

THE SEAMAN'S SONG.

("Adieu, patrie.")

[Bk. V. ix., Aug. 1, 1852.]

Farewell the strand,

The sails expand

Above!

Farewell the land

We love!

Farewell, old home where apples swing!

Farewell, gay song-birds on the wing!

Farewell, riff-raff

Of Customs' clerks who laugh

And shout:

"Farewell!" We'll quaff

One bout

To thee, young lass, with kisses sweet!

Farewell, my dear--the ship flies fleet!

The fog shuts out the last fond peep,

As 'neath the prow the cast drops weep.

Farewell, old home, young lass, the bird!

The whistling wind alone is heard:

Farewell! Farewell!

THE RETREAT FROM MOSCOW.

("Il neigeait.")

[Bk. V. xiii., Nov. 25-30, 1852.]

It snowed. A defeat was our conquest red!
For once the eagle was hanging its head.
Sad days! the Emperor turned slowly his back
On smoking Moscow, blent orange and black.
The winter burst, avalanche-like, to reign
Over the endless blanched sheet of the plain.
Nor chief nor banner in order could keep,
The wolves of warfare were 'wildered like sheep.
The wings from centre could hardly be known
Through snow o'er horses and carts o'erthrown,
Where froze the wounded. In the bivouacs forlorn
Strange sights and gruesome met the breaking morn:
Mute were the bugles, while the men bestrode
Steeds turned to marble, unheeding the goad.
The shells and bullets came down with the snow
As though the heavens hated these poor troops below.
Surprised at trembling, though it was with cold,
Who ne'er had trembled out of fear, the veterans bold
Marched stern; to grizzled moustache hoarfrost clung

'Neath banners that in leaden masses hung.

It snowed, went snowing still. And chill the breeze

Whistled upon the glassy endless seas,

Where naked feet on, on for ever went,

With naught to eat, and not a sheltering tent.

They were not living troops as seen in war,

But merely phantoms of a dream, afar

In darkness wandering, amid the vapor dim,--

A mystery; of shadows a procession grim,

Nearing a blackening sky, unto its rim.

Frightful, since boundless, solitude behold

Where only Nemesis wove, mute and cold,

A net all snowy with its soft meshes dense,

A shroud of magnitude for host immense;

Till every one felt as if left alone

In a wide wilderness where no light shone,

To die, with pity none, and none to see

That from this mournful realm none should get free.

Their foes the frozen North and Czar--That, worst.

Cannon were broken up in haste accurst

To burn the frames and make the pale fire high,

Where those lay down who never woke or woke to die.

Sad and commingled, groups that blindly fled

Were swallowed smoothly by the desert dread.

'Neath folds of blankness, monuments were raised
O'er regiments. And History, amazed,
Could not record the ruin of this retreat,
Unlike a downfall known before or the defeat
Of Hannibal--reversed and wrapped in gloom!
Of Attila, when nations met their doom!
Perished an army--fled French glory then,
Though there the Emperor! he stood and gazed
At the wild havoc, like a monarch dazed
In woodland hoar, who felt the shrieking saw--
He, living oak, beheld his branches fall, with awe.
Chiefs, soldiers, comrades died. But still warm love
Kept those that rose all dastard fear above,
As on his tent they saw his shadow pass--
Backwards and forwards, for they credited, alas!
His fortune's star! it could not, could not be
That he had not his work to do--a destiny?
To hurl him headlong from his high estate,
Would be high treason in his bondman, Fate.
But all the while he felt himself alone,
Stunned with disasters few have ever known.
Sudden, a fear came o'er his troubled soul,
What more was written on the Future's scroll?
Was this an expiation? It must be, yea!
He turned to God for one enlightening ray.
"Is this the vengeance, Lord of Hosts?" he sighed,

But the first murmur on his parched lips died.

"Is this the vengeance? Must my glory set?"

A pause: his name was called; of flame a jet

Sprang in the darkness;--a Voice answered; "No!

Not yet."

Outside still fell the smothering snow.

Was it a voice indeed? or but a dream?

It was the vulture's, but how like the sea-bird's scream.

TORU DUTT.