

**FRANCE  
BEFORE EUROPE**

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France Before Europe by Jules Michelet

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**JULES MICHELET**

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BEFORE EUROPE**



*H. S. Trice*

FRANCE BEFORE EUROPE.

BY

JULES MICHELET.

*TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.*

"LES Juges SONT JUGÉS."

BOSTON :

ROBERTS, BROTHERS.

1871.

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## TO MY TRANSLATOR.

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*Florence, February 26th.*

It is a great pleasure for me that the translation of a book, which is of some importance in my eyes, should have been undertaken by so enlightened a mind as yours, and one who has so well and clearly caught my thought and the form in which I express it. The correction of the proofs by one whom I value and esteem, makes this translation unique and precious in every point of view to me and to all.

J. MICHELET.

## PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

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WHEN the Emperor of Russia received the news of the battle of Wörth (our first defeat), he could not repress his transports of joy. He was at dinner, and to relieve his feelings, he tossed off, in old German fashion, a great goblet of wine, and then threw it up to the ceiling, whence it fell and shivered to atoms. The tumbler out of which he had drunk at such a moment could not be defiled by further use.

This barbaric joy is the synonym of the serious phrase made use of by the German workmen in their petition for peace. The Czar thought their prophecy was already accomplished. "This war will result in the victory of Russia over Germany."

Over Europe and over the world! Germany, by exhausting itself in destroying France, opens a royal road to the Tartar Russian legions.

The report of this toast, and of this broken tumbler, was not agreeable to Russia's friend. Count Bismarck sighed. His ingenious operation of chloroforming England while he executed France might be disturbed



by the sound. England, anxious about Turkey, might suddenly be roused, and thus guess the secret treaty, which the said Bismarek had signed with the Czar in July against English interests in the East. The cracked glass would make a slit or opening through which light might dawn on the English Government; it must be, therefore, immediately corked up—calked, patched over. To succeed in this what flatteries must be made use of to the gentlemen and officers with the Prussian armies, to the newspaper correspondents, and what compliments, what confidences, what dinners to the reporters! At last, all the right-thinking, and even all the dangerous-thinking, classes were sufficiently acted upon, and England fell asleep again for two months more, till the 1st of November.

Russia, which, in time of peace, has an army of 700,000 men, doubled her artillery last July. In that boreal realm of snow and silence there are no sounds or echoes—at least, at the commencement of events you hear nothing.

But what is not generally known is, that Russia, after a fashion, is a popular government. It understands how, by the application of certain violent goads, its barbarous masses can be stirred up. After Sedan, after Metz, the Czar thought it right to make an appeal to his people. The white bear opened its huge throat, and obtained an awful roar, as echo from that human sea. That race is as mobile as the ocean. Our workers of the West are sedentary races, the Russian is a

vagrant. It is only the weight of an iron yoke which forces him to be a labourer; he would from choice be a boatman, a coachman, a travelling carpenter, or a pedlar. The monotony of the climate and of the landscape make him anxious to change the scene. This desire for change was felt in '53; there had been an intention to go south for the anniversary of the fall of Constantinople (1453), but instead, the Russian was taken to Poland, although Poland had been already devoured as dry as a bone. Some day he will be led into Germany.

To encourage the enthusiasm of his people, the Czar informed the journalists of St. Petersburg, and of Moscow, "Prussia is Russophile; Prussia is with me" (10th November).

This statement displeased Europe, saddened M. de Bismarck, but was a subject of rejoicing in Russia itself. A concert of wild beasts arose as in a menagerie at feeding-time. From the furious Katkoffs to the most charming damsels, there arose a cry, "Long live the Czar!" Innocent girls wrote to their companions, "How delightful—how great is the Emperor! at a bound all Russia has risen to her feet. What an admirable sight! Glory to God!"

The shouts which reached our ears through these truthful voices spoke of invasion, and warned Europe, but they disturbed Bismarck so much that, through his dear correspondents and his world of newspapers, he dared make a counter-statement in reply as strange as it was facetious. "Russia has adopted a peace policy;

Russia is disgusted with standing armies, is envious of the results of the German landwehr, and will in future only think of defensive armies." Only defensive? 500,000 young men were called out in January '71, to add to the 700,000 soldiers she had before. In all 1,200,000 or 1,300,000: that is the number stated in a quasi-official Russian newspaper. But, as this newspaper is also often made use of to deceive Europe, I trust yet more to private letters, which all speak of an impending general movement in Russia. Russia, they say, is armed and ready to march. Where? Who knows? Is it for poor weak Turkey, or for an occupation of the Wallachian Provinces? Who can believe either rumour? No, Russia is on her march westwards.

In his note of the 1st November, the Czar, giving a flourish of trumpets to rouse Russia, even more than to startle Europe, proclaimed that he considered himself no longer bound by the Treaty of 1856 guaranteed by all Europe. He asserted the liberty of doing what he pleased. England opened her eyes, and remonstrated against this slap in the face. "Be so good as to tell me why you thus attack *me*, an entirely inoffensive person?"

"I will tell you in London," said the Czar, meekly; adding, jocosely, "I will tell you what it is: Turkey is armed to the teeth, and so strong that at any moment I might be attacked in the Black Sea, and—I am afraid."

Where is France? Where is the sword which, in the Crimean war, according to the acknowledgment of an Eng-