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CHARACTERS.

ALEXANDER OF RUSSIA.

We find the following beautiful miniature representation of the character of this highly illustrious prince in a private communication to the Editor of the London Courier, dated at Aix la Chapelle, October 31st—the features are still more striking, when we compare the portrait with those of his contemporaries, which if drawn with fidelity would in two many instances present the most disgusting contrasts. Whatever might have been the sentiments in ancient times, that of the present and future generations will not hesitate to rank Alexander of Russia, far above his Macedonian namesake, in point of greatness.

After noticing the arrival at Aix la Chapelle, of a number of royal personages, the letter proceeds :

"The conferences for some days past have been languishing, owing to the absence of the Sovereigns, particularly of the Emperor Alexander, and the necessity under which their ministers felt themselves of consulting them, before they come to any final decision. The presence of the latter Sovereign, who is almost his own Minister, was found indispensable to their future progress. His servants cannot proceed to a step without consulting him, and he wished probably to see France with his own eyes, and learn the state of parties from those best able to inform him, before he came to any determination regarding the pending negotiations on the subject of the alliance. He arrived late this evening, therefore his ministers had instructions to wait upon him immediately. You express a surprise, in speaking of the reviews, at the rapidity of his motions and the almost ubiquity of his presence; those who have more immediate access to him, on the affairs of office, and who thus become acquainted with his habits, are still more surprised at the unceasing activity of his mind, his unwearied application to the duties of his high station and his amazing dispatch of business."

He is not only his prime minister, and minister of Foreign Affairs, but his own minister of the Interior, of Police and of Finance. The most trifling details, as well as the most important project of negotiations, are laid before him and receive their due share of consideration. Pleasure or amusement are never allowed for a moment to interfere with the calls of duty or the exigencies of business. He gives orders to admit every one into his presence who has any petition to offer, or any useful plan to propose; and the rapidity with which he conceives its objects, or decides upon its merits, is equalled only by the spirit and willingness with which he enters on its examination. When Mr. Clarkson saw him in Paris, in 1814, on his return from England, and though he had only twenty-four hours to spend in that capital, he devoted two of them to an audience on the details of the slave trade question; and I know from good authority, that amid the multiplicity of his business here, he had thoroughly read and considered Mr. Owen's memorial, and would have heard his explanations had he seen any thing feasible in his plan, or even any thing not dangerous in his doctrine. He rises every morning at 6 o'clock, and often does not go to bed till two. When he finds that he cannot enjoy even this short period of regular repose, he refreshes himself by a short sleep of an hour dur-

ing the day, in his chair as he can find opportunity, by a power which he has acquired of using any moment of leisure he chooses for such a refreshment—a power which perhaps shews his command over his time, and the general quality as well as activity of his mind—His morning devotions are never omitted, whatever other duties he has to perform, a habit which is common to him with the rest of his family; nor is he less attentive to the little forms and refined civilities of life than if he constituted its more serious employment. So punctual he is in this respect, that those who had no nearer views of his character would suppose that he comprised the whole business of a sovereign in doing popular things, and shewing the refined attentions. The anecdote regarding his first visit to the Duke of Wellington, on coming here, you will not have forgotten. On the Sunday after his arrival he appeared in four changes of dress, in compliment to those whom he wished to see; he transacted business in his usual habit in the morning; he waited afterwards on the King of Prussia in the uniform of the Prussian guards; he waited on the Emperor Francis, in that of Austria; and he was dressed again in a Prussian uniform, at the ball given by the city in the evening. The Leige papers celebrate some of the popular things which he did on his way to the review; and I have no doubt the French journals will echo their praises by reciting similar acts of popularity in France.

This episode on the personal activity and popular manners of the Emperor Alexander may be thought at first sight minute and ill placed; but it will cease to appear so, when we reflect on the great influence which joined with his military success they have already had on the world, and consider how much the individual character of a Monarch under an absolute government moulds the conduct of his people, and controls the policy of his empire. On the views and policy of Alexander depends in a great degree, at present, the measures which shall be pursued towards France, and consequently the future stability of the European Confederation."

TOPOGRAPHY.

DESCRIPTION OF QUEBEC.

From *Sanson's Tour to Canada*, published at New-York.

The mountains begin to rise, and produce more interesting scenery. The country in view having before been invariably flat. About 9 o'clock we came in sight of the heights of Abraham, on the left, and those of Point Levi, on the right; between which were fifteen or twenty sails of Merchantmen, and Ships of War, riding at anchor; the island of Orleans appearing, in the back ground of this interesting picture.

We rapidly passed Wolfe's Cove, and were brought too, with admirable dexterity, at a wharf of most inconvenient height: for the tide rises in this wild channel, from eighteen to twenty-four feet.

