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A TRACT
FOR THE TIMES.

BY

AN OFFICER
LATE OF THIS GARRISON.

MALTA, — September 1849.

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The Peace of Society is not to be with impunity disturbed with Insurrection; and the Men against whom such action is proved, become the just objects of punishment.

Dr. JOHN MOORE.

I feel that I would be doing *justice to the Maltese*, and a *service to my Brother-Officers*, and to my *Country*, by declaring, in all truth, the opinion entertained in this Island of the late important, and imperatively demanded change, in the character and policy of its local Government; and I feel the more called upon to publish these pages, since I have perceived that the "plague spot" is extending, and its fetid humours have begun to infect, not only the villanous Papers of Malta, but those of my Country, who, finding that matters are invulnerable in principle, have given vent

to their natural propensity, by attacking personally the enlightened Personage, who has been entrusted by Our August Sovereign with the means of effecting the *real*, and *permanent* prosperity of Her most loyal subjects, the Maltese.

That we have proved faithless to the Maltese, is a fact; that we have hitherto misgoverned and injured, from ignorance and carelessness, their best interests, is another fact; and that they have a positive and stipulated right to much more liberal Concessions than have lately been made to them, is a third fact; and although they are in circumstances to impeach not only our individual, but our national character, with the foulest deeds, and could assert, with great justice, that our proceedings and dealings with them, are worthy of a Nation much less civilized than we boast to be, and that we have returned *ingratitude* for the significant words

“ MELITENSIVM AMOR HAS INSULAS CONFIRMAT.”

they have, let it be said to their honor, shown themselves worthy of much greater proof of Royal Confidence, and have evinced more thankfulness, than the restricted concessions doled out to them after half a century of really governmental humbug, and severe trials, deserved.

The Maltese, unexceptionably, consider the appointment of a Civil Governor to their Island, as amounting to their emancipation, and the *partial*, and *most curiously modified* restoration of a Right, they so positively enjoyed, and so wisely and honorably exercised, until usurped by us at a time when the Maltese were the admiration of all Europe,

and when they were still bleeding for their country and our cause, has been received by them "with feelings of loyalty and gratitude to Her Majesty."

The conduct of the Maltese appears to me worthy of the highest eulogiums, especially when I call to mind the numerous attacks I have at times observed in the Malta English Papers (and I must say it to my shame) in some of the publications at Home, evidently the rudest effusions of the most heartless Blackguards that ever disgraced humanity: and I felt grievously hurt when I heard that these cowardly assaults on the loyal, peaceable, and civil Maltese, were attributed to Individuals of my cloth. We may pride ourselves, as Protestants, of being Bible Readers, and abuse our Maltese neighbours for being Priestly-ridden and deprived of the Sacred Scriptures, but, allow me to ask, who has more attended to the dictates of that Divine Book, we, or our benighted neighbours? Does not their uniform behaviour to us, prove their strict obedience to the Divine injunction:

Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you.

Did they ever return to us

An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth?

Did we not

Smite them on the right cheek, and they turned to us the other also?

I have been among them many and many years, and have frequented the best of their Society, and I can safely assert that I have never heard one of them utter a

word of disaffection to us *as a Nation*. This fact, as a winding up to the above observations, I feel bound to state *in justice to the Maltese*, and for the information of my misinformed countrymen, who have been maliciously led to entertain an impression, that the Maltese are "a set of grumblers most difficult to be satisfied."

It is generally believed that the Military are the most inveterate enemies to the appointment of Civilians as Governors of our Colonies, and that such is their enmity and determined opposition to this novel measure, that they have actually *bribed* Papers to support the Military Cause wherever a Civilian has been appointed Governor in preference to a Military Officer.

This belief has created a feeling of aversion to the Military generally, and has occasionally given rise to disgraceful collisions and interchange of abusive language. I beg to be allowed to state, that if this feeling of opposition does exist at all, it is harboured in the *hare-brained* young gentlemen of the inferior ranks, who may be better designated as the "Military Noodles." In the superior ranks, and I have had ample opportunities of testing the mind of the Gentlemen composing them, I declare that no such feeling of opposition exists, and it is their unanimous opinion that Civilians are much better qualified, in every respect, to govern Colonies than Military Officers; and I have never witnessed an instance of dissension on this subject. In thus asserting the above fact, I hope, I am rendering *a service to the sober-minded part of my Brother-Officers*.

