

The Examiner.

A WEEKLY JOURNAL OF POLITICS, LITERATURE AND NEWS.

EDWARD WHELAN]

This is true Liberty, when Free-born Men, having to advise the Public, may speak free.—EURIPIDES.

[EDITOR AND PUBLISHER.

VOL. VI.

CHARLOTTETOWN, PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND, MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 1856.

No. 8.

MOON'S PHASES.—SEPTEMBER, 1856.
First Quarter 7th day, 11h. 18m. morning. E.
Full Moon 14th day, 9h. 29m. morning. N.W.
Last Quarter 21st day, 1h. 9m. morning. E.
New Moon 28th day, 11h. 9m. evening. N.

Literature.

COME BACK! COME BACK!!

Come back—come back—thou youthful Time,
When joy and innocence were ours,
When life was in its vernal prime,
And redolent of sweets and flowers,
Come back—and let us roam once more
Free-hearted through Life's pleasant ways,
And gather garlands as of yore—
Come back—come back—ye happy days!

Come back—come back—'twas pleasant then
To cherish faith in Love and Truth,
For nothing in disparage of men
Had sour'd the temper of our youth.
Come back—and let us still believe
The gorgeous dream romance displays,
Nor trust the tale that men deceive—
Come back—come back—ye happy days!

Come back—oh, freshness of the past,
When every face seem'd fair and kind,
When sunward every eye was cast,
And all the shadows fell behind;
Come back!—'twill come; true hearts can turn
Their own Decembers into Mays;
The secret be it ours to learn—
Come back—come back—ye happy days!

—Charles Mackay.

TRAVELS IN CIRCASSIA.

The capital town of Abkhasia is Souchoum Kaleh. Here it was that a large Russian force was permanently garrisoned, and it was hoped that the troops of the Czar, supported by the powerful influence of Prince Michael, would eventually lead to the subjugation of these wild mountaineers who professed to own allegiance to their prince, and to the annexation of the entire province to the Muscovite Empire. That anticipation had not been realised when the war broke out. Notwithstanding the exertions of Prince Michael in favor of Russia, the greater portion of his subjects could not be induced to relinquish that independence which he (perhaps compelled by the force of circumstances) had already forfeited. Secure in their mountain strongholds, they bade defiance to the imperial troops, who dared not penetrate beyond a few miles into the interior. A line of Russian forts along the coast, however, insured the obedience of those of the inhabitants who preferred their worldly possessions to their liberty; while, as the plains which extend in a southerly direction from Souchoum Kaleh increase in breadth as the mountains recede from the sea-shore, the population which inhabits them found any attempt at opposition hopeless, and have long since resigned themselves to their fate, to which they have been the more easily reconciled, as they are opposed in religion to the Mahometan mountaineers in the north, and sympathise in their Christian worship with their wily conquerors. These have sedulously fostered that disunion in the country which a difference of faith was likely to engender; and there can be little doubt that, if the old regime be restored, this policy will be at last successful.

Prince Michael, called by the Turks Hamid Bey, is himself a Christian; but his father was a Mahometan, and most of his family still profess that faith. He has two country residences, one situated at Shemsherrai, about thirty-six miles to the south-east of Souchoum Kaleh; the other at Souksou, about fifteen miles to the north-west of that place. The former of these I had already visited. A large wooden mansion it was, with elaborately carved overhanging eaves, and gaunt unfurnished rooms, looking doubly desolate in the absence of the owner, with nothing but a couch in one, and two or three rickety chairs and a table in another, and a heap of suspicious looking bedding piled in a corner of a third, and a quantity of noble antlers, the spoils of many a hard day's chase in the mountains, ornamenting a fourth. Prince Michael had often asked me to pay him a visit, and I was not sorry to find that he was away from home on this occasion, as it involved an expedition to his northern residence at Souksou, and an opportunity would thus be afforded of visiting a new part of his territory. Meantime Abkhasia was becoming a place of considerable resort. On my first arrival I had found it an unvisited and almost unknown country; now English and Turkish men-of-war lay at anchor in the beautiful bay of Souchoum, and English travellers and Turkish soldiers encountered one another in its formerly deserted streets. It was with a party of the former that, in the beginning of last October, I undertook the expedition to Souksou, with a view of afterwards extending our wanderings, and penetrating, as far as time and circumstances would permit, into some of the hitherto totally unknown and unexplored valleys of Circassia.

