POETRY.

The Floating Straw.

BY CHARLES MACKAY.

The wild waves are my nightly pillows,
Beneath me roll the Atlantic billows;
And as I rest on my couch of brine
I watch the eternal planets shine.
Ever I ride
On a harmless tide.
Fearing naught—enjoying all things—
Undisturbed by great or small things.
Alas! for the lordly vessel
That sails so gallantly;
The winds may dash it;
The storms may dash it,
The lightnings rend its tall masts three:
But neither the wind, nor the rain, nor the sea
Can injure me—can injure me;
The lightnings cannot strike me down,
Whirlwinds wreck, or whirlpools drown;
And the ship to be lost ere the break of morn,
May pass o'er my head in saucy scorn;
And when the night unveils its face,
I may float unharmed, in my usual place,
And the ship may show to the pitying stars
No remnant but her broken spars.
Among the shells
In the ocean dells
The ships, the crews, and the captains lie,
But the floating straw looks up to the sky,
And the humble and contented man,
Unknown to fortune, escapes her ban;
And rides secure when breakers leap,
And mighty ships go down to the deep.
May pleasant breezes waft them home
That plough with their keels the driving foam.
Heaven be their hope, and Truth their law;—
There needs no prayer for the floating straw.

Italian Patriotic Song.

TRANSLATED BY WM. CULLEN BRYANT.

Here ye the trumpet that calls to the combat?
Up with your banner to stream in the sky?
Children of Italy, forward together!
Bravely in battle to conquer or die.
Down with the Germans, with kings and cowards!
Spurned be their bribes, and their tortures defied.
Freedom for Italy! what if we perish?
Greatly we perish on Liberty's side.
Matrons, come forth, with the old men and children,
Grasping your weapons at Liberty's call.
Charge on the tyrants, the foes of your country—
Foes who for ages have held her in thrall.
Loud be the cry, that for battle and vengeance,
Rises from millions on Italy's shore:
She shall be free, and her children united,
Slaves to the Austrian despot no more!
She shall be free, or we sleep in our graves—
Better die bravely, than live to be slaves.

NAPOLEON AT MOSCOW

We subjoin from Headly's work 'Napoleon and his Marshals,' a brilliant account of the burning of Moscow, which is well spoken of in the American Whig Review as superior even to Cooly's picture, in 'Salathiel, of the conflagration of Rome.—Headly's descriptive powers have rarely, if ever, been surpassed:

At length, Moscow, with its domes and towers, and palaces, appeared in sight, and Napoleon, who had joined the advanced guard gazed long and thoughtfully on that goal of his wishes Murat went forward and entered the gates with his splendid cavalry, but, as he passed through the streets, he was struck with the solitude which surrounded him.—Nothing was heard but the heavy tramp of his squadron as he passed along, for a deserted and abandoned city was the meagre prize for which such unparalleled efforts had been made. As night drew its curtain over their splendid capital, Napoleon entered the gates, and immediately appointed Mortier governor. In his directions, he commanded him to abstain from all pillage. 'For this,' said he, 'you shall be answerable with your life. Defend Moscow against all, whether friend or foe.

The bright moon rose over the mighty city, tipping with silver the domes of more than two hundred churches, and pouring a flood of light over a thousand palaces and the dwelling of three hundred thousand inhabitants. The weary army sank to rest; but there was no sleep to Mortier's eyes.—Not the gorgeous and variegated palaces and their rich ornaments, nor the parks and gardens and oriental magnificence that every where surrounded him, kept him wakeful, but the ominous foreboding that some dire calamity was hanging over the silent capital When he entered it, scarce a living soul met his gaze as he looked down the long streets; —and when he broke open the building he found parlors, and bedrooms, and chambers, all furnished and in order—but no occupants.

The sudden abandonment of their homes betokened some secret purpose yet to be fulfilled. The midnight moon was sailing over the city, when the cry of 'Fire!' reached the ears of Mortier; and the first light over Napoleon's falling empire was kindled, and that most wonderous scene of modern times commenced—the burning of Moscow.

