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New Series.]

THE POET'S SONG TO THE STARS.

BY A. J. SPARROW.

Paraphrased from the German of Kroner.

Oh ye that calmly move—
In holy peace above—
Ruled by harmonious love—
Since first the world was new!
Oh, solemn stars of night!
Upon your path of light—
Eternal, pure and bright—
I spake to you!

While trustingly I gaze
Upon your shining rays,
A tender softness plays
Within my breast and brain.
Sweet stars! I have but three
Fond wishes dear to me,—
Oh, do not let them be
Breath'd forth in vain!

The love that I have known,—
The love I thought my own,—
It fails!—and left alone,
Mine is a joyless lot!
Restore that love which blest
The poets cling to breast;
This is my first request—
Refuse it not!

And deem it not too hard,
Oh, stars! to grant the bard
One—only one—reward
For all his glowing lays!
The lyre beneath my hand,
Oh, let it but command
In this, my Fatherland,
One voice of praise!

And when death's hour is nigh,
Then swan-like let me die,
And onwards let me fly,—
A singer pure and true!
When hence I shall depart,
Oh bear my fervent heart,
From sorrow's piercing dart,
Sweet stars, to you!

Notes of Travellers.

ROYAL MARRIAGE.

The New York Journal of Commerce contains a long letter from the Rev. Dr. Baird, now in Europe, in which he gives a description of the ceremonies of the marriage of the Grand Duchess Olga, daughter of the Russian Emperor Nicholas, to the Crown Prince of Wurtemberg. We extract what follows:—

As we entered, we found several of the dignitaries of the Church standing in the centre of the chapel, and the choir of men and boys, dressed in deep purple coats, which came down to their heels, standing half on one side, and half on the other side of the chapel, near to the "most holy place." In fact, they occupied corners of the chapel. The Ambassadors and Ministers of the Emperor, and your humble servant among them, stood on one side of the chapel, and hard by a portion of the singers.

It was some time after our arrival, that the Imperial family came. After them followed a great number of officers and ladies, who filled the ante-chamber or vestibule, or whatever else it may be called. The Archbishop of St. Petersburg, accompanied by several other dignitaries, dressed in their showy and heavy robes, which seemed to be composed more of silver and gold than anything else, and wearing their mitres, met the Emperor and Empress, and the rest of the Imperial group, in the middle of the other room, and received them in Oriental style, bowing most profoundly, and kissing their hands, an homage which was as graciously returned. Entering the chapel, the Emperor presented his daughter and her affianced to the Imperial chaplain, who was to perform the ceremony, and who received them on the estrade or platform. I had expected that the Metropolitan would perform this service; but he is a monk, and no monk is allowed in Russia to perform the marriage ceremony. The chaplain is a little old man, whose countenance interested me much.

After the presentations of the persons who were to be married, the Emperor, Empress, and the members of the Imperial family, took their places on the side of the chapel opposite the Ambassadors, and on the right hand of the officiating priest. The Emperor and Empress stood by a window, he being quite near to the portion of the choir on that side of the chapel. Next to the Empress stood her brother the Prince of Prussia, the heir to the throne of that country. Next to him and beside another window, stood the Duchess of Leuchtenberg, (the oldest daughter of the Emperor,) and her sister-in-law, the wife of His Imperial Highness Alexander Nicolaevitch, the heir to the throne of Russia. Next to them stood the Prince himself, and his three brothers, the Grand Duke Constantine, Nicholas, and Michael, who are youths from 8 to 10 or 12 years. Near to them, and in one of the side doors of the cha-

pel, stood the Grand Duke Michael, the brother of the Emperor. Next to him was the Duke of Leuchtenberg; the central door and the other side door were so crowded with great officers, that the ladies and gentlemen who filled the ante-chamber had but a poor chance to see what was going on in the chapel, although they might hear the chanting, and much of what was said.

