

MISCELLANY.

From the Liverpool Literary Museum.

A TALE OF THE SEA—founded on facts.

The mate of the Dolphin, the moment he discovered that treachery was on foot, steered the schooner close alongside the brig, to which she was instantly grappled. Her crew were armed with cutlasses, and boarding pikes; and three of them, in boarding, fell overboard, with mortal wounds. The rest, headed by the sturdy Frenchman, gained the side of their commander, on the quarter deck of the brig, and a conflict, unequalled in the annals of nautical warfare, continued for upwards of half an hour. We were but sixteen in number; the enemy, several of whom had been below at the commencement of the attack, were more than double our number on deck, and others of them fired upon us from between decks, in a cowardly manner, through the grated hatches. In a short time, the decks became slippery with blood, and were strewn with the dead and the dying. There was scarcely a countenance without a frightful gash, and few could boast of sound limbs.

During a breathless moment, I looked overboard upon the deck of the schooner. The young surgeon was binding a tourniquet round the thigh of the black boy, who had received a severe wound, and as I turned rapidly to resume the struggle, my eye caught a marine taking a deadly aim at the youth with his carbine. His purpose I could not but consider murderous,—seeing that his victim was engaged in an act of humanity, and urged by an uncontrollable impulse, I clove him with my cutlass to the deck, where he lay, the blood swelling from a fearful wound in his shoulder. The retribution was, however, too late. The trigger was drawn as my weapon descended, and the poor surgeon, falling upon his patient—both of them vitally wounded, were soon motionless in death.

Our party, overpowered by numbers, and many of them stabbed from behind, at length thought of effecting a retreat to the schooner. They made a desperate effort to gain the gangway, which was hemmed round by the Spaniards, who strove to cut off all retreat. We made a bold rush against our unequal foes, but though many of them were slain, we were foiled in our first attempt; and in the closeness and heat of our struggle, the stilettoes of the Spaniards gleamed on high. The cutlasses of several of our men had snapped, from the badness of the metal—but they armed themselves with the swords and pikes dragged from the stiffening clench of their dying foemen. One of the Englishmen was severely wounded on the shin, and was unable to keep his legs. He fought upon his knees, until he received a death blow on the head from a sabre. The remembrance of the conclusion of the struggle is to me but a dream. The brave French mate was run through the back by a pike. He made a dying effort to be avenged, and not in vain; for stretching out his sword as he fell, his weight sent it into the breast of his antagonist, and they rolled together lifeless on the deck. A last fearful effort—and we gained the gangway, over the bodies of the dead, and leaped on board of the schooner. We let go the hawsers that bound us to the brig, and slowly drifted from her to the leeward.

It was only now that a sense of the danger I had passed rushed upon my mind. I felt my arms and legs as though to convince myself I was still corporeal. I gazed upon those of my comrades who had escaped. Good God! they were but four in number!—namely, the captain Patrick O'Flinn, severely wounded, and his eyes flashing with indignation at the treachery of the foe, and the faithful African, the captain's servant! We stared a moment upon each other, as if we had unexpectedly met in some unknown country, after we had passed the portals of death.

The captain came up and shook hands with us, saying, with placidity, "my brave, my fortunate associates! It is but small consolation to think, that though we have lost nearly all our gallant men in this conflict, we have sent double the number to furnish a feast for the sharks; but let us not despair! there are still four of us left, with fearless hearts, who will yet dare to cope with the outnumbering enemy, and strive, at least, to avenge the treacherous death of our gallant comrades!"

I could see the blood oozing from the captain's vest, as he spoke. "You are wounded," said I.

"Nothing—nothing," he replied, interrupting me, "but a scratch;" & he opened his shirt, and thrust his handkerchief down his breast, to staunch the wound, which, in other circumstances, would have excited more caution and alarm. But we had all received a number of flesh wounds, which we bound up in the best manner we could, and taking each a glass of Catalonia wine, to dispel our faintness, we kept our eye upon the enemy, and again began to prepare the guns for action. The Columbian sailor was, while assisting us, nearly cut in two by a cannon shot.

The brig now got ahead of us, on the starboard tack. We set sail, and stood directly in her wake. They had still, we conjectured, eighteen or twenty men left; yet we resolved to seek revenge even against so fearful an odds.

