

[For the Kaleidoscope.]
Political Peeps at Russia.

BY "MINERVA."

At no period since the time of Napoleon the Great, whose projects for French aggrandizement were deemed incompatible with the tranquility of the Old World, have the destinies of European monarchs impended o'er such an uncertain crisis as at the present time. Thrones, the most obnoxious of all seats, in republican estimation, are seen in tottering uncertainty, to such an extent, that the most enthusiastic speculator in the necessity of the existence of kings, and their *soi-disant* "Divine Right," would at present hesitate to ensure their royal duration for a twelve month hence!

Let us glance at Europe, and there we behold an immense battle-field, entered upon some twelve months ago with fulsome vauntings, maintained with miserable trepidations, and in due time, to be surrendered after an avenging Providence shall have crushed, with omnipotent hand, the pride of diademed tyrants—the most egregious humbugs the folly of man ever created for his own ruin. Let us contemplate this European battle ground, and look where, as the spring warmth comes to animate its flowers and blades of grass, they are to be swamped in the blood of legions of human beings assembled for their mutual slaughter, in order to gratify the rapacity, maintain the "honor," or dispel the apprehensions of three or four individuals!

It is a war with its untold attendant miseries, adduced by political and social oppression, and by national gratification and jealousy. It is a theme that will before hand, lead the imagination through a thousand scenes of pain, cruelty, anxiety and terror, and will arouse the curiosity to pursue the increasing train of events, and to draw conclusions from them! It will engage the mind in the contemplation of geographical scenes and localities which have hitherto lain almost in oblivion, and without interest to persons so far removed from them as we are. Notwithstanding all this, to use a maxim of our first President, "we are not to implicate ourselves in the ordinary vicissitudes of European politics, or in the combinations and collisions of her friendships or enmities," still we may draw from them a moral lesson, with a hope that no such unjust encroachments and sanguinary devastations may ever arise to disturb the harmony of this great Confederation.

Among the uneasy crowned heads of the old world at present, the one which seems to keep the others in a kind of indiscribable awe, is the Muscovite. His quiet and stubborn resistance is an enigma, and his empire and policy are now like they have at all times during the last two centuries been, a Gordian knot, which not any of the most wily diplomatists of the old world, have been able to understand or to unravel. We shall, therefore, trace down the extensive empire of the Czar from the period it first began to aim at might, to the present day.

About the beginning of the 17th century, we notice Russia commencing to emerge from what had been previously considered a barbarous and semi-Asiatic power, to take her stand and rank among European States. But, it was "Peter the Great," who began to reign in 1689, that consolidated Russian Power, and by the introduction of vast military, naval,

commercial and legislative reforms, laid the basis for the immense materials which constitute the present empire of the Czar. The history of Peter the Great is familiar to everybody; and like "household words" are the facts of his quitting the gorgeous scenes of majesty and power in order to acquire, by practical experience, knowledge of mechanism and ship-building in the workshops of Holland and of England.

It was this Peter who first assumed the title of "Autocrat of all the Russias!"

The next remarkable period of Muscovite history, worthy of notice, is during the reign of the renowned Catherine 2nd, of unscrupulous character, and of masculine understanding, whom we find in 1762 handling the reins of government, after having been accessory to the death of her husband. Her rule of action was as follows: "We should be constant in our plans; it is better to do amiss than change our purposes; none but fools are irresolute." It was under this bold woman that Russia began to assume that aggressive peculiarity, which she has ever since manifested, and which at this moment brings Europe to the eve of great changes, possibly to the total disarrangement of its civil policy.

The laxity of the morals of Catherine and her court was notorious, and the pre-eminence of the Russian women during her reign was extraordinary, in political, beligerent and commercial affairs and combinations. It was, in truth, the age of "strong-minded women" in Russia, some of whom filled public offices, such as the Princess Dashkoff, who held the appointment of Colonel in the imperial guards! The viceroy of Finland (Count Pouschkin) dared do nothing official without consulting his wife, and the Minister of War trembled before the woman who was literally his *better half*. In fact, the respect and fear produced and exercised by Catherine over her ministers and subjects, seemed in their minds, to emanate from every being wearing *skirts*; and had another woman mounted the throne after Catherine, they would have had lady generals, lady admirals, and lady judges! (At the Russian court, offices are only obtainable through military appointments.)