After all had taken their places, the service commenced. The Grand Duchess and the Prince of Wurtemberg standing on the platform, occupied a conspicuous station; and certainly they went through their portion of the ceremony in an admirable manner. The Prince was dressed in the uniform of a Wurtemberg officer of the highest rank. He is a fine-looking young man, of between twenty-three and twenty-four years of age. He is well-formed, of proper height; possesses a very pleasant countenance, and has the reputation of unblemished morals and fine talents. The Grand Duchess is twenty-four years of age, and is older than her husband by some six months.—She is a beautiful woman—she is even called the most beautiful woman in Europe. However this may be, it is certain that it would be difficult to conceive of one that could possess more charms of person; and those of her mind and of her heart are said by those who know her well, not to be inferior to those of her person. She is rather above the medium height of ladies; has bright blue eyes, a fair blonde complexion, and auburn hair. Her dress was magnificent, as may be supposed.

In the first place, she wore a white, or rather a fawn-colored, silk dress, with large sleeves, that were adorned, as was the skirt, with a rich border of flowers of silver. A red velvet riband, of a couple of inches in width, passed from one shoulder over or beneath her bosom, round to the other side, from which hung numerous diamonds, as pendants. A necklace of the richest and most splendid kind, all sparkling with precious stones, adorned with many a fold, her neck and bosom; whilst two tresses of her hair fell on her fair shoulders behind, and two more descended before. A coronet, studded with precious stones, rested on her head; whilst a train or mantilla, if such it may be termed, made of the richest purple velvet, and lined and bordered with the most beautiful ermine, some ten or twelve feet long and six wide, attached to the dress below her shoulders, descended behind, and was borne by five great officers of state. In my humble opinion, she would have looked better without this splendid and heavy appendage. As it was, she appeared extremely beautiful. When she ascended the platform, and throughout the ceremony, she was rather paler than usual, but seemed to be self-possessed. The graceful manner in which she stood, and the great beauty and loveliness which beamed from her countenance, charmed every one, and made it impossible to take their eyes off her.

The marriage service was very long, and consisted of reading portions of the Gospels and Epistles, and chanting of prayers and hymns; the chaplain, and two deacons, who assisted him, taking the lead. And never have I heard such singing or chanting as from the choir, which consisted of from sixty to eighty boys and men. There was no instrument of any kind. I have heard the Pope's choir many times in the Sixtine chapel, but never did I hear any thing like this. The bass and soprano voices were wonderful. A great portion of the singing consisted of the responses in the prayers, chanted by the whole choir. I never heard sounds prolonged to any thing like the extent I did in these responses. Often the priest had made considerable progress in the next petition, before the last lingering notes of the choir uttering the preceding responses, had died away.

At the commencement of the ceremony, a wax candle was put into the left hands of the bride and bridegroom, which they held until its close. The marriage crowns were held over their heads, during almost the whole ceremony; the Grand Duke Constantine holding one over the Princess, the Grand Duke Nicholas holding the other over his brother-in-law, the Prince. It must have been fatiguing work to these youths, for they changed hands and position very often.

At one stage of the ceremony, the officiating priest uniting the right hands of the parties whom he was marrying, and taking their hands in his, led them three times around the altar, accompanied by the crown-bearers, train-bearers, and two deacons, whilst the choir and priests chanted portions of the Scriptures in the most wonderful manner. It seemed almost as if the very walls of the chapel must be driven asunder by the power and immensity of the volume of voice, which was poured forth by the many-throated band.

During the whole service, the Emperor, the Empress, all the members of the Imperial family, and many of the spectators, crossed themselves frequently, according to the custom of the Greek church, with much apparent devotion. This was especially the case with the Emperor, who stood all the time, wearing a half military dress of a deep green, which is

the color of that of the Infantry of Russia. It was easy to see that with his whole heart he doated upon his beloved daughter; and that his earnest aspirations ascended to heaven in her behalf. The Empress, who is a most affectionate mother, seemed scarcely to take her eyes off her; and it was manifest that her maternal affections were deeply interested in the touching scene before her.

