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AMERICAN TELEGRAPH.

Letter from the Capital.

WASHINGTON, *April 5, 1852.*

Verily 'tis a curious thing to have one's serious, long-settled opinions, or pleasant, pertinacious fancies, suddenly rebutted, reversed, unsettled, overturned, scattered, and not so taught. Such an utter and unlooked-for revolution has been wrought in my mind by the reading of an able article in the last number of the Westminster Review, on Mary Stuart. I confess hitherto to have been one of the blinded and willfulest worshippers of this fair, unfaded princess—sovereign not of Scots alone, but the queen universal of love and beauty. Indeed crowned, by royalty, loveliness, and misfortune—this regal sorceress, who bewitched the world, laid her spells on time, and sent her weird charms down enchanted ages. I never voluntarily read anything to her disfavor, or pertinently heard anything to her disparagement. I swore by Walter Scott, Agnes Strickland, and the royal lady's French biographers and poetical adorers. With an unsophisticated trustfulness, an innocent faith in virtuous impossibilities, only to be surpassed by that displayed by the sturdy Puritan champions of Lola Montez, the "respectable" school commissioners of Boston, I looked upon her beheaded majesty as a deeply-injured and much-calumniated woman—one who, it may be, had been "wild and wayward, but not wicked," to quote from the tender and touching "appeal" of the hour-eyed dreamer above referred to. But this time I was in for it, before I was aware; and captivated by the calm strength, the lucid argument, the totally conclusive reasoning of the paper, I read on and on, grieving, but not, alas, dissenting. And then the proof contained in private letters under the perfidious Queen's own hand—letters of "damning import," and of whose authenticity there can be no reasonable doubt. They were not discredited at the time, in the tribunals of church and state, or by the people, though they were afterwards arbitrarily set aside, but are now brought forward, and their claims to genuineness strongly urged.

In all her errors, Mary's friends have defended her on the ground that she acted not for and of herself, but was merely the innocent, helpless tool, in unscrupulous hands. These letters prove her to have had a clear, scheming head, and a bold, pitiless heart, of her own.

Well, surely it is strange how things come round and come out! May we not imagine it possible that at some distant future day, some casket of letters may be discovered, some curious private papers may be brought forward, to prove to the descendants of the Lola Montanes party of our time, that the dancing divinity of their "respectable" forefathers was, after all, a long way from being "the wisest, virtuous, discreetest, best," of all her sex. "Let *her* that thinketh she standeth, take heed lest she fall!"—especially when she *presumes*.

So, it is past—my pleasant, early, long-guarded, carefully-nursed faith, not alone in the proud purity of the wedded Queen, but in her warm, impulsive, earnest, though often erring womanliness. That generous, impressible, suffering heart, in which we have believed, seeing that death itself could not still it, but that it has throbbed on, and on, in the song and sorrow and *glory* of Scotland, in the life of the world—was, she herself affirmed, "*as hard as diamond.*" Ah, she herself was the diamond—cold, sharp, costly and shining—giving out light without warmth—bringing peril, temptation, and destruction, to him who would wear her on his breast, and wounded to the death the foot that trod upon her; and not that glorious crushed flower of royal womanhood, crimsoning with its soft appealing beauty the hand of tyrannous power, and sending its sorrowful fragrance through all countries and down all time. She now stands before me, this half mythic creature of my early romantic dreams, as a magnificent incarnation of unholy passions—as the very splendor of sin—as the fair ideal both of subtle intrigue and defiant crime. The question arises, what has blinded us to evidences of guilt and shame we could hardly for a moment dispute if brought against another than Mary Stuart? Not her royalty, nor her misfortunes, for other Queens as unfortunate have sorrowed, suffered, and been forgotten, since she laid down her head at Fotheringay. Her wondrous beauty was the spell with which she glamoured the world. Those splendid eyes are dust and darkness these two hundred and sixty years, yet their deathless flash blinds the gaze that would peer too curiously into that stormy private history—the impartial biographer hears on his paper the dripping of tears which have marked their piteous course down those chasms of immortal bloom; and lo, his stern judgment is blotted out forever!—the stout heart of the grave historian is shaken with the sobs that once heaved that lovely bosom, and so he touches with fatherly tenderness on the faults of the beautiful sinner—but, to ease his conscience, gives to those of poor Queen Elizabeth, who had red hair, an angular, grenadierish figure, and was an old maid, the full measure of his righteous reprobation.