Here, and for half a mile round the precipice, which consists of a black slate, there is but just room for one narrow street. The rock is almost perpendicular, till near the top; and as you look up from the water to the stone wall, which caps the summit of the hill, with projecting bastions, you wonder what prevents the ponderous masses from coming down upon your head.

In this dismal ditch, where it first became exposed to a strong battery, which has been since taken down, on the 31st day of December, fell General Montgomery, and his Aid-de-Camp, M'Pherson, at the very first fire from the fort; and their disheartened followers were easily made prisoners, after a hopeless conflict. The snow being then four feet thick upon the ground.

Yet I was told, upon the spot, by a Canadian Burgher of confidential appearance, who said he was in the place at the time of the attack, that the town might have been taken, by

surprise, if General Arnold had pushed his opportunity, when he first reached Point Levi; instead of waiting for the Commander in Chief, who was then coming down the St. Lawrence. In the mean time the Citizens had recovered from the panic into which they had been thrown, by so unexpected an event. Sir Guy Carleton had thrown himself into the town, and the favourable moment for the attack was irretrievably lost.—The unfortunate General was interred by the British Commander, upon one of the bastions of the citadel, with what are called the honours of war.

Almost perpendicularly over the place where Montgomery fell, on the very brink of the precipice, which is here not less than two hundred feet high, in lieu of the ancient Fort or Chateau of St. Lewis, which name, by courtesy of England, it yet retains, is erected the Government House, the apartments of which are occupied by the various offices of the Civil and Military Department, acting under the orders of the Governor General of British America; the Provinces of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia being included under his command. But his residence is in a convenient building, on the opposite side of the square.

The lower town, from which we have not yet regularly ascended, is a dismal category of the most wretched buildings, rising, in darkness visible, amidst every kind of filth, between the rock and the river; which is said to have washed the very base of the promontory, when Jacques Cartier first sailed by the craggy spot. I quitted the narrow confines with the alacrity of a Fugitive, escaping from the confinement of a prison; by a long flight of steps, ending in slope after slope: down which trickles perpetually the superfluous moisture of the upper town; the streets of which, in wet weather, are rinsed, over the heads of the luckless passenger, by those projecting spouts which are so common in the situated towns of Germany.

The upper town, at a height of one hundred and fifty feet, from which it overlooks the lower; and shows the shipping so perpendicularly below, that you think you could toss a biscuit into them; from the ramparts is completely fortified with walls and gates, and all the other inconveniences of a garrisoned town; such as centinels on guard, at every avenue, &c. &c. independently of the citadel which, with its outworks, of considerable extent, occupies an elevation two hundred feet higher.

The Cathedral, and the Seminary for the Clergy, together with the Jesuits College, opposite, now converted into a barrack for the troops; who make its once tranquil walls resound twice a day with the animating sounds of Martial music—the bugle—the fife—and the spirit stirring drum. These extensive establishments, all originally devoted to religion, together with the Hotel Dieu, as it is called, after the name of a similar institution in Paris, being a hospital for the sick, and the single Sisters who attend them; the Monastery of the Recollects, now taken down, to make room for more useful edifices; and the Convent of the Ursine Nuns, with other religious establishments and their courts and gardens, occupied at least one half of the ground, within the walls; leaving the streets narrow, irregular, and invariably up hill and down; a circumstance which must render them singularly inconvenient in frost and snow.

Such is the famous City of Quebec for the acquisition of which General Wolfe willingly devoted his life, in the year, 1759; the only memento of which circumstances, upon the spot, is a wooden figure of the celebrated Hero, in his broad skirted coat, with slashed sleeves, painted red, standing in a niche, at the corner of a street; in the attitude of commanding the decisive action, which for ever separated Canada from the dominion of France.

It is called St. Johns street, and it leads to the Gate of St. Louis whence through I know not how many covered ways, protected by a like number of salient angels (I may

very probable be incorrect, in the terms of fortification, never having made the science of destruction my particular study) it finally disengages the weary passenger, thwarted by recurring obstacles, upon the open air of the adjacent common.

We are now upon the plains of Abraham, yet the ascent continues sufficiently to cover the scene of action, from the fire of the batteries. Turning round when you arrive at the summit, and looking down the river, between the two steeples of the Catholic and Protestant Cathedrals, you have what I thought the most interesting view of Quebec, because it embraces in the same coup-d'œil, the principal objects in the vicinity. Overlooking the basin which is six miles wide, you behold the Island of Orleans, stretched out before you, till it terminates in undistinguishable haze, whilst on the left you have the north coast, rising gradually into distant mountains, from which the river Montmorency precipitating itself into the St. Lawrence, is all but seen, through a grove of firs, and the view terminates abruptly in the perpendicular Promontory of Cape Tournout, which is two thousand feet high, and therefore may be distinctly seen at the distance of thirty miles. On the right you have the rocks of Point Levi, and behold the shipping in the harbor, at an immense depth below. Imagine the effect of this whole fairy-scene, connected as it is by the broad surfaces of the River, which is seen again upon the edge of the horizon, winding round the stupendous Bluff above mentioned, in its course towards the sea.