There was one part of the ceremony, which was very striking, and which I have never seen in any excepting that of the Gseeck Church. It is this: the officiating priest placed in the hands of the Prince a cup filled with wine, into which some bitter drugs had been infused, of which he drank, and then gave it to the Princess. She drank of it, and then returned the cup to him. This was done three times. It signifies that those who enter the married state must expect sorrow, as well as joy, and that they must seek support under the former from God alone.

At one point of the ceremony, all knelt down, and remained in that position whilst the priest offered up a prayer over the heads of the couple whom he was marrying. It was an impressive and affecting moment.

At the close of the marriage ceremony, properly so called, the bride and bridegroom moved from the estrade towards the Emperor and Empress. And it was delightful to see with what affectionate embrace they were both received by the parents, as well as by all the other members of the Imperial Family, to whom they advanced in the order in which these persons stood.

When this was done, the Metropolitan and other great dignitaries of the Greek Church came forward on the estrade, and there took their stand. They commenced the chanting of the Te Deum; and certainly I never heard any thing like it, although I have heard it chanted by many celebrated choirs.

At the close of the service, the most distinguished of the clergy came forward, and expressed their felicitations and congratulations to the newly-married pair, as well as to the Emperor, Empress, and other members of the Imperial Family. This was done in Russian style, in which there was mutual kissing of hands. That is, while the priest took the hand of the Princess, (or Prince, or Emperor as the case might be,) and kissed it, she kissed his. This being over, the Imperial Family retired first from the chapel, followed by all the rest of the company.

The Prince is a nephew of the Emperor, the Princess is a sister of the reigning Duke of Nassau.

New Foundland.

A disastrous gale swept the Colony on the 19th, 20th and 21st ult., causing immense destruction to life and property. Among the buildings destroyed in the city of St. John's, was the Native Hall, which was blown down at 5 o'clock in the afternoon, burying a young woman and child in the ruins; the former is likely to recover. A brother and sister were also instantly killed by some falling timbers at the same place. Several others were more or less hurt. Several bridges were carried away. One boat with six or seven men on board, in trying to make the harbor, was upset and all in the boat perished. Wrecks cover the waters, and dead bodies are continually being washed on shore. It has been found impossible to form any thing like a correct estimate of the entire injury.

At Quidi Vidi, a loss of not less than £1,000 falls on poor fishermen, the proceeds of whose Summer's labor were destroyed in a few hours. At Grates Cove in Trinity Bay, about 70 fishing skiffs lay at anchor, and 60 of them were totally wrecked and lost. In addition to the great loss of skiffs and loads of fish and oil, the poor people's fishing stages and flukes were destroyed. They are likely to suffer much from want of food and clothing in the course of the coming winter. We understand also that the state of things is truly melancholy and distressing in other parts of Trinity and Conception Bays.—[Boston Post.

THE HOTTEST LEVER SAW.

The story of the country man who drank the lemon water from the finger bowls at one of the fashionable hotels, and called it poor lemonade, has found its equal in the following: A gentleman at one of the hotels in an eastern city, sat beside a countryman, who from his appearance had "just come down." He used "split-ted spoons," as he termed silver forks, with remarkable agility, and the friarcase do poulet and other viands, were sent to their long account with magnetic speed. On the opposite side of the table sat a plate of peppers, the genuine red hot ones strong enough to shake a man to pieces, which the countryman eyed for a moment and plunged his fork over, and conveyed one entire to his mouth. He munched, and munched, and munched away until he could stand it no longer, for he was the color of crimson, and the tears poured down his cheeks. He hastily took it from his mouth, and laying it down a side of his plate, exclaimed, "There! lay there and cool, will you!"

A KIND WORD.

A little word in kindness spoken,
A motion or a tear,
Has often healed the heart that's broken
And made a friend sincere.

A word—a look—has crushed to earth,
Full many a budding flower,
Which had a smile but owned its birth,
Would bless life's darkest hour.

Then deem it not an idle thing,
A pleasant word to speak;
The face you wear the thoughts you bring,
A heart may heal or break.

THE DEFENCE OF THE ALAMO IN 1836.