From what has been maliciously published in Newspapers, Pamphlets, &c. Government at Home may incline

to apprehend that the proceedings of the Civil Governor of Malta are not fully consonant with their views, that certain of his late acts are positively injurious to the interests of the Mother Country, and one especially, "does lower her in the scale of civilized nations. "I feel *I would be doing a service to my Country* by stating few plain facts in support of the Civil Governor of Malta, and in doing so, I declare (allow me to use a professional phrase) "as a Gentleman and an Officer," that I am perfectly unbiassed.

Unlike his Military predecessors, who did hardly any thing else than perambulate the Streets of Valletta (*occasionally in the dead of night,*) hands in pocket, smoking cigars; some, eyes riveted to the ground, and with the pace of a Dromedary, left daily their kingly Palace in Town to visit their friends in the Government Country Residence; others, stiff as a block, "eyes front," "shoulders square," took an aristocratic carriage airing, and afterwards sat down to "Search the Scriptures," and forsooth stumbled on the agreeable passage "that a Bishop should be the husband of one wife," Mr. More O' Ferrall grasped the helm of Government with a determination which gave us at once to understand that he was deeply sensible that "England expects every man to do his duty."

In less than 18 months he conceived and effected most important measures, affecting the Revenue of the Island and its Commercial interests, organized almost all the Government Institutions in the Island, and has used the whole power of his mind, and all his exertions, to repeal the unlucky expressions of "necessarily precluded," &c., from Earl Grey's Despatches, and succeeded in substituting

those of "I approve of your measure, and you may carry the same into effect forthwith," &c.

In all his proceedings he has evinced great talent, great policy, and rigid attention to the spirit of Her Majesty's Government; and I have frequently heard him request the advice of Maltese Gentlemen, with great earnestness, that his measures may meet the peculiar wants and predilections of the interesting people confided to his care. Such scenes, such wisdom never took place within the precincts of the Jerosolimitan Palace. I repeat the above circumstances with a conviction of their truth, and without the least fear of being contradicted, as I have been personally acquainted with almost all the predecessors of the present "*Excellency*."

The Reforms he has effected in the most important Departments of the Public Service, and the numerous measures he has conceived for the better Government of the Island, as detailed in his really talented Addresses to the Government Council, have invariably been the subject of serious conversation among sober-minded Military Officers; and I have experienced, upon every occasion, the pleasure of hearing their unanimous opinion "that a better Governor could not have been selected for Malta." The peculiarly difficult position of a Governor of this Island, appears to be admirably understood by Mr. More O' Ferrall, and his *tact* in meeting the *queerest* predilection of the Maltese is a qualification of which none of his Predecessors ever evinced the least glimmering, and the total want of which has exposed (and very justly so) some of our best General Officers to much ridicule and abuse.

We cannot as yet understand that our position in this

Island is a very peculiar and delicate one, and we cannot as yet understand that it is our positive duty to consult, upon all occasions, first of all, and in preference to every other consideration, the *predilections* of the Maltese, the *views* of the Maltese, the *opinion* of the Maltese, before exercising our judgement and authority. We cannot in this Island (and those acquainted with the History of the "*How*" we came to the possession of Malta, will certainly concur with my views) consult our feelings as Englishmen in our native Land; we are here as guardians of the Rights and Privileges of the Maltese, defenders of their Land, and for the performance of this duty, we have, let it be remembered, pledged our honor in the face of all Europe. With this solemn truth Mr. More O'Ferrall is deeply impressed, has on all occasions acted accordingly, and by his deeds has taught us "that the science of Politics is not fixed and unchangeable, like a system of abstract truth, but is progressive, and fluctuates with the exigencies of Society."

I feel I shall be rendering a service to my Country when I declare (after a residence of many and many years in this Island, and having a perfect acquaintance with the Maltese, and a knowledge of their interests) that it is now high time that we should deal with the Maltese as they deserve, and make amends for our past transgressions, by the justness of our future conduct; and in doing so we shall be acting as men of honor, bound as we are by the History of the "*How*" we came to the possession of Malta, and imperatively commanded to do so, by the admirable behaviour of the Maltese to us *as a Nation*. In appointing Mr. More O'Ferrall Governor of Malta we have

certainly given the best proof of our inclination to do justice to the Maltese, and have decidedly opened a new era for Malta: the superior talents of that personage, will, I earnestly hope, ere his time expires, effect, or at least initiate, the *real national prosperity* of the Maltese.

