

were, and not attempt to walk on, for they might in all probability chance to be murdered.

Such is the feeling with which the monks are now regarded over a great part of this country, though I believe that feeling is generally confined to the population of the large towns; they who but two year's back were almost omnipotent. I am not disposed to defend them from the various immoralities and even crimes with which they have been charged, but yet in such a country as Spain, so backward in civilization, the influence they exercised over the minds of the people in maintaining a spirit of subordination, may be felt by a government too weak to exercise the same salutary controul. In such a country they are perhaps necessary evils. They were besides the dispensers of charity, and thousands of the poor will now miss the hand of succour daily held forth to them. The wealth they possessed supplied at least some provision for the helpless, the needy and the infirm. Nor are we to forget that it was the monks who with the crucifix in their hand animated the peasantry to that enduring and dogged resistance against

the yoke of Napoleon, and they *alone*; nor that at Barcelona they faced all the horrors of contagion, during many inflictions of the plague to relieve the sick, to console the dying, and to pay the last honours to the dead. In such a country as Spain I again repeat they may be missed for these and other reasons.

At ten o'clock we reached Bailen to breakfast, the town, which I had purposed to proceed to from Andujar, to take the diligence for Granada. It was a wretched place, half in ruins, crowded with beggars, and presenting everywhere a scene of squalidness and poverty; you might have taken it for a town that had been sacked. The walls of the inn were bare and naked, and the floors of mud, and for the dog's-fare they set before us nothing was eatable but a dish of Granzos.

The next town we reached was La Carolina, surrounded with avenues of trees, an uncommon distinction in this country, where in general they stand as naked as in the midst of Salisbury Plain, and was built even with a degree of taste. At the following stage Venta di Cardenas, where

during the time we halted to change, we were surrounded with many a pitiable object, with many a tale of distress to unfold, we commenced the ascent of the Sierra Morena. Of these mountain passes I need say nothing, as there was little to distinguish them from scenery of this kind in general.

Towards dusk we reached the critical point of our day's journey Despeñaperos, a small village in a defile on the frontiers of Andalusia and La Mancha. The apprehensions of my fellow-travellers had proved groundless. We found a regiment drawn up in line, some artillery drawn out and soldiers bivouacking on the sides of the mountains, and were ordered to shew our passports to the Conde de las Navas, who perceiving me to be an Englishman returned me mine without examining it, shook me very cordially by the hand and wished me a pleasant journey. Having received the pass-word "La Constitucion," we again set off, passed through the lines of the Queen's army without molestation, and continued our journey in all tranquillity, highly satisfied with the turn things had taken. The fact was



the two parties had joined together as at Seville in the common cause of the Constitution, and the troops sent by Torreno had served but to swell the ranks of his opponents.

We arrived at Valdepeñas for supper. Who has not heard of the celebrated wine of Valdepeñas? In flavour and strength it is between the generous richness of Burgundy and the delicacy of claret, and is, indeed, as Sancho Panza would term it, a truly Catholic wine, “y como es Catolico?” There are, however, too often certain infusions added to the red wines in Spain, which by no means improve their flavour, namely, water and log dust, the latter being added to make up the loss of colour from the effect of the former, and of this mixture our host at Valdepeñas had been more than usually liberal; for to do his wine justice, it was little more palatable than a black-dose, and perhaps not so wholesome, and as different from the genuine juice of the Valdepeñas grape which I had tasted with Don Tomas in all its purity at Andujar, as sloe-juice from unadulterated port.

Our following day's journey led us through the

poverty-struck villages of La Mancha. You can imagine nothing more dreary than their appearance, standing in the midst of bare bleak plains without a tree to shelter them, and built of mud hovels thatched with straw. At one of these melancholy places, half in ruins, Puerta Lapice, we were detained four hours, while our wheel was repairing.

Since we had ascended the Sierra Morena we had got into a completely different climate. The mornings and nights here were sharp and cold. After a fatiguing day's journey we slept that night at Ocana, which we left at three in the morning, and about eight arrived at Aranjuez, a royal residence, distinguished by its palace, marble statues and fountains, and its noble avenues of trees stretching for a couple of miles along the borders of the river Tagus. From hence we proceeded through a wild solitary country, bleak and dreary, for three hours, when suddenly, at a turn of the road, Madrid, placed on a hill at the distance of a mile, opened to our view, displaying the spires and cupolas of its numerous churches with a very imposing effect.

