

my visitor. We began our conversation in Latin, continued it in Portuguese, and ended it in French. The subject of Italian poetry was easily introduced. At the name of Ariosto, "Ah (he cried) he was my countryman, and (holding out his arms) I have embraced his tomb!" He then told me of his early love for poetry, gave the standing history of all poets since poor Ovid; the dislike of his parents to his favorite study, who locked up his Petrarch and burnt his Ariosto. When I mentioned Dante he rose from his seat, and with the utmost delight repeated the tale of Ugolino. I should think higher of his genius if I had not seen that most of his printed poems are complimentary pieces addressed to Kings, Queens, and Princes. There are among them two or three flaming panegyrics on the late Duke of Orleans, of sad and seditious memory.

Talassi invited me to sup with him, and promised me poetry and Parmesan. He read us part of an unpublished work, in imitation of Tasso's

Rinaldo, he said, in which he had introduced Lord Bute and Lord Fitzwilliam. After supper we had a specimen of his art. I had long wished to hear an Improvisatore. He sung or toned his verses, so that the deficiency or redundancy of three or four feet was of no consequence: his hand went up and down keeping time, and occasionally he continued for ten or twelve lines with his eyes shut. It was a strange loosely-connected rhapsody of rhymes: he complimented us all, talked of a Poet's poor house and poor supper, lamented the King of France, laughed at my Uncle for not bringing a wife from England, and told me that I should return there and marry one. This lasted about ten minutes, and, in a language so abundant in rhymes as the Italian, might have been continued as long as the Poet's breath could endure. The defects of metre are disguised by toning, and they who admire the poetry of the South of Europe cannot complain if the effusions of the Improvisatore rise not above prose in dignity of sentiment.

The extempore poet and the extempore preacher practice necessarily the same professional trick : the same subject will call forth the same thoughts, and old ideas are closely connected with the words in which they have been usually conveyed. This I have known to be the case with public speakers ; and one who had often heard Talassi with more than common attention, assured me that his best passages were such as were easily introduced on any subject. A few days after we had supped with him, I again saw this enthusiastic Italian ; he found me reading the life of Tasso, and catching up the volume, he kissed the portrait of his favourite author. I spoke of the entertainment he had given me, he talked of his verses, and repeated the lines he had addressed to me on that occasion ; either his powers of memory, therefore, are prodigious, or these lines were not the effusion of the moment when I first heard them : they were equally applicable to every young foreigner Talassi has been in company with, and it would be strange if so trite an idea had not often occurred to him before.

A circumstance which happened here in March will show you the dread they entertain of French principles. Four prints arrived here for an English gentleman, representing the royal family of France in their most distressful situations. These prints that appeal to the feelings, are more powerful advocates for aristocracy than all the volumes of its pensioners; the Custom-house Officer, however, took them out of the frames, and tore them in pieces, declaring that nothing about the French should enter Portugal. He then repacked the frames and glasses, and sent them to the owner.

All improvements here are classed under the hateful term of innovations. A Portugueze, who, after making some fortune in England, settled in his own country, had learnt the value of English comforts, and built a chimney in his sitting-room. But none of his countrymen would sit in the room. "No," they said, "they did not like those metaphysical things." "*Essas cousas metaficas.*" I met with as curious an application of a word in the fragment of a

Portugueze theological work ; after enumerating some of the opinions of an heretic, the author adds, “ he was guilty of these and many other such bestialities.”\*

Yet, however averse they may be to French principles, many of the Portugueze dislike the English influence, and reprobate the Methuen treaty as the ruin of their commerce. The following extract is a striking instance, I translate it from a paper published in the memorials of the Royal Academy : “ We have beheld in our times the Aurora of a brighter day, and just posterity will learn with admiration the actions of a Sovereign who has made the city rise more flourishing from its ashes, created public credit, and *destroyed the prejudice which had subjected us to a nation well acquainted with its own interests, which, under the specious semblance of pro-*

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\* This word, however, is only ridiculous to an English eye. *Bestialidades* in Portugueze bears the same meaning as the French *bêtises*.