We are aware that a northern climate, such as Russia, is more adapted to raise women fonder of intrigue and dominion, than the south, where the attributes most remarkable in a woman, are love, tenderness and domestic cares. Of the effect of climate we have some instances in this country. Where do we find these male-minded females like the Rev. Antoinette Brown, Dr. Lucy Stone, Counsellor Emma R. Coe, or Ambassador Harriet Beecher Stowe? It surely is not Louisiana that can boast of such strong minded daughters. For our part, we have no objection at all to see women thus diving, we trust profoundly, into classic professions, provided of course, that such employments do not interfere with their very natural duties of cultivating home happiness and domestic bliss, that charming sphere of woman. In the aspirations on the part of woman, to an acquaintance with literary pursuits, and to well grounded general information, we are inclined to perceive a means which must eventually do away with a good deal of that old-fogyism, superficialism, drunkenism, libertinism, and know-nothingism, we perceive characteristic in so many men, who must, if they desire to maintain, with any symbol of pretence, their rank as "lords of the creation," aim at still higher and truer talents.

With regard to the Muscovite women, and without any disparagement to the female sex in cold climates generally, we must say, that "love" in Northern Russia, is more of a physical necessity than a burden to the heart. The females of that climate are more given to political intrigues, and mental reasonings, than those in warmer latitudes, and consequently, as J. J. Rousseau says:

"Quand la femme commence à raisonner elle cesse de sentir."

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

The Kaleidoscope.

EDITED BY

MRS. R. B. HICKS.

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WOMAN'S RIGHTS.

A Chapter for the Women of Virginia, with a word now and then for the Men.

BY MRS. R. B. HICKS.

"When Florio speaks, what virgin could withstand
If gentle Damon did not squeeze her hand!
With varying vanities from every part,
They shift the moving toy-shop of their heart;
Where wigs with wigs—sword-knots with
sword-knots strive,
Beaux banish beaux, and coaches coaches
drive.
This, erring mortals levity may call
Oh, blind to truth! the sylphs contrive it all!"

The above, my fair readers, is a sample of the fashionable style of gallant writing, in the days of that famous wit POPE. And I very much fear that, in some respects, we are not much better now than we were in the gay times of wigs and sword-knots. Mr. POPE wrote of us, as many wits now write of us, and as they will continue to write of us, unless we should be fortunate enough to fall upon some *man-pleasing* plan to better our condition.

That the sole object of a woman's life is *not* fashion, dress, establishments, and matrimony, I sincerely hope the nineteenth century will triumphantly prove. Still, I must candidly acknowledge that I do not think that ANTIONETTE BROWN, or LUCY STONE, or EMMA SNOODGRASS will, in any way, demonstrate this great oncoming Truth.

There is a *womanly* way to prove our great mission upon earth, which these masculine women will never discover. So long as we are women, we must act as such. We can never make men of ourselves; and it is our duty to endeavor to attain unto the perfect stature of Heaven's last best gift, Woman. Perhaps there is now being developed, in some of our admirable institutions, the fair pioneer of our sex—the mighty woman of a mighty age, who shall guide us through the labyrinthine question of the day. The Moses of our weary wandering sex, who can point us to that promised land to which many a timid, time-searching eye has been directed, during uncomplaining years of bondage.

But, before proceeding further with my subject, I feel in duty bound to address a few words to my own sex. I hope I need not remark to the fair readers of the *Kaleidoscope* that it is absolutely necessary that we should *please* the men, before we can ever hope to conquer them. This important truth has been entirely overlooked by the Woman's Rights women, who have offended all masculindom, by plunging right into the pantaloons, without even saying, "by your leave, gentlemen." And if they have not already suffered for this thing, they have got to suffer for it, by all the laws that ever governed our race, from the palmy days of poor old gullible ADAM, unto the present wonderful century.