The performances of Miss Cushman at the National Theatre, in our city, have been subjects of much interest for the week past. She has been playing a farewell engagement. To you, I know I need say nothing of the merits of this truly great actress. I can tell you little in this regard which you know not already by heart; yet, for mine own pleasure, I will indulge myself in a few words. To me, it seems that to all lovers of the histrionic art the acting of Miss Cushman must be not alone a rare pleasure, but, for the time as absorbing study. It takes such a wide, free, fearless sweep, and yet in artistic detail, combination, balance, and symmetry, is so exquisitely true. And then, there is about it that captivating, indescribable, irresistible spirit of abandon, the ever-new, enthusiastic enthusiasm of the genuine artist. No true feeling ever loses its truth in her utterance—no great passion is ever dwarfed in her conception. She may exaggerate, but she never belittles—she may over-pass the idea of the poet, or our own, but she never falls behind it. Her genius is wonderfully strong and individual—full of glowing vitality, palpitating with a rich, vigorous life. Her power in high tragedy has much of regal sway and consciousness—somewhat too much, it may be, of arrogance and fierceness at times; but she grasps you, holds you, and conquers you, finally, whether you rebel, or submit at the first. She compels your half-bewildered admiration, she commands your sweetest sympathies, she gives you sudden electric shocks of passion, she storms upon you with all the fire and flood of maddened love, hate, revenge, anguish, and despair. But this is only the night side of the picture—there is another side of sunshine, of glad, golden, Italian sunshine. In scenes of playful tenderness, her voice, her look, her manner, have a most subduing sweetness and a peculiar, child-like charm. Yes, child-like; for there is always something of pride and sovereignty about a child, and, in comedy, she ever seems to get to be playing with her wildest wit, sovereignly and proudly, as though half divining that grave fates sometimes come under forms of humorous fancies—as imperial Juno might have trifled with the cuckoo which nestled in her bosom, all unknowing that she fondled an adventurous god, masquerading under borrowed plumes.

There is another picture of her genius, neither of darkness nor full day, but of soft and tender moonlight. In scenes of great soul-sounding sorrow, of holy womanly love in adversity, desertion, and death, Miss Cushman's deepest power is no longer stormy, imperious, or exigent, but seems to steal upon you like the soft step of a beloved friend, who comes to join you in your sadness, and grieve with you, rather than to ask you for your tears. And in her most passionate per sonations the lulls in the tempest, the deep-breathing times, the after-calm, are especially delicious. There are no where such pleasant re sts to our impassioned interest as in her splendid representation of Romeo. Never shall I forget the exquisite tenderness, the refined passion, the wonderful blending of manly strength and womanly softness of this noble personation. Before him, I had never seen any rendering of this character which was not a caricature, or a profanation. But who could do justice to the lightness, the sparkle, the mirthful abandon, the absolute delicousness of her Rosalind? It is a wonder of art, and yet a delight for its pure, spontaneous naturalness, for its fulness of glorious wit and matchless humor, for its truth to life, womanhood, and Shakespeare. There is about this part an exultant, exuberant joyousness, which must make it a brilliant impossibility, a beautiful despair, to any but an *artiste* who has preserved much of the flush and freshness of early girlhood, like the joy and fragrance of past May-day-crownings lingering about her yet. Miss Cushman's triumph in this part proves that the heart of eighteen now throbs in her bosom—that the springs from which her genius first drank have not failed, but gladden, refresh, and sustain it still.

In regarding Miss Cushman, I cannot pay all tribute to the genius and art which has won her such distinction; for the tireless energy, the will, the courage, the indomitable perseverance of the woman, claim yet more of my admiration. She has built, block by block, the structure of her own fame and fortune; she has cut her own way through "the forest of difficulty," has herself bridged all the chasms and floods which lay in her path. And for this I honor her.

Well, I have made a long leap from Mary Stuart to Charlotte Cushman—from the actress-queen of Shakspeare's time to the queen-actress of our day—from her who played on the broad stage of state, with the world for an audience, so fearlessly yet fatally, her own passionate and improvised role, tragedy or tragedy, to its dark and bloody finale—to her who so well presents for our admiring homage the great poet's grand and gay, sweet and sorrowful creations. Adieu.