Souksou is situated at a distance of about five miles in the interior, and we proceeded in two men-of-war steamers to a little village upon the coast, not far from the dismantled Russian fortress of Bambar. The arrival and disembarkation of so formidable a party at this remote harbour caused no small sensation. A Turkish flag, of minute dimensions, was hoisted upon the steep bank which overhung the water, and the houses were soon emptied of their inmates, collecting in wondering groups on the beach. The singular attire and handsome figures of Caucasian mountaineers render such assemblages doubly interesting; and whether in Circassia, Abkhasia or Mingrolia, I always thought that their picturesque inhabitants formed their most characteristic feature. The scenery is indeed probably unequalled in the world; but if those rocky gorges and smiling lovely valleys were not inhabited by such a peasantry, they would lose their highest charm.

There was a steep little street, composed of wooden houses, leading up to the top of the rugged and precipitous bank, where a winter torrent had rendered the ascent easier; and there were quaint old houses perched upon the edge of the cliff, with deep verandahs, where the old men of the village sit and smoke their pipes, and no doubt discuss Abkhasian politics. Dogs and children were playing together upon the short green grass in front of one of these as we approached, and broke off the game abruptly to bark and cry at the strangers. An old patriarch, whose more elaborate costume betokened a man in authority, advanced to offer us horses on which to ride up to Prince Michael's; and while they were getting ready we sat down in chairs of a civilized con-

struction at the edge of the cliff, and became the centre of a group of admiring Abkhassians.

At length a number of diminutive but wiry ponies made their appearance, with slippery, impossible-looking saddles, upon which we perched ourselves with difficulty. It requires a short residence in Circassia before one becomes thoroughly reconciled to the seat of the country. The saddle-bow is about six inches high, and terminates in a sharp point. There is a corresponding elevation similarly shaped behind, so that one has very much the sensation of being jammed down between two perpendicular hunting-knives. As the stirrups are so short as to throw the knees considerably above the withers of the horse, there is a natural tendency to rise in them; and when one is thus thrown above the saddle, an anxiety suggests itself about getting safe back again. However, we were in an impatient humour, and reckless of consequences, dashed off at a gallop with our knees up to our chins, and our arms extended to assist in preserving our balance.

While one of our party, whose Crimean sketches have gained for him a world wide notoriety, was engaged in immortalising the scene, we strolled through a rough, ill-tended garden, and regaled ourselves on pomegranates, and then, not without reluctance, once more inserted ourselves into our saddles, and bidding adieu to the Prince and his enchanting domain, galloped down to the boats, and pursued our northward course.

After rounding a low promontory of Pitzounda, we found ourselves approaching the northern frontier of Abkhasia. The undulating plains which separate the lower range from the sea gradually narrow, and through them numerous streams take their winding course. The gorges by which these issue from the mountains become more clearly discernible—dark and gloomy portals to unknown and mysterious valleys beyond. Above all towered the stupendous Ochetene, rearing its snow-crowned summit to a height of about 13,000 feet. Distant scarcely twenty-five miles from our ship, its altitude seemed even greater, and it reduced to insignificance the intervening range, which, though from 7,000 to 8,600 feet in height, was free from snow, and presented that rugged and precipitous aspect which characterises the limestone formation generally. From the Ochetene to the Djoumantan, the main chain is composed of a series of peaks of an almost uniform elevation. It forms the north-eastern frontier of Abkhasia, and separates that province from the Circassian tribes of the north, serving as a barrier which, except at one or two points, is insurmountable. We were assured that the only practicable pass from Abkhasia across these mountains, for horses, was from Souchoum Kaleh to Karachai, a province situated upon the western shoulder of Mount Elbruz. We had indeed at one time entertained the idea of attempting this pass in company with some of the chiefs of Karachai, who were about to return to their homes. As it turned out, however, it was fortunate that circumstances obliged us to change our plans, as a few weeks afterwards our friends returned to Souchoum, having found their province in the hands of the Russians, who had pushed their successes over the Naib, farther into the mountains than they had ever ventured to do. The people of Karachai, leaving their homes at the mercy of the conquerors, had taken refuge in the more inaccessible parts of the mountains, knowing that the approach of winter would compel the enemy to evacuate the valleys. Never before had that remote district been visited by Russian soldiers, and the utmost terror and dismay had been inspired in consequence.

The pass by which these men had traversed the range will henceforward be blocked up, and the day is in all probability far distant when such an opportunity will again be afforded to Europeans of penetrating into these mountains. The Russians themselves are unable to go beyond five or six miles from Souchoum Kaleh into the interior. The journey to Karachai, although the distance is not very great, occupies about a week, in consequence of the impracticable nature of the road; during the few summer months, however, it is reported to be free from snow.