Do our champions in these ridiculous conventions for one moment imagine that EVE could have forced ADAM to eat that unfortunate apple? Do they pretend to

say that there was ever any power, under Heaven, given to woman by which she could have induced our illustrious ancestor to do so silly a thing, except the *gentlest persuasion*?

ADAM himself knew it was wrong. He knew he was transgressing the one great law of Paradise. He knew the misery it would entail. He knew it was the very last thing he ought in his right senses to do. And I'll venture to say, that if that remarkable old shade were in communication with me now, he would express his approbation of these remarks by a spiritual rap or two, and would give me distinctly to understand, that I am nearer the truth of this matter than any female has been for some time.

Yes, ADAM knew it was wrong. His conscience was too new and unseared, not to have raised its still small voice at so critical a moment. But *she* asked him. She asked in such a way, my beautiful readers, such a womanly bewitching manner that ADAM could not find it in his loving heart to refuse. And though he felt it was the worst thing he could possibly do, for her as well as for himself, and the rest of mankind, he took the apple and he ate it—not because she seized him and made him swallow it—not because she menaced him like a fury—not because she attacked him at all points—but because she *asked* him! And how grandly simple was his reply, when the Lord God questioned him—"the woman gave it me, and I did eat!"

Now, with this first great lesson before their eyes, see what the woman's rights women have done! They have failed to use the only weapon a woman can ever hope to use. They have neglected the very first power which ever conquered man. They have forgotten the very first lesson Heaven ever taught them. They have scorned to use the right which is most clearly ours. They have, in a fit of phrenzy, rushed heedlessly into the enemies ranks, and left the only available weapon they possessed behind them.

This little weapon, which no woman should be without, I now humbly present to them, in the name, and for the sake of us all; and I would also fain induce those learned and eloquent warriors who are already in the pantaloons, to shuffle off their masculine coil, and come back among us, determined to fight in their own legitimate rank and file, and after the manner and fashion of women, or not at all.

But to prove that we have good cause for complaint, I will endeavor to show how very unfair our lords and masters are to us; which is, after all, the cause of all the unbecoming acts of Northern innovators. Men do not see their injustice, because they do not feel it, and I think I can clearly prove to any unprejudiced mind, that men are often unjust and ungenerous in their requirements of us.

In the first place, they set themselves up as judges and lawgivers over us—viewing everything from *their* stand point, and nothing from *ours*. They conclude that because we are silent, all must be well with us, forgetting that kind Heaven has given us almost super-human endurance, and that according to *their* laws, made by *them*, for their own convenience, one word against our lords and masters is Treason!

Then they are eternally meddling with our little preferences, our weaknesses, our imperfections, and even our personal defects, as though we could control the

freaks of nature, or the weaknesses of humanity, or the peculiarities of feminality. They deny us all interest in matters of importance, and then sneer at us for being interested in matters of no importance! They swear we shall not vote or take any part in the affairs of the nation, and then cry out because of the importance we attach to our bonnets and dresses! They pique us to attempt higher things, and when we do, they scornfully bid us go back to the very things they ridiculed us for preferring! They are continually prating about our fondness for dress and fashion, and gossip, and shopping, forgetting that such trifles are all of the great empire they possess, upon which they will allow us to trespass. A woman must be interested in something, and for the want of something else, she plunges into all those frivolous but exciting pleasures, for which men's natures are much more predisposed than hers. ROBERT BRUCE became interested in a spider—and another equally celebrated man, in the absence of all other employment, became intensely absorbed in the movements of a mouse; and some such reason may cause a woman to watch, with vigilant eye, the fluctuations of her idol fashion, and to lounge out her mornings in Madame FOLLET'S show-rooms, and at least four times a year, to go teasing her husband for bonnet money. Glory, honor, learning, and every ennobling pursuit is denied her, and so she dresses, and giggles, and flirts and spends money; and Providence takes care that her tyrants shall suffer a little for their illiberality. Woman shall be nothing, and she shall be everything, cries ungenerous man. She shall not be a politician, and yet if *I* in the plenitude of *my* wisdom choose to become a politician, she shall be able to understand every question which interests me, and to minister to me, and counsel me, and to rise or fall with me in my wonderful career. She shall never have the opportunities I have, and yet she shall be fully informed upon every subject it shall be my pleasure to expect of her. She shall be always young, and always true, while I may be as old as I please, and desert her when she most requires my attention. She shall be beautiful enough to have kings and heroes at her feet, and care only for *me*, even though I happen to be a baboon at best, with about as much soul as an oyster.