Traversing the bridge of Toledo over the Manzanares with its two richly sculptured columns at each extremity, a wide avenue before us of gradual ascent led up to a lofty and magnificent gateway. Leaving this entrance into the city on our left, we followed another avenue on our right, which skirted the walls of Madrid for a quarter of a mile, and entered the gate Atocha. We passed through one extremity of the grand promenade, the Prado, and catching a passing view of its three colossal fountains, ascended the spacious street la Carrera di San Geronimo, and alighted at the Diligence-office, near the Puerta del Sol.

As I found the inn I had been recommended, too full, I was obliged to shelter my head e'en where I could, and here I am at a small one, la fonda dell' Union in the calle del Caballero di Gracia. This is certainly not the Clarendon of Madrid, but it by no means answers to the descriptions of certain veracious travellers, who mention their having been shewn into some apartment furnished with a single ricketty chair and a three-legged table. On the contrary, I have two apartments, which, though now somewhat "faded

from all their original glory," were certainly once even handsome and furnished with all I can possibly want, and the charge for them, 3s. 6d. per day is not unreasonable. You will be astonished to hear I have even the luxury of a bell, whose summons is punctually attended to by an Asturian lad named Pepé, whose shrewdness and naïveté are very amusing. My landlord is a Navarrese, an extremely respectable and intelligent person. He is, I believe, however, only the acting manager of the concern, for the house belongs to a Marquis, one of the broken down grandees of Spain, who has apartments next to me. In my next I shall give you some account of Madrid.

Believe me, &c.

To Trelawney Tomkinson, Esq.

Land's End, Cornwall.

## LETTER XII.

### ANALYSIS OF DANTE CONTINUED.

University Club.

DEAR SIR,

DANTE now descends into the second circle, where he meets with Minos, the judge of Hell, and beholds the punishments awarded to the sensual and voluptuous. Seeing Frances of Rimini and her lover Paul among the condemned, he questions them on their history, and after having heard their tale of sorrow, faints away, overcome by the excess of his emotions. I shall give you my humble translation of this 5th Canto entire, with references to the notes, which will be sub-joined.

From the first circle to the second thus we came,

That less in circuit fiercer pangs contained

As the loud wails and howlings of the damn'd proclaim'd :

Stood Minos here, and fearfully he gnashed his teeth,

He cites the sinner and examines his offence,

(1.) Judges and passes sentence, as his tail he whirls around.

For when before him summon'd stands the ill fated soul,

To full confession of its guilt 'tis forced ;

Then that experienced judge and weigher of all crimes



Sees at the instant its appointed place in Hell

And round his flanks so often whirls his tail,

As down degrees below, he dooms it to descend.

In crowds before him ever wait the guilty throng,

Each in his turn at his dread bar appears,

(2.) Confesses, hears his sentence, and is downwards thrust.

O thou to this receptacle of woe arrived,

Said Minos as on me his searching eyes he cast,

Suspending his dread ministry the while he spoke,

(3.) Heed how thou enterest in, in whom reposest trust,

Nor let the spacious entrance hither thee deceive;

Wherefore exclaim'd my guide thus menacing dost cry?

Dare not his progress by the fates decreed to bar,

There hath it been ordain'd, where what ordained is,

Shall be fulfill'd—no further question, but obey.

And now within my ears 'gan rueful notes to sound,

I am arrived, where like a tempest on them burst

Grief in full flood with groans unnumber'd of the damn'd.

A place it was all blind and dead to ray of light,

Loud bellowings smote the air, as when the surge

Lash'd by conflicting winds falls thundering on the beach.

No pause to that infernal hubbub—nor that whirlwind's rage—

It sweeps the tortur'd ghosts before it, to their sore annoy

And whirls and dashes them against the sharp-set rocks.

Which as they strike against all mangled by the shock

They howl with anguish, they lament, they wail,

And rail blaspheming 'gainst the avenging power.

To such dire torments saw I doom'd the slaves of sense,

Who their best gifts and faculties of mind

Debase to carnal and voluptuous sins.