LETTER FROM AN OFFICER OF THE ARMY TO HIS FRIEND IN NORTH CAROLINA, COMMUNICATED TO THE NATIONAL INTELLIGENCER.

San Antonio de Bexar, (Texas.)
August 24, 1846.

On the 14th instant I wrote you a very brief letter announcing my arrival at this place. We are so far removed from the United States that intercourse is almost prohibited. Mails are so irregular that no reliance is to be placed on them, and private expresses to La Baca, and thence to New Orleans, by any vessel that offers form the most common means of transmission. This place is very different from any in the Republic as it was, and the houses and streets are not more extraordinary than the habits and appearance of the people. The most interesting object, however, in the vicinity, is the Alamo. It is now a shapeless mass of ruins. The chapel is defaced and broken down, and the walls of the fort are fast crumbling to decay. Time and the elements have almost completed what the Mexican artillery commenced, and the Coliseum of Texas will soon form but a shattered and mournful monument of its own existence.

On the 23d day of February, 1836, Santa Anna entered San Antonio de Bexar, and took possession of the town without firing a gun. The small garrison of one hundred and thirty men, under command of William Barret Travis, retired, as he advanced, to the Alamo, on the opposite side of the river, determined there to offer whatever resistance to the progress of the tyrant that God and their own energies should permit. Flushed with the conquest, so easily effected of the town, the Mexican General prepared for an immediate attack upon the Alamo. He ordered breastworks to be thrown up on every commanding point, and artillery to be planted wherever it could be made most effective. One battery was completed on the right bank of the river by the 25th, and on this day the siege commenced.

It is a dark and gloomy morning, devoted to a dark and unholy purpose. Exulting in the work of death upon which he is entering, Santa Anna crosses the river, the better to behold the success of his designs, and establishes his head quarters in a small stone building yet standing. The signal is given, and ere the sun has risen upon the scene, the roar of artillery from the Mexican battery awakens the echoes far and wide, and rouses from their slumbers the yet sleeping inhabitants. But the defenders of the Alamo have not sight for a single moment of their wily and remorseless enemy; they watch the studied gun; they see the match lighted; they listen, breathless, as if even at that distance they could hear the command to fire; and when it does come, and the walls of the citadel tremble under the shock of the iron hail, and the fragments of stone are whirled aloft by the sudden impulse, they send back a shout of defiance, mingled with a discharge from their own guns, almost as deafening as the thunder of their assailants. Before the smoke rolls away, and the reverberations are lost in the distance, while the shouts of the besieged still linger on the ears of the besiegers, the cannonade is renewed, and for seven hours fiercely continued upon the walls of the Alamo. By these walls yield no more than the spirits of their defenders. The fire is steadily returned; and, though stones are shivered around them, there are stout hearts and willing hands ready to repair every breach, and to restore from the interior whatever may have been destroyed from without. Earth is thrown up; every crack or fissure closed as fast as created by the eager efforts of those who will permit no evidence of success to cheer the hopes of their enemy. The sun has almost sunk behind the western plains when there is a pause in the work of demolition. The firing ceases for the day by order of the Mexican commander, with his thirst for blood unsatisfied, for not a single drop has fallen within the Alamo. Many of his own men have bit the dust before the artillery and riflemen of the fort; but thus far they are unavenged. Darkness falls upon besieger and besieged, the former raise new entrenchments to prosecute the assault; the latter establish a watch for the night, and endeavor to seek that repose which shall give them fresh vigor for the contest which they know will come to-morrow.