Mortier, as governor of the city, immediately issued his orders, and was putting forth every exertion, when at daylight Napoleon hastened to him Affecting to disbelieve the reports that the inhabitants were firing their own city, he put more rigid commands on Mortier to keep the soldiers from the work of destruction The Marshal simply pointed to some iron covered houses that had not yet been opened, from every crevice of which smoke was issuing like steam from the sides of a pent-up volcano.

Sad and thoughtful, Napoleon turned towards the Kremlin, the ancient palace of the Czars, whose huge structure rose high above the surrounding edifices

In the morning, Mortier, by great exertions, was enabled to subdue the fire. The next night (September 15) at midnight, the sentinels on watch up on the lofty Kremlin saw below them the flames bursting through the houses and palaces, and the cry of 'Fire! fire! fire!' passed through the city.—The dread scene had now fairly opened Fiery balloons were seen dropping from the air and lighting upon the houses —dull explosions were heard on every side from the shut dwellings, and the next moment a bright light burst forth, and the flames were raging through the apartments All was uproar and confusion. The serene air and moonlight of the night before had given way to driving clouds and wild tempests, that swept with the roar of the sea over the city. Flames arose on every side, blazing and cracking in the storm, while clouds of smoke and sparks, in an incessant shower, went driving towards the Kremlin. The clouds themselves seemed turned into fire, rolling in wrath over devoted Moscow.

Mortier, crushed with the responsibility thus thrown upon his shoulders, moved with his young guard amid this desolation, blowing up the houses and facing the tempest and flames, struggling nobly to arrest the conflagration He hastened from place to place amid the blazing ruins, his face blackened with smoke, and his hair and eyebrows singed with the fierce heat.

At length the day dawned—a day of tempest and flame—and Mortier, who had strained every nerve for thirty-six hours, entered a palace and dropped from fatigue. The manly form and stalwart arm that so often carried death into the ranks of the enemy at length gave way, and the gloomy marshal lay and panted in utter exhaustion

But the night of tempest had been succeeded by a day of tempest, and when night again enveloped the city, it was one broad flame, waving to and fro in the blast. The wind had increased to a perfect hurricane, and shifted from quarter to quarter, as if on purpose to swell the sea of fire and extinguish the last hope.

The fire was approaching the Kremlin; and already the roar of the flames, and the crash of the falling houses, and the crackling of burning timbers, were borne to the ears of the startled Emperor.—He arose and walked to and fro, stopping convulsively and gazing on the terrific scene. Murat, Eugene and Berthier rushed into his presence, and on their knees besought him to flee; but he still hung to that haughty palace as if it were his empire.

But at length the shout, 'The Kremlin is on fire! was heard above the roar of the conflagration, and Napoleon reluctantly consented to leave. He descended to the street with his staff, and looked about for a way of egress, but the flames blocked every passage. At length they discovered a postern gate leading to the Moskwa, and entered it; but they had only entered still further into the danger. As Napoleon cast his eye around the open space, girded and arched with fire, smoke and cinders, he saw one single street yet open, but all on fire Into this he rushed, and, amid the crash of falling houses and raging of the flames, over burning ruins, thro' clouds of rolling smoke, and between walls of fire, he pressed on, and at length, half suffocated, emerged in safety in the imperial palace of Petrowsky, nearly three miles distant

Mortier, relieved of his anxiety for the Emperor, redoubled his efforts to arrest the conflagration.—His men cheerfully rushed into every danger.—Breathing nothing but smoke and ashes—canopied by flame, smoke and cinders—surrounded by walls of fire that rocked to and fro, and fell with a crash amid the blazing ruins, carrying down with them red hot roofs of iron—he struggled against an enemy that no boldness could awe or courage overcome These brave troops had heard the tramp of thousands of cavalry sweeping to battle, without fear; but now they stood in still terror before the march of the conflagration, under whose burning footsteps was heard the incessant crash of falling houses, and palaces, and churches. The continuous roar of the flames was more terrible than the roar of the artillery; and before this new foe, in the midst of the elements, the awe-struck army stood powerless and affrighted.