We observed with the telescope that, while they dashed along, they were busy committing their dead to the deep. As we neared them, we heard their loud cheer, followed by peals of laughter, as they plunged a body from the side, and we could not divine the cause. In a few minutes, all was explained. The bodies of several of our comrades, who had perished on the deck of the brig came floating under our hawser, tied to pieces of planks, that we might see them; and the exulting shouts of the brig's crew expressed their brutal triumph, though they assuredly had little to boast of, over the mangled bodies of their enemies. We were stung to the soul at this unmanly and gratuitous insult, and each of us longed to have a gripe of one of the ruffians by the throat. O'Flinn instinctively blew his match, and looked round impatiently upon the great gun, while his enormous quid shifted from cheek to cheek, in an unusual and portentous manner; and he, at intervals, muttered snatches of oaths in the genuine Irish vernacular.

The captain sat a few moments on the trunk of the cabin, with his eyes pensively fixed on the blood-clotted deck, & then, calmly rising, said to his black servant, "Antonio! wash the decks; and then make a strong fire in the cambouse; heave on all the fire wood you can find, and break up the hatches and washboards for fuel, if you have not enough, rig the wind sails to blow it; and fling into it a dozen of the twelve pound shot. We must warm these miscreants' jackets before we have done with them."

These orders were instantly obeyed; and as we gradually neared the brig, which was under easy sail, O'Flinn spunged out the great gun, and loaded it, remarking, "we might as well trade him to a cold shot or two, to stay his stomach till the cook can serve him with a hot one!"

By this time we were close upon the brig, which again showed the Spanish colours, and hoisted the black flag at the main. She fired upon us her two stern chasers, which wounded our main-top-mast, just above the cap, and before we could take in our gaff-top-sail, which was very large, the pressure of a passing squall carried away the spar. O'Flinn soon cleared it from the cordage; and observing the Columbian colours, still uninjured, nailed upon it, we erected it as a flag staff abaft, Patrick exclaiming, as we secured it, "be handy my boys! or the gentleman may be after thinking that we have struck; but, by the powers! we must *undress* him, and do our best to give him what Paddy gave the drum."

In a few minutes we were close under his lee quarter. O'Flinn, who had considerably elevated the great gun, stood by with the match, and watching his moment, it went off with a report that started the blood from one of my ears. A crash was heard from on board the brig, and when the smoke cleared away, we could see that the shot had brought down his main yard by the run.

"Hav'nt I done it neatly!" said Patrick. "By the powers, we have spoiled his after sail!" He was right. The two carronades, fired by the captain, had also told upon his main rigging, and one of the shots had carried away his try-sail boom. He was unable longer to hold his wind. As he fell off, he poured into us a broadside of grape and round shot.

We were so close that I know not how any of us escaped destruction. Our main-mast went by the board, and poor Antonio was killed by the fall. I looked to the great gun, and saw the Irishman stretched beside it. A ball had entered his breast, and the finger of death was upon him. He beckoned me to him; and while I endeavored to staunch the blood that flowed copiously from the wound, he said, "Norman, my boy, it is all over with Patrick O'Flinn. But thanks be to God! we have not died without favoring the Don with a bit of comfortable news to carry home with him to Porto Rico. By my soul! he caught a tartar, when he fell foul of the little Dolphin; and if Tommy Moore would but write a bit of a song about us, for the honor of Ireland and Columbia, and all lands where God's creatures are trampled upon, it would please me old father better than all the howls that are sure to be set up in the parish of Ballybrook, when they hear of the death of Patrick O'Flinn. Master Norman! though you be a Scotchman, by my faith, you're an Irishman in your heart; and if you reach the land before you're kilt, you'll find a few dollars in my chest below; you'll send them home to my father, and Judith my poor wife, with this letter; and you can write the poor creatures a word of comfort, and tell them that Patrick died at his gun, like a man!"

I received his letter, and endeavored to console him with the hopes, which I

could not myself sincerely entertain, of his surviving his last wound. He shook his head, and becoming faint, said, "I wish I could but see one of the red-hot shot fired at the Don, before I take my leave of you."