She shall be useful, and she shall be ornamental. She shall be universally admired, and yet scorn all men but her lord and master, though he be as surly as a bear! She shall know how to dress, and understand all the mysteries of that art, and yet care not a fig for it! She shall be courted by society, and delight in society, and yet be entirely domestic! She shall be ever bright and cheerful, and yet have everything that my laws can devise, to make her otherwise! She shall bring all her treasures and the fortune her father gave her, and lay it, with her love and fealty at my feet; and I may take all this thanklessly, and squander it in any way I like, and abuse her, and maltreat her, and leave her children destitute, and she shall not dare to open her lips! Yea! and she shall worship me, and bow down to me, and exalt me before men for all this! She shall be pure, and holy, and angelic, and yet she shall love and adore a fiend, if I happen to be a fiend! It is her duty to be young and pretty, and if she cannot be

young and pretty, neither the oldest nor the ugliest man will have a civil word for her! She shall be faithful, cries ungenerous man, though I am unfaithful; tender, though I am harsh; confiding, though she may know to her sorrow, that I am unworthy of confidence. She shall yield to my wishes, though I scorn to consult hers. She shall be wise, and yet foolish enough to think *I* am her superior! She shall laugh when I laugh, and weep when I weep. I may deceive her, ruin her, desert her, and yet all the world shall scorn *her*, and uphold *me*! Every ill that flesh is heir to, shall fall most heavily on her; and though it is my duty to bear part of her burden, and to assist her who is so weak, yet I ungenerously exult in my strength, and laugh at every effort she makes to relieve herself of her great cares! Oh! woman—woman—great indeed must have been thy sin if, to this day, thy punishment is so severe!

I would raise my voice for you, my sisters, did I not know it were treason so to do. I would say that so long as God has given us mind, nay, *more* mind, than he *sometimes* vouches to conceited man, that we should, at least be permitted to use it. I would most respectfully beg, that if, under any circumstances, a woman should happen to be wiser than her husband, that he should take her place, and she his. I should like to petition, even at the risk of my ears, that the law would graciously single out such extraordinary contingencies, and provide for them.

I would also venture to hint, that this is not an age in which mere physical strength is all that is necessary to decide so important a question, were I not afraid of provoking more physical strength than I am formed to encounter.

I would call upon men with all the eloquence of my poor, but earnest pen, to divide a portion of our inheritance among us. I would laugh sardonically, and cry out, that some of their occupations are as unfitted for them, as the battle-field is for us. I, who have seen man-milliners, and man-dress-makers, can see nothing ridiculous in a female physician for females. I should say that scissors and yard-sticks look just as well in our hands, as they do in theirs, were I not awfully afraid of these same scissors and yard-sticks.

And I *do* say, at the risk of everything, that when they come *en masse*, and seize all our employments, and leave nothing in the world whereby we can make a decent living, that it is nothing more than fair play, that we should don the pantaloons, and try and drive them back to their places.

I should like to hold the mirror up to men, and let them see themselves as we women see them, did I not know that discretion is the better part of valor.

Oh! I would do all this, and more, if I dared. I would so delight to taunt them, to ridicule them, to sneer at them, to annihilate their provoking conceit. I should like, by way of illustration, to select a few choice specimens of this vain, boasting sex, and dress them in basques and petticoats, and then I should like, in a stentorian voice, to put the startling question to the assembled judges of the land, "If, in point of *mental superiority*, they could see any reason why these specimens should not be classed among us women?"