We had fixed upon Vardan as the point from which to start upon our expedition into the interior, as the principal chief in the district was an old friend. Vardan is situated about sixty miles farther up the coast than Gagra, and is a somewhat important place among Circassians, as it boasts an apology for a bay, and there is no Russian fort on either side for some miles; it is therefore a favorite place for that trade which Russians are pleased to call contraband, because, in order to be carried on, the blockade must be broken which they have established in the prosecution of their nefarious war against these tribes. But few houses, however, are apparent from the sea. The hills are not precipitous as they are nearer Gagra, and the gorges have widened out into fertile valleys. Immediately on our dropping anchor, the shore, which at first seemed deserted, became thickly dotted with human forms, and we were received upon landing, with profound demonstrations of respect. Our friend Ismail Bey, however, was ill at his house, and in his absence no great encouragement was manifested when we explained the object of our visit. However, we sent messengers to inform him of our arrival, and strolled up to three or four houses hidden among the trees, which composed the village; here we soon became the centre of attraction to numbers of natives, who, seeing from their hill-tops the ships anchored in their bay, came down to inspect us. There was an elaborate little rest house of a form and construction common to all Circassian villages, open at the sides; its roof supported by pillars of carved wood, and with seats for tired travellers inside, not unlike a summer-house. Here we held a levee, and discussed the chances of the expedition with chiefs of various degrees of importance and magnificence of attire. There was an evident disposition on the part of these gentry to assist us in our desire of penetrating into their country, and they looked with perhaps a pardonable suspicion at so large a party demanding admittance into regions hitherto unvisited by Europeans. Moreover, we could assign no other motive for our journey than curiosity, and they seemed incredulous of this being a sufficiently powerful stimulant for so novel a proceeding, more particularly when they saw two men-of-war lying in their bay, also there from curiosity. They therefore depicted in the strongest terms the difficulties of travelling in the interior, the impossibility of procuring horses, guides, &c. However, we determined to await the result of our mission to Ismail Bey, and meantime I went with an exploratory expedition up the valley.

We followed the banks of a clear sparkling stream, full of trout, to a village where the female inhabitants peered curiously out of chinks in their doors at us, and then ascended the side of a steep hill, through fields of millet and Indian corn, until we reached a ridge from whence we had an extensive view; here we stayed to rest, and our Circassian guide, who spoke Turkish, sent a boy to a village to bring us something to eat. While we were basking in the sun, watching the blue smoke ascend from the clumps of trees which here and

there marked a hamlet, a ragged figure approached, carrying a load of wood and almost naked, and throwing his bundle at our feet sat down to rest. Upon looking at his features I scarcely needed the information of our guide that he was a Russian. He said he had been eleven years a slave in Circassia, a hewer of wood and drawer of water—condemned all those long years to the most servile offices, and yet he manifested no desire for a change. He looked at us with dull leaden eyes, and what little expression his face still retained was one of resigned melancholy.

We lunched of walnuts and hard-boiled eggs, and prevailed upon a pretty Circassian girl to give us a light for our cigars, which she did with much grace and modesty, holding just enough of the thin white handkerchief over her face to satisfy her conscience, and at the same time to exhibit her charms. Her mother scolded her from within for such bare-faced behaviour, and appeared to the rescue with only one eye visible. We did not regret the loss of the rest of the countenance so much as the result of her indignant reproaches to her daughter, who flung her veil back over her shoulders, and throwing a glance of defiance at her mother, and of farewell at us, disappeared into the house, and we walked down the hill smoking thoughtfully.

We found the rest of the party mounting their ponies to go to Ismail Bey's house, as that distinguished personage was too unwell to come to us. Our way led up another valley very like the first, also with a clear stream, which was continually to be crossed, through green meadows, fields and woods, and past cottages. Following it for about two miles from the shore, we reached a substantial-looking mansion, the residence of Ismail Bey, who was visited in his room, where he was confined to his bed, by some members of our party, and arrangements were made for our departure on the morrow. He was public spirited enough to turn out his harem for our inspection, and his wives and daughters came trooping out much to their and our satisfaction.

At first they kept at a respectful distance, and tittered immensely among themselves, and got behind one another with a great affectation of coyness. When, however, they saw that presents were to be obtained by nearer advances, they crept forward, sending the little children on as pioneers, who advanced timidly, keeping their fingers in their mouths like civilised infants, until within reach of the prize, when they clutched it ravenously, and rushed back triumphant. At last we were surrounded by a galaxy of beauty, and showed them their own lovely countenances in looking-glasses, and explained the mysteries of intricate housewives, or taught them to look through opera-glasses. One of our party who had come well provided with such articles soon became immensely popular. At last the shades of evening, and our sense of what was due to the owner of so much charming property, warned us to terminate the scene; and after many expressions of unbounded admiration, we parted with mutual regret. One or two of these girls were very beautiful; their soft luxuriant hair, regular features, brilliant complexions, as purely pink and white as that of any European, combined to render their countenances peculiarly attractive, while they had a sweet and refined expression, which was scarcely to be expected among them.