And as in long and straggling files their airy flight  
 In wintry season do the starlings wing,  
 So were those sinful spirits by that blast urg'd on  
 To, fro, aloft, below in ceaseless eddies whirl'd.  
 Nor hope e'er beams on their benighted souls,  
 Not e'en of pause or mitigation of their woe.  
 And as the cranes in lengthen'd phalanx cleave the air,  
 The while their doleful ditty they chant forth,  
 So by that storm saw I those shadows swept along,  
 Advance towards us, shrieking forth their lamentable cries.  
 Whereon I said, O master, now to me reveal  
 Who in this murky air are these so fierce chastiz'd?  
 The first of these ill-fated, he to me replied,  
 Thou askest tidings of, was she who wanton Queen  
 Swayed her imperial sceptre over many tongues.  
 Who to voluptuous vices so the reins gave up,  
 That every license she by law allow'd  
 Into the shade her own vile infamy to cast.  
 Semiramis her name, who History thee informs  
 Succeeded to her husband Ninus on the throne,  
 And ruled the land which now the Soldan subject holds.  
 There thou behold'st the hapless fair who died for love  
 And to Sichæus' ashes broke her plighted faith,  
 And yonder Cleopatra mark, luxurious Queen.  
 Then saw I her who steep'd the world so long in blood  
 The fatal Helen, and the mighty chief of Greece  
 Achilles who for love on field of battle died.  
 (4.) There Paris, Tristan, and a thousand more I saw,  
 Whom with his finger pointing out to me he shew'd,  
 All whose thread of life by cruel love was cut in twain.

Then when my sage instructor I had heard unto me name,  
 So many famous dames and knights of old renown,  
 Beside myself I stood as 'twere by pity overcome.  
 (5.) When finding words, O Poet, my heart yearns, I thus began,  
 With yon two spirits join'd to hold discourse awhile  
 Who seem so lightly down the current to be borne along.  
 A moment wait, he answer'd, till more nearly they approach,  
 And by that love intreat them then, whose spell  
 Binds them together thus, and they will hasten at thy call.  
 Soon as the wind had wafted them to where we stood,  
 I lifted up my voice, and cried O ill starr'd pair,  
 If nought forbids it, draw ye near, and with us words exchange.  
 Then as two gentle doves by strong affection urg'd along,  
 With wings outstretch'd and firm their way cleave thro' the air  
 Mov'd by fond home's endearments to their shelt'ring nests,  
 Thus from the throng where Dido hapless spirit stood,  
 Sped they towards us thro' that baleful air,  
 So strong my cry affectionate their hearts had touch'd.  
 For thee, O living mortal, who so gracious and benign,  
 To visit 'midst this gloom-ting'd air hast deign'd,  
 Us, who have left our blood-stains in your world above,  
 O! Would our Sovereign judge unto our prayers attend,  
 For thy soul's peace for ever they should offer'd be,  
 For that thou pity thus hast shewn towards our hapless doom.  
 While hush'd as now doth pause the blustering storm,  
 Both speak to us, and hear as pleaseth thee thou canst,  
 And we in turn will listen and will speak with thee.  
 On the sea-margin there doth sit my parent land,  
 Where the vex'd Po in Ocean seeks repose  
 And mingles with his tributary streams in peace.

Love of which gentle heart the ever ready scholar proves  
 Of this my charming lovers strong possession took,  
 Him from me torn in way that still my spirit grieves.  
 Love that ne'er one belov'd from debt of Love exempts,  
 With such transporting passion fill'd my soul for him,  
 That as thou see'st not here abandon'd by him love I still.  
 To one, sad end, this fatal Love betray'd us both,  
 But waits the doom of Cain the spiller of our blood.  
 Such were the words that full of sorrow to our ear were borne.  
 When I had heard these ill-starr'd lovers' tale rehears'd,  
 With head bent down upon the earth all mute I stood,  
 Until the poet wond'ring cried, what ponderest thou upon?  
 Soon as I words could find, ah me! I thus began,  
 That all these thousand tender thoughts and soft desires  
 Should but to this grievous pass this hapless pair betray?  
 Then turn'd I tow'rds them, and my speech I thus address'd;  
 O Frances, these thy Martyr's grievous pangs,  
 My heart so sadden that my eyes with tears o'erflow.  
 But tell me in those sweet remember'd hours of lover's sighs,  
 To which of ye, and how Love's secret was reveal'd  
 That of the doubtful passion full assurance to ye gave.  
 Alas! she answer'd, pang more bitter is there none,  
 And well thy sage instructor this doth ken,  
 Than steep'd in wretchedness, past happiness to call to mind.  
 But if so great desire the fatal root thou hast to learn,  
 From whence our growing love did first spring up,  
 Tho' mingling with my words flow tears, together they shall flow.  
 One day we read together, 'twas to pass away the hour,  
 Of Launcelot, and how Love held him in its thralls,  
 Alone we were, nor ought of evil were at hand suspect.