*tection, has reduced us to be, as it were, the colonists of a foreign metropolis.*

A dignified churchman, the Conego da Cruz, founded a silk manufactory at Sobral, an ill-chosen situation, being a day's journey from any water conveyance. His great difficulty was to keep the workmen there, who regretted the amusements and vices of a metropolis : with this view he provided plays for them, and, so fully possessed by the spirit of commerce was the patriotic ecclesiastic that he even established a colony of prostitutes from Lisbon at Sobral : the attempt failed, and the expensive buildings that he erected are now in ruins.

These premature attempts cannot be expected to succeed. A measure has been adopted since my residence here which will render the most essential service to Portugal ; the edict is now printing which declares Lisbon a free port ; and when peace shall be restored to Europe, the beneficial effects must follow which were pointed out by the most enlightened of her statesmen.

I am now preparing for my return: I am eager to be again in England, but my heart will be very heavy when I look back upon Lisbon for the last time.

I am now preparing for my return I am  
glad to be again in England, and my heart will  
be very glad when I look back upon London  
in the last days of my life.

Appendix.







ON THE  
STATE OF PORTUGAL.

*Abridged from a paper written by a Portugueze Secretary of  
State early in this century, and never printed.*

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The advantages which Spain possess over Portugal, consist in,

- 1st. The Bourbon connection.
- 2d. Extent of territory.
- 3d. Consequent superiority of population,
- 4th. Of forces by sea and land,
- 5th. And of wealth foreign and domestic; for the Spanish settlements are most productive: and as one province in Spain produces what another wants, there is always an internal mar-

ket; the Spaniards likewise wear the manufactures of their own country; whereas the Portuguese follow all foreign fashions, and prefer any foreign manufactures to their own.

In their government, language, courage, honesty, love of their country, loyalty, and laziness, they are alike.

On the first of these advantages (now no longer existing) he observes, that if the Prince of Asturias should leave no issue, and the Infant Don Carlos, King of the two Sicilies, should attempt to reign in Spain, without surrendering those two crowns to his brother, the Infant Don Philip, a civil war might be the consequence, from whence Portugal could derive great advantages; or if Philip V. should have no descendants, and his Majesty succeed: neither of which possible cases must we wish to happen, because such wishes are contrary to Religion.

As to the extent of territory, we must not complain against Omniscience for so unequally

dividing the peninsula. Where man fancies deformity, God beholds the beauty of aptitude. The Creator might have made the world one level surface without the inequalities of vales and mountains that apparently deform it : but the vallies are fertile when the sun scorches the mountains, and the mountains afford refuge and food when the vallies are inundated. To remedy this inferiority, the Kings of Portugal have extended their dominions in other parts of the world.

Pedro, at the end of the last century, found it prudent to treat with Louis XIV. and Philip V. but as his object was to increase his dominions, he broke the treaty, and leagued with their enemies the two maritime powers, on condition that he should have Badajox, Albuquerque, Valença, and Alcantra in Estremadura, and Guarda, Tuy, Bayona and Vigo, with their dependencies, in Gallicia. The Rio de Prata and Viente were to be the American boundaries. My son, I will not enter into the question whether this manifest breach of a former treaty can be justi-

fied on the principles of good faith, which Princes ought to esteem as the main spring of all their actions. This was the answer I made when the King did me the favour to ask me if he could in conscience and honour depart from the treaty he had made with France and Spain. I took the liberty to reply, that his Majesty had *an anterior and natural alliance with his own subjects*, which obliged him to maintain them in peace and security: his treaty with the two Courts was *posterior and civil*; therefore as his Majesty had conceived in his own deep consideration, he could not keep the first contract without violating the second. It followed, therefore, that his Majesty, from greater motives, could and ought to break his engagement, in consequence of those circumstances which authors mention in treating upon this delicate matter. But as his Majesty did not question me concerning the consequence, that of confederating himself with the enemies of his former allies to make war against them, I did not touch upon it; and to say the truth on this subject, I should have felt myself very much embarrassed.

Indeed Princes ought to have a greater portion of Christianity than individuals, that they may mutually pardon the injuries they mutually commit, for they are ever reproaching each other with breach of faith, attended with the most aggravating and odious circumstances; but the evil is, they never possess this spirit of charity, except when it serves their own interests.