I should like to bring out before the eyes of the world, couple after couple,

which I know. I should like to say, see here is the man with his advantages, and here is the woman with hers, which has made the most of these advantages? I should like to turn to another couple on exhibition, and say, see here is the man who has been so many years at college, so many years in Europe, upon whom so many thousands have been spent, who has had every advantage that time and fortune could obtain, and not a bit inferior to him stands the woman, whose mind no miserable system could crush, to whom nature gave more than even man's institutions can take away, and who takes her place beside him, fully conscious that she is quite his equal, if not his superior.

That there are instances where no advantages could advance the man, and no disadvantages could check the woman, is beyond a doubt. Then why all this ado about the natural superiority of men's minds? They are *sometimes* superior, I grant, but that they are often hopelessly inferior, nobody with a pair of eyes in his head, can ever pretend to deny. Men are sometimes stupid, and women are sometimes wonderfully gifted, and there's no use in denying it, and all we ask of the men is to stand back, and give us fair play. What we *cannot* do, we cannot do, but what we *can* do, we are very anxious indeed to prove.

We can flourish yard-sticks, and talk nonsense over counters, all the world knows—we can use a pen, now and then, and edit newspapers too, as the age is beginning to acknowledge.

The tongue that can talk scandal, can be put to more profitable employment. The gossip who can peddle her villainous wares from house to house, can get that article up in other forms. The woman who can go to market, and drive a bargain, can go elsewhere, and do the same. The mind which controls husband and children, can assert its powers in higher stations. The woman, who under all her troubles, and provocations, can keep her temper, has learned the lesson, and got the key to a great many things. The woman who can manage her own husband, (if there be any such,) can manage any other mule upon earth.

Now, if we wanted to chew tobacco, smoke cigars, and drink brandy, men might oppose us with reason, but when we simply ask for employment, to keep ourselves out of mischief, it is as little as they can do, to bid us go and find it.

It is very well to say it is a woman's duty to stay at home, attend to her children, obey her husband, and all that, but all women have 'nt got homes, nor have they all got children, and some, whom men think very unfortunate, indeed, haven't even got husbands! and some who *have* got husbands, are worse off than those who have not, and thus that mighty argument falls to the ground.

When every man makes a good husband, I shall be the first to exhort every woman to make a good wife. But so long as there are drunken husbands, whose wives must have employment—so long as there are destitute widows, with large families dependent upon them for support—so long as there are plain and portionless daughters, which the plainest and poorest men refuse to wed—so long as there are spendthrift fathers and starving mothers, this pen and this hand shall sustain the woman,

who, true to the fine instincts of her superfine nature, toils earnestly for those she loves.

And I say to the men, from one end of this mighty continent to the other—I say to them, with a voice no man in this country ever hears without heeding, for it is the voice of justice—I say to them as the master said to the reapers in his field—"Drop now and then a sheaf, as ye gather in the harvest, drop now and then a sheaf as you go along, that *she* may come and glean it, for *she* is weak, and you are strong."

To the Advertising Public.

The *Kaleidoscope* has now attained a circulation, worthy of the attention of advertisers. Our Southern circulation particularly, is becoming every day more extensive, and it is from the South, and the South alone, that Virginians need expect any thing. If Southern merchants could only be induced to halt in Petersburg, on their way to Northern markets, we do not think they would go much further. But, with a pertinacity beyond all precedent, Southern merchants and politicians will preach one thing, and practice another. Merchants come rushing through our cities, not even pausing to take a look at their own cottons, or our own tobaccos, so eager are they to get to New York to be cheated.

Southern men, of talent, and enterprise, find that they are obliged to go to New York, and establish themselves there, before they can command the patronage of their own personal friends. And we take this opportunity to say, that the best business man we ever saw, the man who united in the most happy and successful manner, *Southern talent* with *Northern enterprise*, was a man transplanted from this city to New York! A man who went from here *broke*, and who is now in New completely *mended*!

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