The field of battle lies a mile further west—The common remains bare, and uncultivated; and a little to the left of the road to Montreal, you perceive a large stone, near which trickles perpetually the superfluous moisture of the upper town; the streets of which, in wet weather, are rinsed, over the heads of the luckless passenger, by those projecting spouts which are so common in the situated towns of Germany.

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The French Governor of Quebec, M. de Montcalm, fell likewise on the field of battle, yet such is the injustice of mankind to those who seek the bubble honour, in the cannon's mouth, that the man who died in the defence of his country, is never mentioned with applause, because unsuccessful; whilst the victorious invader of a foreign shore is puffed to the skies by the meretricious trumpet of Fame.

POLITICAL.

From the *Charleston Patriot*.

In looking back to the late session of Congress it is impossible not to notice, in one view, its extreme barrenness.—Much oratory has been no doubt displayed, much ingenuity expended, much valuable information elicited, but the public business has stood still, whilst the orators, one and all, were delighting, as they thought, the galleries, and delighting no doubt, themselves. The House of Representatives has, in fact, been transformed this session nearly entirely into a theatre of eloquence, where each who supposed himself gifted, appeared to play his part, and the actors became in the end, nearly as numerous as the spectators. This is, however, paying too high a price for our public displays of this description; the practice is becoming an evil of magnitude. As long as so large a proportion of the members continue more ambitious to shine as orators than to be useful as legislators, the business of making laws will be viewed as a dull and heavy duty, and the people come to look on the national legislature as

an arena for the exhibition merely of oratorical gladitorship.

We are aware that in a popular government this is, in some measure, unavoidable, but the publication of the speeches delivered, has a tendency, we are of opinion, to foster the practice. The public looks in consequence for this sort of intellectual food, and the representative, aware of it, pampers the appetite. He speaks, he publishes, that he may be read, imitated, admired, applauded and become popular, mangre the pains which have been taken to work up the rude draught, by the aid of rhetrical embellishment, into a goodly specimen of eloquence.

We are aware that the agitation of public questions of commanding interest will give rise to diversity of opinion, and we are not now about to confound that the lights that are struck out in argument the flash of eloquence that illuminate debate, the strokes of genius that kindle or move are without their use and their beauty, but the number who are gifted for this high purpose, are extremely small in the largest deliberative assembly. The few master spirits of the scene, who by the force of their mental superiority, direct the opinions, and controul the votes, of the majority, are sufficient to illustrate important questions, to display their bearings and tendencies, to dispel error, to detect sophistry, and to carry conviction to the minds of others, whilst much that is uttered by those who appear in their tract must be superfluous or weak, or have a tendency to embarrass the argument.

Is it necessary that every Representative should make an essay in oratory, or even deliver his opinion, on all interesting questions brought up for decision? What the effect will be it is easy to anticipate, as our population increases and our Representatives multiply. The entire year will be too short a period for the accomplishment of the public business. Important subjects of legislation will sleep from session to session, after lengthened discussion and if new members should be in the interval introduced, the question will probably have to be debated anew, and the points once gained freshly contested. Every new election may carry into Congress a new race of orators, who are panting for the public scene and the occasion to show off their powers, or to be applauded and admired for their published speeches.

RELIGIOUS.

Extract of a letter just received in Sattunah, from one of the American Missionaries at Bombay, dated, July 15 1818.

DEAR SIR:

From communications we have already made to America, you have probably learnt the general circumstances of our voyage. Our reception here, and our prospects of usefulness, are quite as favorable as our most sanguine hopes had led us to anticipate. The field before us is extensive and interesting. We are in the midst of an immense population, elevated in some respects above the common standard of civilization, but in others sunk far below the most barbarous tribes of men. The Hindus are acquainted with the various agricultural and mechanical arts; but nothing can be more shocking than their ignorance of every thing most important for men to know. And this may be traced directly to their baseless systems of idolatry. They are in general ignorant of every just idea of God—of his justice, and of his mercy. They have no correct ideas of human accountability, or of those obligations to truth, fidelity and justice, so generally recognised in Christian lands. Idolatry is never a solitary vice—it is always connected with every thing that is odious and disgusting in the human character.

For this deadly disease, which has for ages been sweeping millions into the pit of eternal destruction, there is no remedy but the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Hence the immense importance that it should be