

## A SONG.

BY JOHN PAYNE.

I know of nothing that lasts, not I,  
Save a heart that is true to its love always—  
A love that is won with tear and sigh,  
And never changes or fades away,  
In a breast that is oftener sad than gay;  
A tender look and a constant mind—  
These are the only things that stay;  
All else flits past on the wings of the wind.

## The New-York Tribune.

ILLUSTRATED SUPPLEMENT.

SUNDAY, MAY 11, 1902.

The announcement that the story which the late Stephen Crane left unfinished is to be completed by Mr. A. E. W. Mason, the author of "Miranda of the Balcony," causes us to wonder once more just why this sort of thing should happen. It is altogether probable, to be sure, that Mr. Mason will do the work well. He has before this acted as collaborator, and with a much more distinguished writer than Mr. Crane—Mr. Andrew Lang, to wit. He has shown that he understands and can successfully practise one of the most difficult of all the arts. His own books have almost invariably been of merit. But is the question, where the completion of Mr. Crane's novel is concerned, one of doing the work well or ill? Is it not rather a question as to whether the work should be done at all? No matter how skilful the craftsman may be who is called in to finish the book of a dead man, the result is bound to be of doubtful value. Mr. Quiller-Couch finished the late Robert Louis Stevenson's uncompleted novel, "St. Ives," and he acquitted himself of his task with sympathy and tact. But is the confirmed Stevensonian really grateful for his intervention? A disinterested reader is not likely to feel much interest, to say nothing of pleasure, in the added portion. No matter how interesting Mr. Crane's book may be when it leaves Mr. Mason's hands, it could not help but be, in the very nature of things, an ambiguous souvenir of the American author.

Hysterical and unthinking enthusiasm sometimes seems to entrench an author in a very firm position, but in good time the reaction always sets in. In alluding to this fact last Sunday we said that a week no longer passes without a voice being raised somewhere in defence of the highest standard. Proof of this reaches us from across the sea, where a writer in "The Quarterly Review" has been turning his attention to the case of Mr. Stephen Phillips. So much has been said in preposterous eulogy of this writer that it has seemed as if English criticism had quite lost its head. But "The Quarterly" has no illusions on the subject. It says, for example: "Mr. Phillips has laid the paper, the sticks and the coals neatly in the grate, where they remain, in undisturbed order, awaiting the flame that never wakens them into light or heat." The critic goes into details. "Nothing that is said by Herod might not as well be said by Mariamne; nothing that is said by either Mariamne or Herod might not better be said by a third person." Of "Paolo and Francesca" it is remarked that it "seems at first sight to be more nearly a work of art than 'Ulysses' because it has nothing quite so bad as the prologue in heaven." The poet's characters, we are told, "pass, and the scenery is changed; . . . and nothing that they have done has moved us, and nothing that they have said has moved us; and we can always discuss the acting and the staging." Mr. Phillips's work is characterized, in short, as "neither original as poetry, nor genuine as drama." These views, as our readers well know, have been already stated in The Tribune; but the point to which we would especially refer is that they indicate a recovery in England of that critical sanity which for a time seemed to have disappeared.

The Baconian hypothesis has for a few months caused so much excitement in the public prints that on the old principle of averages a goodly number of persons may safely be assumed to be very much on the side of the iconoclasts. But it is interesting to observe that the reprinting of Shakespeare's works, which has long been a phenomenon as persistent as the tides, goes on with undiminished energy. The new editions come from the presses in a never ending procession. One of the latest Shakespearean enterprises is that which is to give us in the pages of "Harper's Magazine" a series of drawings by Mr. Abbey, in illustration of the tragedies and historical plays. His illustrations to the comedies, originally published in the same periodical, will be recalled. The text was supplied by Mr. Andrew Lang. For the new series various hands have been engaged. Mrs. Craigie will contribute to it, and Mr. Swinburne will also, writing upon "King Lear." Other equally well known authors will share in the work. Plainly, the efforts of the Baconians are powerless to abate devotion to the poet. It is strange, indeed, that they do not recognize the utter hopelessness of their campaign. Shakespeare has been accepted as a kind of natural fact. The Baconians may rage and imagine a vain thing, but, to use Matthew Arnold's phrase, the great mundane movement still goes on.

## A RUSSIAN TRAGEDY.

## A STORY OF THE INGLORIOUS REIGN OF PETER III.

PETER III, EMPEROR OF RUSSIA. The Story of a Crisis and a Crime. By R. Nisbet Bain. Illustrated. Octavo, pp. xvi, 298. E. P. Dutton & Co.