The morning of the 26th dawns, and reveals to the occupants of the fort the effect of the midnight labors of their enemy, in the establishment of two additional batteries within the Alameda of the Alamo. The bayonets of the infantry, crossed over the river during the night, glitter in the morning beams, and the plumes of the cavalry are seen waving on the eastern hills, to intercept the expected aid from that quarter. The contest is renewed by a slight skirmish between a few of the Texans, sent in quest of wood and water, and a detachment under the Mexican General Sesna; but this is a mere overture to the grand performance of the day. The thunders of the heavy ordnance, under the direction of Colonel Ampudia, are soon roused into action: volley after volley is poured into the fort, and answered only, except at rare intervals, by the shouts of those within.—There is no pause, no cessation. Still the cannonade goes on; shells fly hissing through the air, and balls bury themselves within the ramparts; but night comes on, and the Mexican general can see no progress. Baffled but not discouraged, he advances his line of posts, and prepares with the morning light to enter again upon his task. The north wind sweeps over the prairies, as it only sweeps in Texas; a stormy lullaby to the stormy passions of those contending hosts. The darkness is broken only by the feeble blaze of a few tules, fired by the Texans, which have furnished a cover to the enemy. The flames curl upwards with a sickly glare, throw a fitful light for a moment upon the slumbering army, and expire. The reign of darkness and of silence is resumed.

On the next day the Mexicans appear inactive. There is but little firing on either side. Those within the fort, with spirits unsubdued, and with energies weakened but not exhausted, are applying their limited resources to the purposes of defence. No heart falters; no pulse throbs with diminished power, no hand shrinks from the labor that necessity imposes; all is confidence and determination a firm reliance springing from the holiness of the cause, and the certainty of its final triumph. Sunday follows, but brings no rest to those whom God has created in his own image, yet endowed with such unhalloved passions. Perhaps within the chapel of the Alamo, consecrated to the worship of the Almighty, and distinguished by the emblem of man's salvation which surmounts the dome, heads may be bowed in prayer to the God of battles for deliverance from their sanguinary foe; but that foe takes no heed of Sabbaths. Exclusive followers, as they proclaim themselves, of the true church, they doom to destruction the very temple they have erected for its worship; and, kissing the cross suspended from their necks, and planted before every camp, they point their guns upon the image of that Saviour they once made the tutelary deity of the Alamo. The fire of the artillery keeps company with the minutes as they roll on. Morning, midday and evening are passed yet there is no faltering among those who are defending the Thermopylae of Texas. Another sun rises and sets; and yet another: still the undiminished hearts within quail not before the unceasing efforts of their enemy. In spite of that enemy's vindictive vigilance, the little garrison receives from Gonzales a reinforcement of thirty-three men: additional victims for the funeral pyre, soon to be kindled by Santa Anna on the surrounding hills, as a human hecatomb to Mexican vengeance.

New batteries are erected by the besiegers: from every point around the missiles of destruction concentrate upon the Alamo. The circles grow smaller and smaller. The final hour must soon come. Provisions are not yet exhausted; but the ammunition is almost gone. Water for days has been supplied by the daring efforts of a solitary Mexican woman, who, through showers of grape and musketry, has threaded her way from the river to the castle, while her own blood has marked the path. She bears with her the spirit of her illustrious ancestor, stretched upon the racks of Cortez; and it is not the fear of death or the torture that can swerve her from her purpose. In her presence there is hope, and joy, and life. At each arrival she is hailed by the garrison as the guardian angel of the Alamo, and until it falls her efforts fail not.

The siege has continued for ten days. The Mexican General has received large reinforcements, and his army now numbers thousands. He has been unceasing in his efforts to batter down the walls, but has thus far failed. The triumph is with Travis; but it is written in the heart of his ruthless foe that he must die; and when the cannonade is suspended on the 6th of March, Santa Anna has determined that the hour for the assault has arrived. During ten days a blood-red flag has been streaming from the spire of the church in San Antonio, proclaiming that no quarter is to be given to the champions of the Alamo—that blood alone will appease the fury of Mexican malice. When the sun again goes down, the flag is no longer seen, for the deed of which it was the sign has been accomplished.