The popularity Mr. More O'Ferrall enjoys with the Maltese, although a "*Vicious Circle*" of 241 individuals of no "weight or standing," and two disreputable penny liners of local Papers, have lately opened their "flood gates of the vilest eloquence," and seized upon the two *best* measures His Excellency ever conceived for the peace and comfort of the Maltese, to tarnish His Excellency's name, must be the best proof to Her Majesty's Government that at last the *right* person has been fixed upon for the better Government of this most deserving population. The two measures I allude to above, and which have been so shamefully descanted upon, are *the just admission of the Jesuits* and *the just expulsion of the European Rebels*. To the Government at Home I have hardly any local information to afford them in further justification of the *strict instructions* furnished by them to His Excellency the Governor for his guidance in dealing with the above two very opposite classes of men, as I have no doubt every circumstance connected therewith must have been duly and fully reported in Official Despatches, upon which implicit reliance will be placed. But a word or two, from an individual, *at present* unconnected with Government, and belonging to a class of Society, proverbially and professionally straightforward, may serve to corroborate the truth reported by those concerned with the Administration of the local Authority.

I may safely assure the Government, and our good people at Home, that the *admission* of the exiled Jesuits into, and the *total expulsion* of Cargoes of sundry Rebels from Malta, are, considering *our position* in Malta, and *all circumstances*, very *wise* measures: and, mark if you please, both have the hearty approbation of the Maltese, excepting the 24 individuals of barren brains, hereunder summarily described, forming a "*Circus*," for the advocacy of the present social and political chimeras, and the Editor of the "*Malta Mail*," and the hired Scribblers of the "*Mediterraneo*," who, mingling with their low conduct, *malicious* love of country, have given the best example of the truth of Dr. Johnson's definition "that Patriotism is the last refuge of a Scoundrel," and like the Tailors of Tooley Street have dared to speak (to grunt I mean) in the name of the Nation.

The "*Circolo*" was formerly a respectable Society, but it has lately dwindled into a low smoking Divan, a lounging house for petty Foreign tradesmen, shopkeepers, discharged Government employès &c., and the 24 Pharisees, set apart out of such *respectable stock*, are Junior Clerks and Errand-Boys of Counting-Houses, expelled dull Students of the Jesuits, broken down sprigs of Nobility, a teacher of $a + b = c$, who, from his *lamentable* disposition, has been very properly nick-named "*Jeremiah*," quack Doctors of Medicine, a *Perpetual Secretary* of an Idle Society, besotted habitual tipplers, addle-pated country Lawyers, who have lost the confidence of the Public, and have no clients to attend to, &c., these are the groveling characters who constitute the important body called the "*Circolo Maltese*." Most assuredly their *foul tricks* "*will not be*

endured either by the *Public* or the *Government*." The Maltese know too well that "*tricks* and *treachery* are the practice of fools, that have not sense enough to be *honest*."

I need hardly add that the above *Street walking-gentlemen* are the most *independent* subjects in the Island, having neither property, character, or reputation to lose.

O Heaven! that such companions (*) thou'dst unfold
And put in every honest hand a whip,
To lash the rascals through the World.

Othello.

The *Public* has already employed the best means of destroying these worthy characters for an "*Olympic Circus*," and a Paper has been set on foot by the *Juvenal* of Malta, who will drill them, and bring them to a sense of "*Order*," and whose avowed object is to work the total discomfiture and disgrace of the "*Circolo Maltese*," and the suppression of the "*Malta Mail*" and "*Mediterraneo*." I wait with impatience, as a sincere friend to the Maltese, for the means the *Government* will employ.

The "*Malta Mail*" is conducted by a man of very doubtful biography, a vulgar and illiterate man, with one collaborator only, of the same caste, and both shunned by *Respectable Society*; and both

Lay by their reason in their bowls
As Turks are said to do their souls.

The "*Mediterraneo*" is conducted by a man of no education, unable to write, and is therefore obliged to *purchase*, from

(*) The word companion in Shakspeare's time bore a very opposite meaning to its present acceptation; instead of being the honorable synonyme of associate, it occurs in the above Play, with the same contemptuous meaning which we now affix, in its abusive sense, to the word "*fellow*." I make this glossary note, lest the applicability of the passage to the above circumstance, be doubted.

the *foulest sources*, materials for his columns; hence its low and varied character. He is also a Bandit from Society, and

Supplies his loss of wit and sense
With barbarousness and insolence.

The Public at Home must rest assured that the opposition to the Government of Mr. More O' Ferrall is confined to the above *insignificant* and *unprincipled* parties, who are in Malta treated as they justly deserve, viz. with utter contempt, who are all Bandits from respectable Society, and avoided like lepers.