THE UNIVERSITY AT LEYDEN.

That distinguished French periodical, the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, is now publishing a series of interesting articles from the pen of M. Alphonse Esquiros, on the Netherlands and life in Holland. From a late number, we translate his graphic account of the origin of the celebrated University of Leyden.

The foundation of this famous university is connected with the siege which Leyden sustained in the year 1573. The United Provinces had risen against the Spanish domination. Liberty of conscience basely violated, political and religious despotism, the inquisition, and the establishment of arbitrary taxation, had all tended to exasperate the national feelings. "At this time," says the historian Hooft, surnamed the Tacitus of Holland, "all ranks, ages, and sexes were confounded in one general persecution. The gibbet and the wheel did not suffice; the trees which bordered the public roads were laden with corpses, and the flames of the funeral piles of martyrdom darted upwards to the sky. Scaffolds were erected in every quarter; and the very air became infected with a vapor of death." Then was seen a spectacle rarely paralleled in the world's history. A few hundred men, pushed to despair—fishermen, shepherds, merchants—banded themselves together to struggle against the crushing oppression of a powerful government, and against armies reputed invincible. Following the example given by other towns of Holland, the inhabitants of Leyden declared themselves in favor of the union of the provinces; but towards the end of October they were attacked and surrounded by the Spaniards. The Prince of Orange wrote directions to the citizens at all hazards to offer resistance. He promised on his part to seek every means of assisting them. "Hold out for three months," he said; "and even if the siege should last longer, do not lose courage. If you persevere, deliverance is certain; but if you surrender, perpetual servitude awaits you."

The enemy, meanwhile, sought by insidious promises to obtain an entrance into the place. The only reply vouchsafed by the besieged was this Latin verse—

Fistula dulces canit, volucrum dum decepti accipis.

The defence of the city was entrusted to Janus Douza. The burghers bound themselves by oath to die beneath the ruins of their houses rather than yield. Although in the first instance all the useless mouths had been sent away, famine soon pressed on the city. No bread was to be seen, and provisions of all sorts became every day more scarce. At length grass, leaves, the bark of trees, the skins of the animals which had long since been devoured, even clay, came to be used as nutriment. Pestilence followed famine. Of 16,000 inhabitants, between 6000 and 7000 perished. Everywhere lying skeletons were seen burying the dead. The town, defended by shadows, still sustained itself against the fury of the invading army and its own internal divisions. To the soldiers, who shouted to them: "You are dying of hunger—surrender, and you shall have food," they answered from the top of the ramparts: "When our provisions are quite gone, we will eat our left hands, and keep our right to defend our liberty."

One day, however, a famished crowd presented themselves before the burgomaster of Leyden, Peter Adriaenszoon van der Werff: they peremptorily demanded either bread or the surrender of the city. "I have sworn to defend this city," replied the magistrate, "and with the help of God, I hope to keep my oath. Bread I have not; but if my body can serve to enable you to continue the struggle, take it, cut it up, and divide it amongst you." The poor people withdrew in silence.

The fate of Holland hung on the walls of Leyden. All the United Provinces watched the heroic town; but the place was so rigorously blockaded, that it was most difficult to come to its assistance. The Prince of Orange at length resolved to pierce the dikes. It was a desperate measure; nevertheless the old Batavian proverb prevailed—Better a country desolated than a country lost. The whole country was overflowed with water, and the harvests destroyed. The sea, that natural enemy of Holland, came to the help of Leyden; but it came slowly. A north-east wind kept back the waves, on whose crests appeared barks mounted with cannon. These boats, impelled by means of wheels, without either oars or sails, were manned by brave Zealand seamen, who had almost all been wounded and mutilated in the war of independence. The besieged from the summit of their ramparts could see the flotilla, could even converse with the crews; but the envious flood receded instead of advancing, bearing away their last hope. The enemy, on the other hand, although driven from some advanced positions by the overflowing of the waters, still maintained themselves on the principal dikes. Leyden seemed lost, when the moon becoming full, swelled the tide. The wind changed to the south-west; and one of those violent storms which at ordinary seasons tend so much to endanger the safety of Holland, burst forth on its coasts. The sea, resistless in its might, enlarged the breaches already made in the dikes, and rushed over the land, bearing along on its waves terror, desolation, and—safety. Surprised and submerged, stupefied with terror at the noise of the tempest, and the falling of a portion of the walls, the Spaniards tumultuously abandoned their posts, and threw their cannon into the water.