The captain was at the helm, and when we lost our main-mast, he kept her before the wind, in a course parallel with that of the brig. We were within pistol shot of her, yet felt, I absolutely know not how, reckless of all danger. There was no one left to load the great gun but myself. I sent home a cartridge; and seeing the brig making preparations to board us, I hastened to the cambouse, and was pleased to observe, that several of the balls were at an almost white heat. I hastened to the gun, and, while ramming down two wet wads, the contents of a canister-shot, as I supposed, from the brig, struck the captain on the left shoulder, tore the flesh from the bones, and left his shattered fore-arm hanging by little more than a piece of skin. He looked calmly at the wounds; yet retained, for some time, his hold of the tiller. I knew little of surgery, but it appeared to me that he could not long survive, although every appliance was at hand. The young surgeon had left some linen on the trunk of the cabin. I bound up the wound on his breast as well as I could, and no tourniquet being at hand, I put a handkerchief round the upper part of the arm, thrust a belaying pin under it, and tightened it by twisting. The blood, however, flowed fast, yet he remained perfectly composed. He became faint, I ran to the cabin to bring some wine for him and O'Flinn, but found every bottle in the lockers smashed by the shot that had entered our hull.

I sprang to the deck with a can of water. They both drank eagerly, and the captain, lashing the helm a little a weather, so that the vessel kept pretty steadily on her course, sat down close to the breech of the great gun, where poor O'Flinn lay, with his head resting upon the carriage. He shook hands with his dying comrade, whose eye lighted up as he saw him, and who was affected to tears to observe him so dreadfully wounded. There was a dead silence for a few moments, when the captain, turning to me, said faintly, as he pulled a small miniature portrait from his breast, "Norman! should you survive to reach one of the islands of your countrymen, or should you, more fortunately, soon visit your native land, remit this trifle to Dieppe. The address is on the back; and it will serve as a small token of my undying attachment. I have no living relatives that are known to me; no one so dear to as poor Antoine, the maid whose beauty this but faintly represents; whose worth and tenderness are, alas! lost to me forever. If you can find leisure to write to her, tell her, in a manner that will least wound her gentle spirit of my death. I know you will do it. There is some property on board besides your own. Should you be enabled to secure it from the enemy, you will please to remit it to the widows, orphans, or relatives of my crew, who have this day perished, and whose names and residences you will find written in the beginning of the log book. And now, young man, ere my strength entirely fails, bring us a hot shot from the furnace, and I will myself endeavor to fire a last gun at our faithless enemy."

I took the portrait—that of a beautiful young female, in a Maria Stewart cap, and wrapping it in a piece of linen, put it carefully into my bosom. I was unable to speak. I sobbed aloud. The captain was moved at my distress, yet my anxiety to preserve the picture seemed to give him a melancholy satisfaction. To rush forward for the ball was a release from my oppressive feelings. The enemy was close at hand, and we might soon expect another broadside. We could hear his contemptuous shouts. I sent out a shot, red-hot into a pitch ladle, and carried it, glowing like a torch, to the gun. I turned home the wet wadding, and, after lowering the gun, so as to hull our adversary, dropped the flaming ball down the muzzle of the piece.

O'Flinn lifted his head, and a gleam of satisfaction brightened, for a moment, his pallid countenance. He raised himself up on his hands, as in a last effort, to assist in pointing the gun. I had then hold of the helm. "Keep her away, a little," said the captain; "a little more!" "That's it," said O'Flinn; "send it into her counter!"

The captain raised the match; but it was nearly out. He was unable to blow it. I ran up, brought it to brightness with a few puffs, and returned to the tiller. It was some time before we could gain another opportunity of firing to advantage, owing to the heave of the sea. They, at last, got it to bear.

"Now," said O'Flinn, "fire it, my brave boy!"

The Captain, who could not rise from his knees, and whose senses seemed to reel from loss of blood, made several ineffectual attempts to place the match to the touch hole. O'Flinn who was equally feeble, tried to assist him; and I had, meantime, presence of mind

enough to keep the schooner as steady as possible in her relative position to the brig. They, at length, succeeded in firing the priming. The gun hung fire, and there was a look of despair on the pallid countenances of the yet dauntless men, who gazed along it. The next moment it went off with a noise that shook every plank in the Dolphin, and the ball, no doubt, entered the counter of the brig.

The scene that followed, it is impossible for me to describe, though it cannot be forgotten. The fiery bullet had reached the magazine of the brig, and, in less than a minute, she blew up with a terrible explosion, that made the boards quiver beneath my feet. It seemed as if the frame of our vessel was shaken to pieces by the concussion. The place which the brig had, an instant before, occupied with her black bulk, became a lived mass of intense flame, that reached to the height of a hundred feet; and I could see fragments of her timber and materials, and probably, the dismembered limbs of her crew, blown into the air in every direction. A small portion of her bows I could just perceive as it sunk, and pieces of the wreck and spars fell upon our decks. A thick and large piece of plank fell upon our quarter-deck; and then, for the first time, did I learn the name of the gun-brig. There was painted upon it, in faint colors, "El St. Jago; de Puerto Rico." The smoke in stifling columns, rolled over to us leeward; and, when my sense of hearing recovered from the shock, I could hear the Irishman, in exulting, but dying accents, exclaim,—"Hurra, my boys, we've done it for him now, any how! Columbia forever! Erin go bragh!"

