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## American Presbyterian.

THURSDAY, AUGUST 31, 1865.

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#### THE LAST PORTRAIT OF VOLTAIRE

Although Carlyle is famous for his hero worship, and although he believes there were worshipful qualities in Voltaire, the picture he draws of this profane and yet gifted man of letters, contains some of the most humiliating traits that ever were raised into notoriety by the fame of their possessor. Voltaire was one of the French savants whom Frederick the Great took pride in attaching to himself, and in weaving into the honors and brilliancies of his Court. Hence Carlyle, in his Life of the Prussian Monarch,\* is frequently called on to speak of the witty Frenchman, in fact gives us quite a graphic and interesting portrait of him. It is a subject which has apparently strong attractions for Carlyle; he returns to it again and again in many an extract and comment, and yet the resulting impression, and perhaps the one after all designed to be left on the reader's mind, is not mainly one of power, nor of wit, nor of eminence any way, but rather of disgust and amazement, not unmixed with pity for the subject. We see a restless, dissatisfied jealous, thoroughly unhappy man, unable to gain a position accordant with his ambition at the French court, unable by the sheer follies and extravagances of his temper, to retain such a position gladly awarded him by the Prussian monarch. We see a man regardless of the sanctities of domestic life; incapable, apparently, of being wounded by the grossest offences in his domestic relations-if, indeed, the word "domestic" could be used in reference to his-a man of the hollowest sort of friendship towards his truest benefactor, eulogizing the kins in his most skilful verses to his face, and deriding him behind his back; shamefully abusing the king's kindest and most intimate confidences and straining his royal endurance to the utmost, and then, when discovered, whining most piteously for forgiveness; -all such and other contemptible traits are brought to light, and made most indubitably clear by contemporary documents, until one must admit that no small part of the Voltairian nature is infected with utter and radical meanness and dis-

It is quite impossible for us to speak fully of what we have called the domestic relations of Voltaire. As represented by Carlyle, he seems to have had no more conscience upon the most sacred of these relations than the most besotted of heathers. or than a brute. An offence of the most aggravated kind committed against himself in these relations, does not appear to have excited in him the slightest flush of indignation against the guilty parties. They still enjoyed his friendship and maintained their places in his circle. No other inference is possible, than that Voltaire's moral sense was steeped in utter debasement. From another source quite friendly to Voltaire, we learn that during his visit to England, his conversation at Pope's dinner table was such that the mother of Pope was compelled to retire from the company.

Voltaire appears in these sketches insatiably eager for courtly and scientific recognition. He hung about the court of Louis XV. until, by the help of Madame Pompadour, he gained a precarious footing there as historiographer. By favor of the same all-powerful beauty, Voltaire, in 1747, saw himself one of the forty Academicians. This elevation of a known infidel, however, created unusual commotion, and Voltaire found himself a target for a perfect tempest of ridicule, which he had no patience to endure. He accordingly plunged into a lawsuit with an obscure person, found himself even then mistaken in the party, and was entangled for above a year in all the pettiness and the mortification of appeals, informations, and processes, which really seem to have harmed no one but himself. Even Carlyle ridicules him in these pro-

\*History of Friedrich the Second, called he Great by Thomas Carlyle, Vols. I.-IV. ew York: Harper & Brothers. 12mo, with gravings.

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### PHILADELPHIA, THURSDAY, AUGUST 31, 1865.

ceedings, as an Academical gentleman taking | lyle does believe and admit that Vol- | THE UNSATISFACTORY POLICY OF | put on her judicial robes, and to mark with in distressed circumstances;" "Phœbus did in these transaction commit forgery!" Apollo going about as mere Cowherd of The king himself writes to his sister that Admetus, and exposed to amuse the popu- "Voltaire picks Jews' pockets!" lace by his duels with dogs that have bitthe good graces of Majesty, led, as it is, by Capricious Beauty. The king passing out in company with Richelieu, after the reprein which the king is called "divine Trajan," overheard the eager flatterer ask Richelieu whether Trajan was pleased? (Trajan, est il content?) and returned an angry glance; as much as to say, "Impertinent Lackey!" "Oh my Voltaire," exclaims Carlyle, "to what dunghills do you stoop with homage, constrained by their of Sciences, Maupertuis, which led to Volappearance of mere size!" Soon, in spite taire's overthrow, we can say but little; in of all these abasements and flatteries, he finds himself practically supplanted at the French court and retires into private life.