The same tide which enabled them to retreat, bore the Zealand flotilla, laden with provisions, to the gates of Leyden. A terrible combat—"an amphibious fight," to use the expression of a Dutch historian—ensued, partly on the dikes and partly on board the barks. The sailors triumphed, and entered the town; but amid the joy of deliverance, a sad spectacle met their eyes. Lining both sides of the great canal, crowds of famished creatures were shouting for food. With almost brutal avidity, they seized the loaves and the herrings which were distributed, and many who had hitherto borne up against hunger died of repletion.

The redoubtable army of Spain, beaten, drowned, dispersed over the land by the waters of the sea, had vanished like that of Pharaoh. "God," it was said, "loves Holland now, as he formerly loved Israel." Disabled by severe illness, the Prince of Orange, surnamed the Silent, had not appeared in person before the walls of Leyden. He was at Delфт, and, scarcely recovered, for the first time attending public worship in one of the churches of that town, when tidings came that the siege was raised. The prince sent a message to the preacher, who immediately, with a loud voice, proclaimed the blessed news. Tears mingled with the thanksgiving that followed.

Although pestilence still raged in Leyden, William the Silent hastened thither. Surrounded by the citizens, who forgot their sorrows as they thronged to meet him whom they regarded as the living rampart of their reconquered liberty, he asked them whether they would prefer for their city a perpetual exemption from certain taxes, or the foundation of a Protestant university. The burghers of Leyden did not hesitate in their choice: "A university!" was the unanimous cry. And so, on the 9th of February, 1575, was inaugurated with much pomp that edifice destined afterwards to number amongst its students and professors many of the most brilliant geniuses of Europe. The anniversary of the inauguration is still celebrated every year in Leyden.

CIVILIZATION OF THE REVOLVER.

We may be thankful that the *Dallas fracas* at the Palace ended as quietly as it did. The palmeto and black neckcloth were significant of other things. The military Professor was, of course, attired after the best American costume; but that cannot have been strictly *en regle* unless the breast coat was furnished with its revolver. We gather, from our trans-Atlantic intelligence, that gentlemen carry this pleasant little instrument just as, in the golden days of Elizabeth, our beaux sported pomanders, as Sir Plume handled his amber snuff-box, our fathers their tooth-picks. That Mr. Dallas's friend did not, when aggrieved by the Master of the Ceremonies, resort to the last resource of a free-born citizen, is a mercy for which we cannot be too grateful. We owe at least a thanksgiving service that the American Minister did not advance through the gentlemen-at-arms and pistol "Victoria" on her throne. One thing we must suggest by way of precaution. If American gentlemen are to be allowed the *entree* of the Palace, not only must the beef-eaters fall back upon the steel-clad panoply of Agincourt, but we cannot trust our Sovereign to receive her subjects and allies without the corselet of Joan of Arc. What is most curious about the domestic manners of the United States is that the revolver is never mentioned as an article of human equipment. It is always taken for granted. Just as, in describing a gentleman's personal attire, we should never speak of him as having a coat on, so, in trans-Atlantic society, the revolver is tacitly assumed. We have before us two little anecdotes of recent American duels—and, we regret to say, between editors of newspapers—in which the word revolver or pistol actually never occurs. This is a fine stroke of feeling. Among the Greeks, the Furies had an especially euphonistic appellation, and among the Hebrews, the incommunicable name was too sacred for utterance; and in like manner, the American household divinity is too hallowed and reverend a thing to be talked about.

Let us illustrate this. Robertson, a Know-nothing editor at a town bearing the euphonious appellation of Bayow Sara, was challenged the other day by a rival Marks, who certainly is anything but a Know-nothing. Robertson declined, and Marks posted his antagonist. On Sunday—blessed day for the holy work—Marks met Robertson, and declared, with a delicate reserve, "That he was ready." "And so am I!" replied Robertson—"whereupon," the narrative proceeds, "they commenced firing at each other, several of the balls taking slight effect. Robertson stood his ground, but his adversary kept up a running fire, when Robertson was brought to the ground. Marks's brother enters the arena, the duel becomes triangular, for each fired at Robertson, he returning on either brother. Robertson, and small wonder, is shot dead. No arrests were made." What especially strikes us here is, not the cowardly ferocity of the whole affair—two men deliberately pouring volleys into a single antagonist, already brought to the ground—but the fine style of narrative. Here is the grand simplicity of the Homeric narrative. Epic writing rests upon the dignity of the subject. The gravity of the event can dispense with the pomp of words.