Mr. Bain makes in this book a welcome addition to that admirable series of monographs in which he has been celebrating some of the less known figures in Russian history. His theme upon the present occasion is not one of profound importance. Peter III reigned for but six months, and was, on the whole, a personage of such light weight that, as Mr. Bain remarks, "to many people he is only interesting as the husband, the murdered husband, of Catherine. His short life is a mere episode in her turbulent and dramatic career." But there is good reason for the publication of a book about him, especially a book like this one, in which all the facts are sifted from the mass of confusing literature assembled around Peter's name, and are stated with fairness and brevity. Peter was not altogether as bad as he has been painted. The conditions attending his reign and his death

direct and easy means. He had a craze for military matters, and among the Empress's gifts to him was a cabinet of fortification, containing wooden models illustrating the science of warfare, upon which the boy threw himself with ardor. But his enthusiasm was that of a child among toys, and Elizabeth, filled with pride as she watched him over his "studies," lacked the insight to perceive that she was building on sand, that this absorbed lad had in him nothing fitting him to succeed her. Still sickly, and unable to fix his mind upon any subject requiring sustained thought, he promised to discerning observers to be a square peg in a round hole if ever he were elevated to the throne. It is surprising, too, that the Empress did not give due weight to the dislike for most, if not all, things Russian which he felt even in that early time. But she was unwavering in her tenderness and hopefulness. She presided with delight over his reception into the Orthodox Church; she had the whole court take the oath of allegiance to him as heir to the Russian throne and then, out of her limitless maternalism, she did the worst service of all for the poor wretch, in marrying him to the little Princess Sophia Augusta, of Anhalt Zerbst, who under the name of Catherine—which she took

a child, and a princess of prodigious intellect and with an insatiable capacity for enjoyment, was bound to end in a catastrophe." But the author of this book protests against the notion that there was at the start no amiability at all between the two. Catherine was not, he asserts, habitually neglected and ill used by her husband. He was to the end of his days a good natured man, and, though often rude to his wife, he was never brutal. If they drew apart, it was because neither could really understand the other. Peter had perception enough to recognize something untrustworthy in his wife. To the brilliant young Princess Dashkova, who detested him and worshipped Catherine, he once said: "My child, you would do well to recollect that it is much safer to deal with honest block-heads, like your sister and myself, than with great geniuses, who squeeze the juice out of the orange; and then throw away the rind!" But though he had glimpses like this of his wife's true character, they were fitful and did not carry him far. He did not see that, while there could be no question of love between them, it would have been well for him to have made her one of his advisers. The consideration he first showed for her opinions did not last long, and after a while she saw in him only a foolish creature who gave her no pleasure and did nothing for the good of the country. Thus they passed from one misunderstanding to another, until misunderstanding developed on her side into contempt and on his into indifference. Such a situation boded ill for the empire, and though Mr. Bain says the best he can for his hero, he can say nothing that suggests any really statesmanlike abilities in the latter. On his accession to the throne he recalled a number of exiles, though his selections were not all calculated to please the people. He instituted one or two reforms. The oppressive salt tax was reduced, the judicial torture chamber was abolished, and the police department was to a certain extent overhauled and improved. He showed, too, that he was willing to work. Witness this passage from Mr. Bain's chapter on the opening of the new regime:

At the beginning of his reign the new emperor manifested a feverish energy and a minute diligence in the discharge of his duties which distressed and disquieted all the supine and somnolent bureaucrats who had grown up under the easy going Elizabethan regime. Peter arose every morning, summer and winter, at 7 o'clock. While he was dressing his adjutants were admitted to make reports and take orders. From 8 to 10 he was in his Cabinet consulting with his ministers. Before 10 he had already gone the round of all the public offices, often arriving there so early as to find no one but junior clerks on the premises, whereupon the Senators and ministers would be roundly rebuked for neglecting their duties. At the stroke of 11 he appeared on the parade ground, where all the officers were already awaiting him. After a rigorous inspection of his warriors (and we betide the soldier whose cravat was improperly tied or whose buckles were not of the regulation size) Peter, assisted by a Prussian officer, the subsequently celebrated General Bauer, would exercise the troops himself till 1 o'clock. It must also in fairness be admitted that he made an excellent drillmaster. The veteran Munich was astounded at the discipline and steadiness of the troops after a couple of months of this rigorous regimen, and confessed that he himself could not have done more within so short a time. At 1 o'clock Peter dined without the slightest ceremony, calling to his table any one of whatever rank with whom he would speak. Occasionally he accepted invitations to private houses, especially the houses of the English factors, where he was a great favorite. His afternoons were never idle. After a short siesta he would go about on a fresh tour of inspection, generally appearing when and where he was least expected. His evenings were devoted to amusements of a boisterous description in the circle of his Holstein officers, where the emperor, though naturally abstemious, frequently smoked and drank more than was good for him, the proceedings generally terminating in rough horseplay. Very often, however, the time between dinner and supper was filled up with a concert, when Peter would, for hours at a time, play first violin in the orchestra with inconceivable ardor. Then came supper and a smoking party, which lasted generally far into the night, after which it was Peter's usual practice to discuss politics and transact business with his confidants till 2 o'clock. Yet he was always up again at 7 o'clock the next morning, so that he seemed to many people to be in a fair way toward ruining his health or shortening his days. To all those who had grown up beneath the old, tranquil, indolent sway of Elizabeth, the bustle and racket of the new reign was very disturbing. "What with the marching and exercising of troops and the rolling of carriages and the traffic and concourse," says Holtey, "St. Petersburg seems to have undergone a complete change, and all its circumstances are so altered that we seem to be breathing quite a different atmosphere."