But Frederick the Great, who, when Crown-Prince, had known and admired Voltaire, and who was on no very friendly terms with Louis XV. at this time, now interposed and brought the discarded philosopher to his court, where he was treated with truly royal friendliness, frankness, and liberality. Here he might have held positions of eminent influence and renown. Or his great talents might have employed themselves with every advantage in the uninterrupted and peaceful pursuits of literature. A truly noble mind would have known how to reciprocate the generous sentiments of the king, and to improve the opportunity of great achievements presented by the royal favor. On the contrary, the whole period of Voltaire's stay at the court of Prussia, almost from the beginning, is one scene of intrigues, of small jealousies, of despicable transactions, of disloyalty to the royal friendship, of restlessness and misery amid shows of greatness, constituting, as drawn by the graphic hand of Carlyle, one of the most humiliating and convincing pictures in the whole history of human depravity.

Of course our limits forbid the attempt, which, in any case, would be unedifying, to enter into the details of this period. But we must dwell for a few moments on a scandalous piece of stockjobbing, in which Voltaire was caught and exposed to the world, soon after his appearance at the court of Frederick. For it must be remembered that Voltaire was a practiced hand in money-making, and a successful speculator in an earlier period of his life. At the peace of Dresden, agreed to just before Voltaire arrived, between the governments of Saxony and Prussia, it had been stipulated by Frederick, that Saxony, which was then employing a depreciated currency, should pay all Prussian subjects then holders of Saxon Exchequer Bills, principal and interest, in gold; whatever became of holders in other countries. As was to be expected, a contraband traffic in these bills threatened to spring up, by which they might all in time have been transferred to Prussian hands, and become payable in gold. But Frederick, rightly regarding this as a breach of faith, denounced the tariffic and menaced it down. At this juncture Voltaire appeared at Berlin, and being at least quite as keen for gain as for position, saw the opportunity to make twenty-five to thirty-five per cent. on his money, in this contraband speculation in the bills of the Saxon Treasury. Totally indifferent to the severe rescripts of his royal friend on the subject, and ignoring all the moral principles involved, he determines to invest a sum amounting to over eleven thousand dollars in the speculation. To cover up his tracks, he employs a Jew, furnishes him with negociable bills to that amount, takes security for the bills in jewels, and speaks of the business as a transaction in "furs" and "diamonds." The Jew agent then leaves for Dresden. All might now have been accomplished to the satisfaction of the philosopher-speculator, and the world never the wiser of it, but for the failure of the Jew to fulfil his part and the consequent stoppage of the principal draft by Voltaire. Hence arose the most vehement disputes and tutile attempts at settlement, followed by a law-suit between the parties, and all Berlin and all Europe rang with the scandal. Such shuffling, such overreaching, such close-fisted bargaining, such cur-like snapping and snarling, such melancholy littleness as were exhibited in these transactions between the 'Olympian'' Voltaire and the Jew Hirsh, one does not often see among the hucksters

in our fish and provision markets. We do

not know whether to believe it-Carlyle

does not charge us to discredit, the accusa-

poor dog by the ears, as "Olympian Jove | taire-upon his oath it seems-did lie, and

Other quarrels and scandals followed this ten him." And in spite of all his humili- law suit with the Jew. As Carlyle says: ating manœuvres, he is unable to keep in | "Voltaire has a fatal talent of getting into quarrels with insignificant accidental people; and instead of silently, with cautious finger, disengaging any bramble that catches sentation of a triumphal piece by Voltaire, to him and thankfully passing on, attacks it indignantly, with potent steel implements, wood-axes, war-axes; brandishing and hewing-till he has stirred up a whole wilderness of bramble-bushes and is himself bramble-chips all over." Of these petty quarrels, nor of that greater one over the perpetual President of Frederick's Academy fact but a word or two of the last.

Voltaire, perpetually jealous of the influence of the Academician with the king, and despising what he considered his pompous dullness, after many lesser demonstrations, wrote a powerful satire upon his character and performances. The king read the satire, and enjoyed it, but commanded Voltaire to withhold it entirely from the public. Voltaire promised, but his word to a royal benefactor was as nothing in comparison with the gratification of his jealous and vindictive nature. Soon Dr. Akakia, as the satire was called, appeared in Holland, appeared in Berlin under the king's nose, and all the world was in conversation about it. Thirty thousand copies were sold in Paris alone. Voltaire's dishonesty being actually without limit, he declares that its publication was by accident; "fatal treacherv and accident:" Frederick answers that such effrontery is astonishing, and asks whether he imagines he will make people believe that black is white? And so, after many more shufflings and discreditable manœuvres, the unprincipled, ungrateful, passionate man leaves the court and territory of Frederick in disgrace.