When night again descended on the city, it presented a spectacle the like of which was never seen before, which baffles all description. The streets were streets of fire, the heavens a canopy of fire, and the entire body of the city a mass of fire, fed by the hurricane that whirled the blazing fragments in a constant stream through the air Incessant explosions, from the blowing up of stores of oil, tar, and spirits, shook the very foundation of the city, and sent vast volumes of smoke rolling furiously towards the sky. Huge sheets of canvas on fire came floating like messengers of death thro' the flames —the towers and domes of the churches and palaces glowed with red hot heat over the wild sea below—then, tottering a moment on their basses, were hurled by the tempest into the common ruin. Thousands of wretches, before unseen, were driven by the heat from the cellars and hovels, and streamed in an incessant throng in the streets. Children were seen carrying their parents—the strong the weak; while thousands more were staggering under the loads of plunder they had snatched from the flames. This, too, would frequently take fire in the falling shower, and the miserable creatures would be compelled to drop it, and flee for their lives Oh, it was a scene of fear and wo, inconceivable and indescribable! A mighty and close packed city of houses, and churches, and palaces, wrapped from limit to limit in flames, which are fed by a whirling hurricane, is a sight this world will seldom see.

But this was within the city. To Napoleon, without, the spectacle was still more sublime and terrific. When the flames had overcome all obstacles, and had wrapped everything in their red mantle, that great city looked like a sea of rolling fire, swept by a tempest that drove it into vast billows. Huge domes and towers, throwing off sparks like blazing firebrands, now towered above the waves, and now disappeared in their maddening flow, as they broke high over their tops, scattering their spray of fire against the clouds. The heavens themselves seemed to have caught the conflagration, and the angry masses that swept it rolled over a bosom of fire Columns of flame would rise and sing along the surface of this sea, and huge volumes of black smoke suddenly shoot into the air, as if volcanoes were working below The black form of the Kremlin alone towered above the chaos, now wrapped in flame and smoke, and then again merging into view—standing amid the scene of desolation and terror like virtue in the midst of a burning world enveloped but unscatted by the devouring elements Napoleon stood and gazed on this scene in silent awe. Though nearly three miles distant, the windows and walls of his apartment were so hot he could scarcely bear his hand against them—Said he, years afterwards.

'It was the spectacle of the sea and billows of fire, a sky and clouds of flame—mountains of red rolling flame, like immense waves of the sea, alternately bursting forth, and elevating themselves to skies of fire, and then sinking into the ocean below. Oh, it was the most naked, the most sublime, and the most terrific sight the world ever beheld!"

MANUFACTURES FROM THE COCOA NUT.

