Is it to tell you that the Queen wants you to pay back any portion of the money she has expended for you? Is it to tell you that you must pay for your freedom from Ashantee? Is it to tell you that as she has done so much for you, you must do what you can for yourselves as she can do no more? Is it to tell you that as she has saved you from your late danger that you are to expect no further protection from her? No. All she requires and expects of you is obedience to her wishes and those of her people in England.

In return for these benefits the Queen requests your aid in putting an end to a thing which she and her people abhor. This thing is against a law which no King or Queen of England can ever change, I have pointed out to some of you that the Eng-

lish people buy sheep, fowls and other live stock, but not men, women and children. The Queen is determined to put a stop at once to the buying and selling of slaves, either within or without the protectorate, in any shape, degree or form and she will allow no person to be taken as a pawn for debt. (This last passage was repeated with considerable emphasis.) The Queen desires to make you as happy as her own people. This buying, selling and pawning of men and women and children is wrong, and no country where it exists can be happy. The Queen does not desire to take any of your people from you; those of them who like to work for and with and to assist you can remain with you. If they are happy and continue to live with you on the same terms as now to change will be forced upon you; but any person who does not desire to live with you on these terms can leave, and will not be compelled by any Court, British or native, to return to you. The Queen hopes to make you happy in many ways, as happy as those in her other dominions. It is right that I tell you distinctly that if you desire her protection you must do as she wishes, as she orders. This is the Queen's message. When the Queen speaks in this way it is not a matter for palaver, question, hesitation or doubt, but she expects obedience and assent. I will only say that without the Queen's money and troops you would have been slaves of a bloodthirsty people. The Queen has paid a great price for your freedom. You and those near and dear to you would have been dragged hence to form a portion of the thousands who are decapitated and sacrificed by this savage race for their customs; your homes would have been homes full of misery.

I see you to-day enjoying peace, and I call on you all to join with me in the prayer, "God save the Queen."  
My message is delivered.

## THE KINGS AND CHIEFS CONSULT AND REPLY.

The Governor ceased speaking, and for a short time the chiefs were consulting among themselves what answer to give, when at last King Edoo, of Mankessim, solicited permission from His Excellency to retire till the next day, so that they, the kings, might consult together as to the answer they could give. This, however, the Governor refused, and referred them to that portion of his speech or message wherein he had stated that when the Queen expressed her wishes it remained only for them to obey, but if they wished it he would retire for a short time and leave them to their deliberations. His Excellency then left the Palaver Hall, and upon his return in about one hour, the kings and chiefs informed him that "they were willing to cease from buying or selling slaves, but raised objection to the slaves being permitted to go free if they chose, without there being any cause shown, and likewise to pawns not being allowed."

After so long a discussion it was decided that no slave could leave his or her master or mistress unless there was proof of cruelty or maltreatment, when such slave would be entitled to his or her freedom. And the question of pawns was settled by the debtor being held liable for the amount that the pawn had been given as security for, and that the amount should be recovered on the pawn leaving.

This concluded the meeting in the Castle, but His Excellency invited all the kings and chiefs to go over to Government House to drink long life to Her Majesty.