But enough, enough. We must conclude this lamentable picture of human wickedness and weakness, which we take no pleasure in reproducing. Read finally a single paragraph of forbele; show it to unbelievers who may be inclined to respect the memory of the profane Frenchman, and say, "These be thy gods, O Israel!"

Quoting first some of Voltaire's expressions descriptive of the externals of his position at the Prussian court-" Potsdam is Sparta and Athens joined in one; a camp of Mars and the Garden of Epicurus; trumpets and violins, War and Philosophy. I have my time to myself; am at Court and in freedom;"-Carlyle proceeds to look at the facts from within. "Alongside of these warblings from a heart grateful to the first of kings, there goes on a series of utterances to Niece Denis (Voltaire's niece and correspondent in Paris) remarkable for the misery driven into meanness that can be read in them. Ill health, discontent, vague terror, suspicion that dare not go to sleep; a strange vague terror, shapeless or taking all shapes; a body diseased and a mind diseased. Fear quaking continually for nothing at all, is not to be borne in a handsome manner; and it passes often roughly (in these poor Letters) into transient malignity, into gusts of trembling hatred, with a tendency to relieve ones self by private scandal of the house we are in. A man hunted by the little devils that dwell unchained within himself, like Pentheus by the Mænads, like Actæon by his own dogs."

\*A curious and painstaking German has published facsimiles of documents produced in evidence by Voltaire on the trial, one of which, in Voltaire's hand, bears indisputable marks of having been tampered with and falsified by interpolations, after it 'had been signed by the other party. "No fact," says Carlyle, "is more certain, and few are sadder in the history of M. de Voltaire. . . . When the judges, not hiding their surprise at the form of the document, asked, 'Will you swear it is all genuine?' Voltaire answered, 'Yes, certainly!'"

#### A PINCH.

"How do you brethren manage about money? I have been praying for money for these two weeks, and have not received any yet," said a worthy and laborious minister to us this morning. "I have read Muller's Life to strengthen my faith, but I hardly know what to do I have blacked my buttons and darned my coat, and my vest is so shabby that I dare not raise my arms when I preach." "Ah!" responded a brother minister, "you have not got to my point yet; I button up my vest to my chin, so as not to show my shirt." And so the good men had a cheery, jovial chat over their shortened purses, and went back, each to his work, cheerful, happy, and uncom tion of the Jew, that Voltaire had changed

# THE GOVERNMENT.

It is of no use to attempt to conceal it The people are more than disappointed, they are fast becoming disgusted, scandalized, and alarmed by the policy of the Government in dealing with its conquered rebel subjects. Looking at the attitude of the President for the past five months, they are reluctantly compelled to admit that he is not showing himself the man of iron nerve, of earnest and indignant purpose, of inflexible justice, suited to deal with rebels, whose last weapon—assassination-had elevated him to the position he holds. That prompt and rigorous policy which the universal voice of the astonished and afflicted people demanded upon the death of the late President, and confidently expected at the hands of his successor-for which, indeed they regarded his successor pre-eminently fitted and providentially designated, has not been followed, save in the punishment of the miserable and contemptible agents in the assassination. Beyond this, not one visible attempt to execute justice upon the unspeakably guilty authors of our great national calamities, of our barely escaped national ruin! No! but a headlong haste to resore to these bitter and implacable enemies of their country, fresh from fields of carnage or from traitorous councils, almost every political privilege and right they ever before enjoyed; a vast bill of amnesties, whose very exceptions are fast becoming a mockery; all the wheels of Government clogged, and the health of the President sacrificed in the rush for pardons and the zeal to restore to excepted parties and flaming rebels their entire political status; men tainted with treason raised to high positions in the process of econstruction; the whole rebel machinery of State Government, as it existed at the close of the war, with exception of the legislative and gubernatorial department, recognized and confirmed in one instance, by a semi-loyal Provisional Governor; and the whole political, social, and ecclesiastical reconstruction of the South falling rapidly back into the hands of the very class of men whom we have spent three a million or lives in conquering on the

econstructing policy of the President and the South, who are editing its papers, restatus which the amiability and the weakness of the North will yield; rebels animated with murderous hatred toward the race which has nominally escaped from their power, and which has so largely conseize upon positions where they can securely their former slaves? entrench themselves under the Constitution, from whence they can beat back Northern immigration, Northern newspapers, Northern teachers and preachers, and from whence signalling to their old allies in Churca and State at the North, they hope to wrest from the country half the advantages which it had gained for good