The cocoa manufactures are remarkable for simplicity of the process resorted to, and for the usefulness of the articles produced, in many instances, from materials formerly thrown away as useless. The cocoa-nut as it comes from the tree consists, first, of the outer husk, composed of fibres matted and adhering together; secondly, the shell, and thirdly, the kernel. The manufacturers up to the present time employed only the outer husk and kernal. The natives of India have long used the fibres obtained by rotting the outer husk till the fibres can be separated by beating the husks. The fibres are spun into yarn by the native girls and women, by rubbing such fibres between the palm of the hand and the surface of the leg, and in this manner is made the large quantity of Coir yarn brought into that country, and used for weaving cloths for covering passages and rooms, and also matting for various uses. Notwithstanding this rude mode of spinning the fibres up to the present time no better means have yet been introduced; and the whole of the yarn employed in England is imported. This, however, may be accounted for by reason of there having been no practical mode of obtaining the fibre in Britian from the husks till very lately. Now, however, that ready means of obtaining the fibres from the husk are known it is reasonable to expect some better means of spinning will be invented. The kusks are beaten to obtain the fibre; which consist of three descriptions first, a light elastic fibre for stuffing furniture; secondly, a coarses fibre used for making mats; and, thirdly, a strong fibre used for brushes and brooms. The husks are soaked for some time, then subjected to the pressure of grooved rollers, and then, by successive processes of carding by revolving cylinders armed with bent teeth, the fibres are combed out, the separate descriptions of fibres being deposited in different receivers. The uses of these fibres are for making of brushes, brooms, mats, and mattresses. The kernels are dried in the sun, then pounded in mills, to extract the oil; but in more modern times the dried kernel has been pressed between mats in powerful presses. The oil, for the most part, is sent to England, and was formily largely employed in the manufacture of candles. The oil being, when it comes to London, of about the consistency of lard, requires pressing to seperate the stearine from the œlaine, and this is done between mats of cocoa-nut fibre pressed in powerful presses. The stearine was used for candles at first alone, then in combination with stearic acid of tallow, producing what are called composite candles; and it was the introduction of stearine of cocoa-nut, combined with steric acid which constituted the first step to the great improvement which has taken place in the manufacture of candles. The larger quantities of cocoa-nut oil, however, are now exported to France, to make soap—the use of such oil in candle making being now, for the most part, substituted by palm oil. It has lately been proposed, in Ceylon, to employ the juice of the cocoa-nut tree for the making of sugar; it being considered that each tree is capable of producing upwards of one hundred weight per annum, and that an acre of cocoa-nut trees, requiring little cultivation, will produce at least twice as much sugar as an acre of sugar cane requiring much more cultivation. —*Scientific American.*

THE MINUTENESS OF CREATION.—It is utterly impossible for the mind to conceive of the almost infinite minuteness of an atom. A single grain of gold, for instance, might be beaten out so as to cover a square foot of space, and yet we have not approached its reduction to atoms. An admirable illustration by Delper, he would give, as he said never seen it quoted: it was this: Reduce a cubic inch of sulphur to fine powder, and you may cover with it an area of six square miles. Take one grain of this powder and triturate it thoroughly with ninety-nine grains of sugar of milk, and its presence would be detectible in every grain of the hundred. Take a grain of this, and treat it in the same way with other ninety-nine grains of sugar of milk, and so on; at the third dilution as we may call it, the powder thus resulting from a cubic inch of sulphur would cover two square miles of area; at the fifth, the empire of Austria at the sixth, the whole of Asia and Africa; at the ninth, it would cover the entire surface of the sun, with all its planets, and all their satellites. And yet, although in every grain of this powder the sulphur was found to be present, we had not reduced it to atoms. Again, it is well known that every drop of rotted water, under certain circumstances contains millions of animalcules, invisible except to high powers of the microscope. And every one of these animalcules is a lightly organized being, having at least something analogous to a skeleton.—capable of action—of pursuing, of retreating, of attack and of defence. The globules of the blood of an elephant are perceivable only with a powerful microscope, and yet these animalcules must have blood and that blood must consist of similar globules. Once more! The Bovista Giganteus, species of mushroom, in the space of twelve hours shoots up from a scarcely perceptible germ to a plant a foot in diameter. Every square inch of its surface contains three hundred and thirty-six millions of cells, every cell, with their six sides is divided from those around it by filaments of far more complex structure than an atom of potash, and yet we have not got a glimpse even of the atoms of which they are composed. He would confess, inquiries such as these inspired him with but one feeling—fear. It was as if he were taken, by some profound anonomer, far amongst the worlds that people infinite space, and he was ready to cry out for somebody to lead him back to solid ground once more. One thing only gave him comfort; he knew of something higher, deeper than those facts—it was their idea. These were, after all, only the letters in which the infinite idea is blazoned. He felt as did the deep-thoughted Pascal, when he exclaimed, that although the universe were to crush him, he would still feel himself greater that the universe, for *he* knew *that and how* it was crushing him. [*Darwin's Lecturer.*

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