Against such merits as are reflected in this passage must be set the incurable flightiness of Peter's mind and his failure to realize that he had been placed upon the throne to rule Russia for the Russians. His heart turned constantly to his native duchy, he surrounded himself with his beloved Holsteiners, and, as though this were not enough, he gave free reign to his admiration of the hated King of Prussia. His praise of that individual in season and out of season was offensive enough to create an angry public sentiment. When he allowed his enthusiasm to carry him beyond all bounds, not simply adopting Prussian methods in his army but embracing Prussian policy in foreign affairs, and relinquishing the ground that Elizabeth had gained during the conflict with that power, he was doomed. Mr. Bain sets forth in a very clear and interesting manner the subjugation of Peter to the crafty Frederick's ideas, and effectively exhibits the evil results upon Russia's standing among the nations. Something had to be done. The interference of Catherine was inevitable. Our author blinks nothing where the relation of the Empress to the tragedy of Ropsha is concerned. He cannot prove that Catherine ordered the murder of her husband, but whether she was to that extent responsible



PETER III.  
(From an old print.)

have not hitherto been made familiar to English and American readers.

He began life at Kiel, where he was born in 1728, the son of Charles Frederick, Duke of Holstein, and his consort, Anne, Duchess of Courland, under circumstances of mixed significance. A grandson of Peter the Great, he had illustrious blood in his veins, and, therefore, obviously, a future of great potentialities awaited him. But physically and mentally he was one of the feeblest scions of his race; his mother died before he was a fortnight old, and he was brought up under a system of education as stupid as it was brutal. In recognition of the fact that there was a possibility of his being raised to the Russian throne, he received a training which, if intended wisely, was certainly ill adapted to his weak body and small intelligence. His imperial prospects did not soften any of his governors. One of them used to punish him by making him kneel on hard peas till his little legs were red and swollen, and the same brutal individual even used a horsewhip upon him, "occasionally alternating the discipline by placing him in a doorway with a fool's cap on his head, for the amusement of his own gentlemen in waiting as they sat at dinner." But as his thirteenth birthday approached affairs in Russia took a turn which promised to improve his outlook. His aunt, Elizabeth, seized the throne and sent for him, resolving to adopt him as her successor. She was more than kind to him, making his reception at St. Petersburg an occasion for all manner of festivities, and straightway establishing him in a position infinitely more comfortable, not to say luxurious, than anything he had known before. When it was discovered that the young duke was backward for his age, and terribly flighty into the bargain, every effort was made to instruct him by in-

when admitted into his church—was to prove his deadliest enemy. Mr. Bain thus indicates the qualities of character which even at the outset this extraordinary woman disclosed:

The bride-elect, a shrewd, piquant, observant, preternaturally precocious little creature of fourteen, who had already made it a rule of conduct to please every one worth pleasing, easily won the heart of the good natured Elizabeth. Great pains were taken with the religious side of her education. Vasily Adadurov was appointed her instructor in Russian, and the grand duke's confessor, Theodorosky, expounded to her the dogmas of the orthodox faith. Sophia Augustina astonished every one by the keenness of her intelligence and the ardor of her application. In ten days she had learned enough Russian to be able to converse with her spiritual father in that language. Then she gave the whole court a great scare. In order to master the difficult idioms of the Slavonic tongue as rapidly as possible, the little princess used to get up in the middle of the night to con her tasks for the following day, and, as her rooms were kept at a very high temperature, she would frequently kick off her slippers and walk barefoot for hours, repeating her exercises aloud. The consequence was that she contracted a severe attack of pleurisy, and for a month the girl's life hung upon a thread. But the Empress herself nursed her through it, scarcely quitting her bedside the whole time, and after hovering between life and death for three weeks she slowly began to recover. Yet, even in the throes of what might have been a mortal illness, Sophia's tact andadroitness did not desert her. During an interval of ease her mother suggested that she should see a Lutheran pastor. "No," replied the girl. "I should prefer to talk with my confessor, Theodorosky." These words were, of course, repeated to the Empress, as Sophia intended them to be, and won her the favor of the whole court.

This self-possessed and clever princess was plainly destined to fill a more important rôle than that of obedient consort to an incapable ruler. As Mr. Bain remarks, "such a union, between a prince who physically was something less than a man, and mentally little more than