government and freedom in the war. Why, oh why, after all our bitter experiences must these things only threaten to be? Why, when we have, at the price of such numerous and such overwhelming victories, so amply secured ourselves against it, must the bare possibility of a partial revival of pro-slavery domination be suffered to haunt us? Is any State necessity laid upon us of re-constructing the South in a single summer? Have rebellious communities any such immediate and urgent claims upon us, that even with the disappearance of the last battle-cloud of their unsuccessorder they have destroyed? Shall there be no time allowed first to weigh the meas-

her most solemn and deliberate proceedings, and her most weighty sentence, her condemnation of such a supreme instance of guilt? What business, indeed, has justice among the generations of men, if she is to be set aside, postponed, ignored, in dealing with the authors of such a carnival of

crime as unjustifiable rebellion, as this rebellion? President Johnson has allowed himself no such pause: has given justice no such precedence. The absorbing business of the Government has been re-construction; it the legislative arm, into all the intricate about persistently far into the twilight, and momentous processes of that undertaking without experience or example to guide it; it has allowed itself to be overwhelmed and exhausted with applications from excepted cases for pardon! What a National arms. The British mind is not spectacle. The successor of the assassinato be a terror to evil doers, the ruler of ten cisive victory and undisturbed peace. It or a dozen provinces lately in bitter and may grow dangerously indignant at deceit bloody rebellion, before he carries through, too palpable, even if practiced in the line or fairly initiates process against a single of its dearest prejudices. The honest core rebel, as such, allows himself to be tasked of John Bull's heart has been reached, and to the very limits of physical endurance, the Times is too shrewd not to know and until health and life are in peril by the act upon the fact. rush of pardon seekers whom he has encouraged to make such appeals!

rounded justice, and under which they fully acquainted with them now, and to triumphed, are down, and in the name of learn the responsibility of Davis and Lee peace and re-construction, a greedy crowd for the crime. The correspondent is temof hypocritical oath-takers are rushing in perate and calm, but he declares that "the and trampling her in the mire. But are evidence upon which the charges of cruelty we opposed to the exercise of the pardoning power? Do we wish indiscriminate vengeance visited upon the rebel population? By no means. Amnesty and pardon are good things, are necessary things in their place and order; out of it, they are mischief and poison to the State. President says the prisoners had not food enough "to Johnson's grievous blunder is not in par- keep a dog alive." Describes the shooting doning, but in not administering justice at the windows-"this crime proved to first; in not exhausting his physical ener- have been committed in scores of cases" gies, (if that were necessary,) first, in bring- refers to the withholding of stores sent from thousand millions in money and half ing to light by judicial process the enor- the North to the starving prisoners—"the mous crime of the rebellion, and visiting prisoners died with hunger in the sight of its penal consequences upon the heads of plenty;" declares it proved beyond doubt-It is egregious trifling with ourselves to the most guilty; in not overwhelming the "every Confederate soldier, private or offihide, to ignore, or to extenuate the facts. departments, (if that were necessary,) | cer, who is questioned on the subject ad-The classes, who, under the pardoning and first, with such numerous and urgent details mits it—that in the Northern prisons no as a righteous magistrate with the authors his counsellors are coming into power in of the greatest mischiefs of the century in Federal and Confederate; both were carehis grasp, might well press upon his subororganizing its churches, leading its voters dinates. And what has followed, but results clothing and food. and shaping its civil affairs, are beaten but easily foreseen to be inevitable? Must unrepentant rebels; rebels malignant and not rebels, hearing much of pardon, but mortified by their defeat, rebels determined not a word of justice, necessarily grow to save all of their old civilization and bold and hopeful? With all the old paths have felt toward the Russians if they had to power laid open before them, with place starved and murdered fifteen thousand of and position near, and punishment for re- your soldiers in one prison." bellion remote, with no warning example before their eyes, can we expect them to throw of Libby Prison, whence corpses of take a different course from what we now tributed to their defeat; rebels who have see them everywhere preparing to pursue? long ago calculated the value of Northern | Is it wonderful that they are arrogant, that sympathy, and whose plans of co-operation | they publish their convictions of rectitude with Northern traitors at the polls are well- in their rebellion, that they advise one matured and deep and startling enough, if we another to pretend loyalty for the sake of but knew them. This is the case in the sharing in the Government, and retaining larger part even of Tennessee, it is the case | such "rights," as they still may, that they in much of North Carolina, it is true of the speak of choosing only true Southerners to South as a whole; the elements of society represent them, that they turn from their hostile to the North, to the Union, to labors in provisional convention to petition among loyal people on the responsibility of emancipation are reforming their shattered for the pardon of Jeff. Davis, that they ranks, and under the hasty, inconsiderate offer Lee the Presidency of a University, policy of the Government, are hurrying to that they starve, cheat, oppress and murder could undoubtedly have prevented this A dispensation of justice on but a mod-