I hastened to my wounded comrades. The captain had gained his legs; but staggered and appeared ready to fall. I ran towards him; but before I reached him, with one final effort, he waved his hat over his head, and exclaimed,—"Thus perish the treacherous butchers of my crew! Thus perish the enemies of Colombia, and the enemies of liberty—wherever they may raise their heads!" He had but strength to utter these words, when he fell into my arms and expired without a groan. I laid the body down gently. He had inspired me with respect for his manhood; with esteem for his generosity. The heartless prejudices instilled into me in my boyish days, by the village gossips, that Frenchmen were the natural foes of England, and were unequal to my countrymen in prowess, had been dispelled three days after I knew him, and now I shed tears, that such a man should perish in so unprofitable a cause.

I turned round to inquire how poor O'Flinn felt himself; and found that his spirit had peaceably quitted its mortal tenement.

I was now left alone, wounded and bruised upon the blood-stained deck. The thirty-four individuals who had stood, alive and well, about five hours before, upon that deck, had all gone to their eternal rest. The vessel was so crippled as to be scarcely manageable. The sight even of the enemy would have been a welcome companionship. But before me lay the bodies of my two gallant friends, and around me roared the boundless waste of waters; while the moonless night closed rapidly in, with lowering clouds & fitful squalls, foretelling the approach of a tempest.

[Norman Scott was afterwards shipwrecked in a storm, reached the island of St. Andrew, and there had a love adventure.]

Deacon Slow had three sons—it is unnecessary to mention his daughters—who were, as Deacon's sons are apt to be—the deuce only can tell why—very roguish. They were in the habit of poking fun at an old ram, who endeavored to make his share of the sport, by butting them over; a kind of fun which he often manifested a disposition to play off upon the Deacon, as he marched down to salt the flock—for these were duties to which he paid strict attention, as he was exceedingly humane, except when he was made very wroth, on which occasion his anger would burn like a furnace seven times heated. Now the deacon's sheep pasture was upon the Shawsheen river, which is narrow but deep, and the pasture terminated in a precipice, which rose fifteen feet above the water, and shelved over it, as a beetle browed house hangs over a narrow street. The boys, after they had exhausted all other fun upon the ram, were in the habit now and then of squatting upon the edge of the precipice, and darting a hat at him, upon which he would come with blind fury thereat. The boy who held the hat, could easily leap aside, and the exasperated ram was quickly cooled by a plunge headlong down the precipice, into the stream. At this trick they were one day caught by the Deacon, their father, who took them into a thicket close by, and anointed their backs thoroughly with the oil of birch—an excellent application in such cases made and provided. It is not always effectual, however, and in this case the disease was not cured, as the boys were a few days after waiting round the place in order to repeat the joke upon the unsus-

pecting and innocent ram; but on beholding their father coming at a distance with his basket of salt, they hid in the thicket which they had so good occasion to remember. Slowly came Deacon Solomon Slow, and after he had scattered his salt, he stood upright and thought within himself, that it would be amusing to see the ram bolt over the precipice into the river. He saw no one nigh—how should he, when the boys were hid in the bushes? and taking off his broad-brimmed hat, he made demonstrations, which at once attracted the notice of the lord of the flock, who set out as usual in full speed. The Deacon had squatted close to the edge—and, as he saw the ram bounding along, he pictured out to his fancy, for deacons have fancy, the ridiculous figure the silly sheep would make, bounding with a splash into the water—he began to smile—the ram at last came close, on the fierce charge, more enraged as the hat was larger than common—the Deacon grinned out right, but in the midst of his delight at the ram's ridiculous appearance, he forgot to jump aside, and the beast butted him over with a splash into that water where he meant the silly sheep should have gone. The boys ran out clapping their hands and shouting "you've got it, dad—you've got it, dad," all in the ecstasy of revenge. Deacon Solomon Slow crawled out from his bath with a visage longer than he had ever worn before. This was his last smile. He was afterwards called Deacon Solenn, by his neighbours, among whom he lived and died at a venerable old age. [Boston Galaxy]

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JONATHAN VAIL, J. P.

Sparta, Nov. 17, 1828. 46—*

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