Our tears oft dimm'd the page, and oft our kindling cheeks

Flush'd as enamor'd o'er the tale we hung,

But at one point alone it was that our sad fate was seal'd.

For of that smile so long'd for, when we came to read,

Which of so dear a lover answer'd to the kiss,

Then Paul, oh from me may he ne'er be sunder'd more,

All trembling with love with kisses cover'd o'er my mouth.

(7.) A pander was that book and he who wrote it, unto us.

All of that day we opened not its leaves again.

Thus the one hapless spirit, while the other sobb'd the while

In mood so piteous, that compassion-struck I swooned

And tumbled unto earth as tumbles a dead corse.

I now conclude with the notes. (1.) "Minos, who was a judge in the antient hell, is turned into a demon in this modern one," (De Guingené.) How so buffoonish an idea as Minos pronouncing the doom of the condemned by the revolutions of his *tail* ever entered into our poet's head I cannot conjecture. Possibly it might have been some stroke of satire in relation to some *political* circumstance of the day. (2.) Remark the summary expedition with which the sinner is arraigned, judged, and sentenced. (3.) "Facilis descensus Averni." (4.) "Tristan, nephew of Mark King of Cornwall, was the lover of that prince's queen Yseult. The king having surprised

them together, stabbed Tristan with his sword, who died some few days after." (5.) "We are now arrived at the celebrated episode of Frances of Rimini. He who could thus invent and paint (observes Mon. Guingéné) was not solely the profound philosopher, the imperturbable theologian, nor even the sublime poet, but the lover of Beatrix. It is proper here to introduce the spirit who is about to speak: her name was Francesca di Rimini, one of the most beautiful women of her time, and daughter of Guido of Polenta, lord of Ravenna. Her father had, contrary to her inclinations, compelled her to marry this Launcelot, eldest son of Malatesta, lord of Rimini: he was club-footed, ugly and deformed in person, avaricious in disposition, and rough in manners: while his brother Paul was handsome, liberal, and fascinating. Paul soon became the ardent lover of his brother's wife, who on her side warmly returned his passion. One fatal day Launcelot, the injured husband, surprising them together, stabbed both with the same stroke of his sword."

The exquisite delicacy with which this tale is told forms one of not its least beauties. It must

be remembered that at the time Dante wrote it, the whole circumstances of this tragic story were fresh in the recollection of the public, though to the reader of the present day it may seem to be told with some degree of obscurity. Who, after reading the episode of Francesca di Rimini, can deny that Dante was as great a master of the pathetic as of the terrible? The father of the hapless Francesca was one of the greatest friends and patrons of the poet: nay, he was actually, I believe, residing in the house at the very time that this domestic tragedy occurred, and with all the sensibility of heart with which Dante was endued, we may imagine that he dropped tears as he penned the relation of the fatal history of two amiable and unfortunate, though culpable, persons, with whom he had been so intimately acquainted.

I shall now afford you a much better idea of the unequalled beauty of this tale by subjoining Chabanon's translation.

Tel qu'un couple amoureux des colombes fidelles  
 Vole vers ses petits, les couvre de ses ailes ;  
 Tel ce couple léger, d'un vol précipité,  
 Fend les noires vapeurs dont l'air est infecté.