The third disadvantage of Portugal (inferiority of population), can never be so remedied as to equalize the powers of the two countries. Great part of Portugal is mountainous, consequently barren and thinly peopled: it is therefore necessary to search for some expedient, that this superiority which Spain enjoys may not be so excessive. I know that what I am about to say might appear violent, if I were not addressing myself to persons who have conquered the prejudices to which they were born, and those superstitious principles which our Ecclesiastics so zealously inculcate; but as it is not easy to subdue these, I know my anti-

dote will be thought poison, and the evil will remain without a remedy. This however shall not prevent me from considering what means ought to be taken against the abuses which disgrace religion and ruin the kingdom. Do me however the justice to believe that my sentiments are orthodox, and that were it not on this account Spain would not possess so vast a superiority in population.

The blood of our country is drained at every vein. Men are the real mines of a state, that continually produce, yet never are exhausted. but what men, my son ? Men who cultivate the earth, that but for them would be barren : men who labour that they may live and multiply : men who serve the Prince and the Republic by land and by sea, in the offices of commerce.

The principal, most excessive, and constant bleeding that Portugal suffers, is by the great number of Convents of all orders, of Monks and Nuns established over all the provinces, and in all the towns of this kingdom, multiplying

the mouths that eat, but not the hands that labour, and living at the cost of those, who, that they may support themselves, and pay the tributes imposed upon them, must plough, and sow, and reap what God has given them, with the sweat of their brows. The natural indolence of the Portugueze increases the abuse ; they can procure food by their profession, without the trouble of labouring for it, and without performing the duties of citizens. I shall never forget what I once heard from a Dominican.— A sadler threatened to make his son a Dominican, if he did not make better saddles, “ and this,” said he, “ will be worse for you.” Thus it is that we have so many friars, who instead of edifying, scandalize.

This whole fraternity is divided into two classes ; the one with lands, the other without ; the one living on its property, the other preying on the public : but both are prejudicial to the kingdom. For the first class,—of what use to the state are so many fat Benedictines, and so many proud Augustines, who live in their con-



vents eating and drinking, except when they disturb the peace with their peculiarities, and send large sums of money to Rome?

The Corregidor do Crime complained to John IV. that the Austin friars of St. Vincent's were so inflamed by party rage in electing a president, that they would probably murder one another unless the King interfered. The King led him to the apartment where his hunting spears were kept: "Take these to the friars," said he, "and let them do what they please with them."

These orders are too rich. It was the riches of the church that tempted Henry VIII. of England to make his detestable attack upon it, and he bribed his assistants with the spoils. The church ought seriously to consider that its wealth may one day be its destruction.

The nunneries are equally prejudicial to the state. Women are forced there when their parents cannot afford to dower them suitably to

their rank, lest they should marry according to their own inclinations.

I well know that the monastic life is the most perfect, but the King ought not on this account to have his dominions depopulated, nor to wink at abuses. These friars avail themselves of the ignorance of the people, to palm a thousand impositions upon them. I remember a religious society was established at Lisbon, calling themselves the Order of Divine Providence: \* I called them the Order of Human Industry: for these Religious made the women believe that St. Caetano would assist them in every illness, if they could cut off their hair as an offering to him. Soon afterwards they kept a barber in the

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\* The order of Divine Providence are so called because they have no revenues, and never go out to beg, but remain in their convent to receive such donations as may be voluntarily proffered, trusting thus to the Divine Providence for their support. If they are in danger of starving, they toll the bell for assistance, and supplies pour in. But they hold out to the last extremity, and have seldom been reduced to this expedient. At present the order consists of a very few monks.

chapel, and got many a good testoon † by the business.

In the colonies where men are more wanted, the evil is, if possible, still more numerous. I remember King Pedro sent to consult the Procurador do Coroa, Manoel Lopes de Oliveira, on the propriety of licensing a convent in Bahia, for which application had been made. He replied, that instead of founding new convents it was proper to destroy those already established: but the Procurador remonstrated in vain, and instead of one convent leave was given to found five.

† The Portugueze money is computed by Reis, an imaginary coin.

The Vintem	-	-	is	20	Reis.
The Testoon, or Tostaon	-	-	-	100	
The Cruzado	-	-	-	400	
The Cruzado Novo	-	-	-	480	
The Moidore, or Moeda de					
ouro	-	-	-	4800	
The Six and thirty, or Meia					
Dobra de ouro	-	-	-	6400	