The *malicious insinuation* that our enlightened and liberal Governör is influenced by the Jesuits in the discharge of his public duty, and that he is overcourteous to these "fiendish beings," (so called by our Modern Social Reformers) I declare, upon what I consider dearest to myself, my honor, that the insinuation is an "infernal lie." Mr. More O' Ferrall is one of the most liberal Catholics I have ever met with, and is one of that stamp, who will allow no Priestcraft of any denomination to prevail upon, or avert him from performing his duty, honestly, and in every respect as becomes the Great Nation he has the honor to represent. The Jesuits, who are said to have been received by Mr. More O' Ferrall "with open arms," have never crossed the threshold of the Palace, have never seen this their great Benefactor, and the fatherly attention paid to them by the rank Jesuit, Mr. More O' Ferrall, amounts "to a supply of dirty paillasses from the Government Hospital," and "a roof at St. Calcedonio," which accommodation was granted at the request of our Ambassador at the Court of Naples, and that of the Catholic Archbishop of Malta.

The *pathetic* accounts given by the above mentioned Malta Journals, organs bye-the-bye of the 24 low Inflammers of the "Circolo," of the sufferings of the "Noble Italian Patriots," yet inebriated from "Belshazzar's feast" at Rome, their hands yet dripping blood of peaceful citizens, are "a tissue of lies," and the hard heartedness evinced to them by our Christian Governor, is a vile exaggeration, which has so disgraced the villains who have endeavoured to diffuse it, that they now fly like Cains from the gaze of the Public, and I regret that my countrymen at Home should have allowed themselves to be so far duped by the false reports gathered from the above infamous Papers, representing the individual opinion of their low Conductors, as to express sympathy for the *Rebels*, and disapprobation of Mr. More O' Ferrall's conduct. I must inform my easily duped countrymen that the *Rebels* who reached this Island from Italy, especially the late Cargoes, consisted, *in part*, of the Demons of the European Revolutionary Movement, the murderers of every Country, the highway men of Calabria, the Transteverini cut-throats, among whom there were low prostitutes, in men's clothing, and whose *indescribable* sufferings, were of an *immoral nature*.

Now, draw your conclusions, if you please, as lovers of truth and justice, and declare with me that Mr. More O' Ferrall was *quite right* in refusing admission into this Garrison to such "degraded beings," who have dared to style themselves "Italian unsuccessful Patriots." Did our *rank Jesuit, our unfeeling rascal* (such are the epithets used in alluding to Mr. More O' Ferrall) stain and lower the honor of our Country, or strongly upheld it by preventing the "Noble Italian Patriots" from laying their execrable

heads on England's Motherly bosom? I have always considered it my duty, as an Englishman, to afford protection to the *honest* and *deserving*, but I have equally considered it my duty to refuse protection, nay to punish the *dishonest* and *undeserving*.

In conclusion I beg to assure my Countrymen at Home, that Mr. More O'Ferrall has earned the popularity of the Maltese, and his numerous measures, including those relative to *Jesuits* and *Rebels*, have, without an exception, received their cordial approbation. The Maltese, in fact, behold in Mr. More O'Ferrall, the most worthy representative they ever have had, of the Nation they deeply love, honor, and venerate.

The only Paper which has, on all occasions, done honor to the Maltese, and has faithfully given the true aspect of things, whether they concerned us, or the Maltese, is the "Portafoglio," and I regret exceedingly that that Paper is not translated into our language, for I am certain what would have been the result, viz. perfect harmony of feeling amongst us.

I would recommend to all the characters connected with the London Press, always to wait for the opinion of that Paper before yielding to insert articles on what concerns Malta and the Maltese. The Editor of the "Portafoglio" is a Gentleman, in the best acceptation of the term, of superior intellectual abilities, has great experience, profound knowledge of the Island, and as he moves in the best Society of the place is always best capable to ascertain the feeling, the opinion of the most respectable, the most influential Inhabitants of the Island, and thus he publishes in his columns the mind of that class we do mostly care for.

Having said as much *in justice* to the Maltese, and in the performance of my duty towards my *Brother Officers and my Country*, I beg to assure my readers, that notwithstanding my age and position, I shall ever exert myself for *fair* representation of facts, whether these concern my Country, or the most obscure puddle-hole in the world.

I have no doubt that the *truth* contained in these pages will prove unpalatable to our would-be Demagogues, and poor efforts will be made in self defence; and for lack of argument to paralyze my statements, will use the only *stale stock* they can have on hand, *abuse*. But I will smile at their "weeping and gnashing of teeth,"

For all must grant it needs no common art

To keep men patient when we make them smart.