Françoise en gémissant m'adresse la parole.  
 Vous dont la pitié, plaint, recherche, console,  
 Deux amants par le fer immolés autrefois ;  
 Aux bontés de mon Dieu s'il me restoit des droits,  
 J'implorerois pour vous les dons de sa clémence  
 Et vos vertus auroient leur juste récompense.  
 Mais je vois quel dessein vous a conduit ici,  
 Ecoutez, de mon sort vous serez éclairci.  
 Je puis parler ; les vents ont cessé leur ravage.  
 La ville ou je naquis embellit ces rivages  
 Ou l'Eridan fougueux, précipitant ses eaux  
 Court aux tranquilles mers demander le repos.  
 L'amour (qui soumet tout et qu'un instant fait naître)  
 Lui fit en même temps et chérir et connoître  
 Des attraits dont l'éclat a passé comme un jour.  
 L'amour (ce sentiment qu' on doit à l'amour)  
 Prés de lui m'enivroit de ses pures délices,  
 Que mon cœur goute encore au séjour des supplices ;  
 L'amour du même coup, nous fit périr tous deux.  
 Sous ce gouffre profond, un gouffre plus affreux  
 Attend le meurtrier, qui nous ôta la vie.  
 Ces mots rétentissaient dans mon âme attendrie ;  
 Je demeurai frappé d'un long étonnement ;  
 Mais enfin revenu de mon saisissement :  
 O mortels m'ecriai je ; O races insensées !  
 Des désirs les plus doux, des plus douces pensées,  
 Voilà donc ou conduit la dangereuse erreur !  
 Françoise vos discours ont passé dans mon cœur.  
 Mais répondez au temps de votre heureuse ivresse,  
 Quel indice a vos yeux découvrit sa tendresse ?



For the remainder of this translation I refer you to the notes in Artaud's prose translation. I think you will be able to discover in this short extract, that the French are by no means behind us in the art of translation. Indeed I much question if Dante has ever been done justice to so completely in our language.

In my first letter I ventured some strictures on Mr. Cary. The following lines of his, one sample out of many such, I think, will prove a pretty strong exemplification that they were not wholly uncalled for.

When I had heard my sage instructor name  
 Those dames and knights of antique days, o'erpower'd  
 By pity, well nigh in amaze my mind  
 Was lost, and I began ; " Bard willingly  
 I would address these two together coming  
 Which seem so light before the wind." He thus :  
 " Note thou when nearer they to us approach,  
 Then by that love which carries them along,  
 Entreat, and they will come." Soon as the wind  
 Had wafted them towards us, I thus framed my speech.  
 O wearied spirits, come and hold discourse  
 With us, if by none else restrain'd.

Why in reading such lines as these with so many

breaks and interruptions, I am reminded of the joltings of an omnibus, which is perpetually halting of a sudden to take up and let down its passengers.

I remain, &c.

To Trelawney Tomkinson, Esq.  
Land's End, Cornwall.

## LETTER XIII.

ON FRASER'S MAY NUMBER, 1836.

Athenæum Club.

DEAR SIR,

IF we are not instructed in the politics of the day, it is not the fault of our quarterly reviews and our monthly magazines, which are all as staunch supporters of their respective parties as our daily journals. To one of these monthlys on the conservative side, Frasers', (I wish it was on the other) my attention was the other day directed by a remark in the John Bull that the May Number was particularly rich, a term by the way which is more generally applied to a plum pudding. I accordingly resolved to profit by the riches of Fraser the first opportunity, and having taken up the number in question, the first article on which my eye glanced was headed Quaffipunchoviesk. These monthlys by the way seem particularly to affect these strange

sounding titles; for example, in the Metropolitan you will find Snarleyou, or the Dog fiend.

Quaffipunchoviesk is *rich* in specimens of burlesque poetry, supposed to be written by a Pole. Whether the Poles, who are a very distinguished literary people, may feel flattered by such specimens is a question. Fraser remarking that the English are fond of humour, is accordingly in this article resolved to be humorous. Now Blackwood who is sometimes humorous also, when he is in this vein, reminds one of Swift (I refer you to his article on the turning out Lord Grey by the treachery of his own cabinet) whereas Fraser's facetiousness is that of the school of Cockaigne, in which you hear the chime of Bow bells ringing in every sentence.

In the next article I found accompanied with a sketch of Sir John Cam Hobhouse, under which the name was by no means unnecessarily written (Fraser not being remarkably happy in hitting off likenesses) a page of such biting sarcasm on that honourable baronet, that had he ever read it, it must have produced upon him

as terrible a wound as that which Virgil describes inflicted by the 'telum imbelles sine ictu' of the aged Priam. I need say no more of that single page of sarcasm than that it was particularly *rich* in the beauties of Grub Street.