constructing and pardoning, would most certainly have changed the whole appearance of things. Had but two or three severe examples been made of prominent rebels in each State, first, then the olive branch might have been held out in safety. Then, pardoned citizens would have gone about their provisional elections with a keen sense of responsibility to the central Government. Then, even bitter rebels would have been cooled, and have schooled themselves not merely to a different policy, but to a different line of thinking. Then, the spirit of justice honored and appeared. would have walked the South with stately presence, would have restrained the remnants of rebellious feeling by her calm but stern brow, would have quieted arrogant pretensions and factious expectations by children in the doctrines of the pretensions and factious expectations by this legislation, free worship, which has exthe sight of her unsheathed sword, and isted in fact in some of the towns of Chili, ful war against the Government, should go would have shielded the weak and defenceour arrangements for restoring to them all less freedmen by the far off rumor of her and edifices of all denominations may be put the conveniences and amenities of the social mighty indignation. Mr. Johnson's ex- up and protected by law. periment is a failure, because it is an experiment. Justice is dishonored and weakure of guilt belonging to the movers in ened by experiments, where right and during the early part of August, show plaining, yet, after all, pinched. Let such a formidable and costly out break of wrong are so heaven-wide from each other no increase of membership at home, and (for the worse) the diamonds left in his our good laymen look around and ease utter lawlessness? Shall not a pause be as here. At least, let there be an end of a falling off of 2832 in the mission hands by Hirsh for security; but Car- the pinch, if it be in their neighborhood. allowed sufficient for outraged authority to them until plain duty is done.

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#### THE LONDON TIMES AGAIN.

At last the Times has found it needful to procure a truthful and tolerably loyal correspondent in this country. So long as there was any possible ground for expecting the success of the rebellion, this representative of the average sentiment of the the newspaper reading public of England, hired men to vilify, misrepresent, and abuse us, and to reiterate the most confident predictions of our downfall. But the truth can no longer be hid. The Republic and the essential principles of its polity are overwhelmingly triumphant. The bats and has plunged at once, without consulting lowls in the service of the Times, that hung have at last fled. They have not even the small consolation of a guerrilla warfare to report to the British haters of America, and secret skeptics of the success of the incapable of receiving unpalatable truth ted Lincoln, the magistrate ordained of God when emphasized by the fact of de-

The new correspondent has been stating in plain and unvarnished language the facts Plainly, there is no room for the calm, of the rebel treatment of our prisoners, deliberate processes of justice here. The facts, which to our astonishment, seem to President and his Law officer are otherwise have been utterly ignored by the English employed. The bayonets which once sur- public hitherto. They are likely to become rest is overwhelming and unanswerable." One of the sufferers was pointed out to him. "There were still traces of a robust and strong man about him, but he was physically a wreck, and his mind was utterly gone." He describes Andersonville briefly, distinction whatever was made between fully looked after, and always had proper 'It is very easy for you Englishmen to talk about mercy and forgiveness,' said a lady talking of this subject, 'but how would you

> "Davis," he says, "lived within a stone's starved men were daily carried out in large numbers. It may be asked, did Davis and General Lee know of the manner in which Southern prisoners were treated? The North believe they did, and, therefore, as I have said, the cry for their lives, however repulsive it may sound, is not a cry raised without provocation."

Nor does the correspondent fail to quote some of the strongest expressions current the civil and military heads of the rebellion for these dire and inhuman practices. Lee stravation had he seen fit, and Davis's just title would be Prince of Assassins. These erate scale, as a preliminary to all this re- revelations must assuredly get "through the hair" of the obstinate readers of the Times, and will contribute largely to disinfecting the public sentiment of its virulent and false humors.

## RELIGIOUS LIBERTY IN CHILI.

We clip the following paragraph from one of our daily exchanges, hoping that the facts are indeed as represented. There is hope for the countries in South America, from the moment they are fairly quit of the religious tyranny of the Pope.

The Chilian Congress has passed, with great unanimity, a bill prepared by the government, giving to those who do not profess the Roman Catholic faith liberty to offer worship within the precincts of individual property. Dissenters are also allowed to found and established children in the doctrines of their religion. By

BRITISH METHODISM-The Reports of the British M. E. Conference, in session field, chiefly in Jamaica.