It is midnight. Stars are smiling in

the firmament, and the repose of paradise seems hovering over the armed hosts, and hills, and plains which encircle the Alamo. A low murmur rises upon the air, which gradually becomes more and more distinct. Lights now move to and fro in the distance, and indicate some unusual movement. The besieging army is in motion. There is no advance by columns. The force of the Mexicans is so great, that the fort may be surrounded, leaving intervals only for the fire of artillery. The place is girdled by a deep line of infantry, and these are hemmed in & surrounded by another of cavalry. If the first shrink, they must be thrust forward to the assault by the sabres and pistols of their comrades. Suddenly the batteries are in a blaze, and from their concentric positions pour forth radii of fire pointing to single centre. Amid the thunders thus created, their own shouts scarcely less terrible, and the blasts of bugles, the Mexicans advance to the Alamo. A sheet of flame from rifles that never failed is the answer to the charge. The infantry recoil and fall back upon the cavalry; their ranks broken & disordered by the deadly fire of the besiegers. The shouts from the fort are mingled with the groans of the dying on the plain, while the officers are endeavoring to re-form their scattered masses. They return to the attack, but the leaden shower which they encounter falls them to the earth by platoons. Travis shows himself on the walls, cheering on his undaunted followers. Around him are Crockett, Evans, and Bonham, roused to a last struggle, for they know that their doom is sealed. In quick succession, rifle after rifle is discharged, sending hundreds to their long account. The Mexicans are again repulsed; they fall back, disheartened by the dead and the dying around them. The battalion of Toluc, the flower of the Mexican army, is reduced from fourteen hundred to twenty-three. Men have become for a moment regardless of their officers, and are almost delirious from the cries of anguish which no discipline can restrain, and which come from their fallen and expiring comrades. But a breach is made at last; the disjointed forces, by the aid of threats and entreaties are rallied, and once more turn their faces to the Alamo. The firing in that quarter has for some time been growing slower and slower.—Rifles have dropped from many a vigorous hand, now cold in death, while others cling to their weapons even in the agonies of dissolution. Ammunition, too, has been failing: one by one the muzzles drop; the last rifle is loaded and discharged, and the Mexicans have gained the wall. Proudly conspicuous in that awful moment, Travis receives a shot, staggers, and falls. He dies not unavenged. A Mexican officer rushes upon him, and is about to plunge his sabre into the bosom of the fallen man, when, gathering all his energies for a last effort, he bathes his own sword in the blood of his enemy, and they die together.

In the mean time the battle has been raging hot and thick. The Mexicans have poured into the citadel, like leaves falling before the storms of autumn. The conflict becomes hand to hand. Each man struggles with his adversary, dealing blows with rifles, sabres, or whatever missile may be within reach. The Texans are almost buried beneath the numbers of their opponents. The carnage has been so terrible that the slain are piled up in heaps. Death stares each survivor in the face, but still he struggles on. Crockett has been conspicuous in the melee, wherever the blows fell hottest and thickest. He has forced his way over piles of the dead bodies of his enemies, and has reached the door of the chapel. Here he determines to make his last stand. At one glance of his eye, he sees that the fate of the Alamo rests upon himself alone. Travis has fallen; Evans is no more; Bowie expires upon a bed of sickness, pierced to the heart by a Mexican bayonet; Bonham fell before his eyes, and he finds himself the only living warrior of the one hundred and sixty-three who had been his comrades. Perhaps at that moment the life-blood creeps to his heart by a natural impulse, but it is only for a moment. His foes glare on him with the fierceness of demons, and assault him with blows from sabres, muskets, and pistols. The strength of a hundred men seems concentrated in his single arm, as he deals out death to his rancorous and unsparring assailants. Their bodies have grown into a rampart before him. Blackened with fire and smoke, besmeared with blood, and roused into phrenzy, he stands like some fabled god of antiquity, laughing to scorn the malice, and the power, and the fury of his enemies. New fire flashes from his eye, and new vigor nerves his arm. On his assailants rush, but it is only upon certain death. They fall, but their places are still supplied; and so quickly the dead seemed to rise up before him, like armed men from the teeth of Cadmus. At length a ball from a distant rifle pierces him in the forehead; he falls backward to the earth, in the streams of gore which curdle around him. No groan escapes his lips; no cry of agony gratifies the implacable rancor of his enemies; he dies, and the Alamo has fallen.