I then come to an article on Von Raumer's England. Fraser after seemingly regretting that the German should 'have fallen into the hands of the Whigs,' sums up his character at once, 'his self-sufficiency is not to be borne, he is a quack,' a remark which is by no means to be confined to Von Raumer alone amongst the literateurs. One single extract of these three volumes of common place, translated for our great edification by Mrs. Austin, Fraser cites with approbation, viz. his vindication of an illustrious lady against the charge of interfering in politics. Now I do think that that illustrious personage needed no such an apologist, since every person of common sense will agree with me that such an unfounded charge could never have obtained currency, but for the hot-headed folly of the Ultra Tories, who in their after-dinner

enthusiasm honour the second toast in so marked a manner above the first.

And now before I pass on to the principal article of the number, that on the newspapers, a word of advice to Fraser. When next he attempts a hit at an author who has fallen into the hands of the Whigs, let him not be so indiscreet as to unbare the motive which provokes his spleen, for who but a ninny will ever give the credit of impartiality to a critic who measures literary merit entirely and solely by the standard of his own political opinions? Literary Magazine indeed! Why Cobbett's Register might as well have been termed a Literary Gazette.

But to proceed, on turning to the article headed Newspapers, I found certain information which it surely required no ghost to reveal to us, that the Times was first in point of talent and circulation—that the Standard was the champion of the high church party—that the Morning Herald was moderate in politics and somewhat miscellaneous in its subjects—that

the *Morning Post* was the purveyor of fashionable news, and that the *Globe* was well written, a singular instance this of Fraser's candour, but the exception only serves to prove the rule. For whose instruction let me ask were these truisms intended? For ours or for that of the people of the Continent? Continuing to read on I however at length found a piece of information which it required Fraser's sagacity to discover, viz. that the *Morning Chronicle* shewed evident symptoms of incompetency and dearth of talent.

I must particularly, however, direct you to his eulogium on the *Times*, which proves him to be as indiscreet in his approbation, as he is harmless where he attempts the task of censure. He remarks that the *Gentleman* is always discernible in the writing of that Journal, as it has been observed it was in the case of the late Lord Castlereagh in the midst of his bitterest opposition. Acknowledging the ready talent that journal displays, the unintermitting fire it keeps up, and the polite attention it invariably shews to its numerous correspondents (an act of courtesy which the *Morning Herald* seems to be ignorant

forms one distinguishing feature of a gentleman) I must nevertheless say (and who the deuce can deny it?) that the Times does not invariably measure its language by the standard of gentlemanly propriety, and though the Doll Tearsheet of his day deserves that vituperation, in which he displays such originality of genius, to be flung back upon him again; yet to call this gentlemanly appears to be a very novel application of the term. I neither praise or censure a journal for bestowing hard names—*if it does any good*. Who expects in political writing any scrupulous attention to decorum? Cicero was not very choice in his terms, nor ever thought of the gentleman, I apprehend, in his oration against L. Calpurnius Piso, when he calls him ‘bellua,’ and talks about his ‘pilosæ genæ,’ and his ‘dentes putridi.’ But how came Fraser *not* to apply the term where it really does apply? to the Standard, the style of which is always that of the gentleman and the scholar.

And I take the opportunity here while I am on this journal, to observe that some of its best friends as well as the Times lamented the part



it played in the Hampden controversy, the folly of which always brings to my mind these witty lines of Hudibras,—

“ Have we not enemies *plus satis*  
That *Cane* and *Angue pejus* hate us?  
And shall we turn our fangs and claws?  
Upon our own selves without cause?”

The riches then of this May Number (to say nothing of the fragments and abortions of tales and novels with which it is swelled up) appear to me, to consist in humour which is neither that of Swift or Sterne, or Sheridan, or any other witty writer that I can call to mind, but truly Fraserian; in some undoubted truisms, and other undoubted blunders, in some little flippancy and some little prejudice.

Of the Sunday papers as Fraser has said nothing, I will venture to say something and very briefly, and my remarks will be reduced to a shorter compass, as the *Age* and *Satirist* are not to be mentioned to ears polite or even decent: these are mere “children of dirt that stink and sing.” Nor need I say any thing of the *John Bull*, being now so little read, except