GRACE GREENWOOD.

[National Era.

THE DAILY AMERICAN TELEGRAPH.

OUR SECOND YEAR!

One year ago this day was issued the first number of the AMERICAN TELEGRAPH. We were then assured by many intelligent citizens of Washington that it had already been fully demonstrated that such a paper could not live here, and that ours could not exist three months; while cautious men of business assured us that if we should succeed in sustaining it, then they would give us their support! The predictions of the former have proved baseless—the wish that was father to the thought has not been realized; and the promises of the latter have not been redeemed.

Cut off from all hopes of the kind of patronage on which other papers of this city feast—encountering the overwhelming competition of Washington papers supported by the government patronage, and the newspapers of Baltimore, that derive their support from a commercial and manufacturing population of one hundred and eighty thousand persons—proscribed in official places—avoided by timid men in office—opposed by the concerted influence of a portion of a respectable religious communion, upon a pretext entirely baseless—without the influence in the community of connexions and friends to defend us from the attacks of opposition of interested competitors,—we have yet maintained our position, and to-day stand before our fellow-citizens prepared to serve them faithfully, fearlessly, and independently.

We have no favors to ask. We have respect and good-will toward the people of this community, and intend to merit theirs in return. But we shall not do this by flattering their follies, or appealing to their sympathies. Where such a course as this becomes necessary to insure success, we shall not be ashamed to fail. But until it does, our path shall lie onward and upward. We will neither fail nor falter.

Now for a few familiar words. Why do we not sell our paper as cheap as the Baltimore papers are sold? is the frequent question. We reply, because we are not in Baltimore—because a commercial city of one hundred and eighty thousand people can yield an amount of advertising custom not to be obtained in a community of forty thousand people who *do their shopping in Baltimore!*

Do their shopping in Baltimore! Yes, by a willful and unreasonable opposition to the only cheap paper of their own that ever could survive their slights, the business men of Washington give all the aid in their power to promote the interests of Baltimore merchants here. The Baltimore papers contain Baltimore advertisements; and the people of Washington compile their memoranda from such advertisements, send their orders to Baltimore, obtain their goods there, and then make our own storekeepers pay a well-merited penalty.

Would we proscribe the papers of Baltimore? By no means. We regard the morning as fair and full that does not bring them to us. We are willing to encourage their circulation here. They should bring light and knowledge to every home and place of business throughout our whole city. Every one should rejoice in the facilities they afford. But the extensive circulation of a Washington afternoon paper, with the advertisements of Washington business people, should preserve us from the temptation of sending to Baltimore for those commodities which can as well be obtained in Washington. It was with special reference to this that we commenced an afternoon paper. We knew the advantages offered by the penny press of Baltimore—we appreciated them fully; we did not wish to come in conflict with them. We intended not to cross the path of those journals; and we believed our purposes would be approved by our own people.

My many they have; but not by all. So far from this, we seriously doubt (call it egotism if you will) that there is another man in Washington who would have clung to an enterprise as the writer of this has adhered to that upon which he had embarked—laboring without present recompense, and with but feeble hope for the future; and even, *from bitter necessity*, submitting to a transitory public misapprehension of his true position in particulars of the most serious moment.

But away with the past. The present around us, and the prospect before, are what now concern us. We have no revenges—no regrets. We have no enemies that we know of, and care not a dime for any that are unknown. We intend to labor on, to improve with increasing means, to stand by our friends, to make them honor, to stifle no sentiment, to sacrifice no opinion, to conciliate no bigot, to flatter no money-worshipper, to bow before no official upstart, to mention no public or private wrong, and in general to be honestly, soberly, democratically, and peaceably, and die only when our time shall have come.

If, therefore, any of our fellow-citizens shall feel inclined to give us kind words of encouragement, and to render us kindly aid, at the commencement of this our second year, we cordially invite them to our office. We will greet them at the threshold with a friendly welcome, endeavor to make a good return for all the benefits we shall receive at their hands, and preserve them from all future regrets that such has been their course.

MARCH 24, 1852.

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