



## LITERATURE.

## SCANDAL.

'Tis wondrous strange, and yet 'tis true,  
That some folks take delight  
The deeds of other men to view,  
As if their own were right.

And if a piece of news comes out,  
They'll eagerly pursue it;  
Then hand the charming dish about,  
And add a little to it.

Each fault they'll try to magnify,  
Yet seeming to bemoan  
The mote within a brother's eye,  
Are blinded to their own.

And if a brother chance to stray,  
Or fortune on him frown,  
Though humble in the dust he lay,  
The text is, "Keep him down."

They'll preach up penance, with a sigh,  
To cure, or nothing can—  
Sufferings are good, I'll not deny,  
But not when sent by man.

Each worthy deed is not forgot,  
As if not worth retaining;  
But oh! let failings fill the pot,  
And slander sucks the draining.

Unto the dregs she draws it out,  
Delighted with her labours,  
Then bears the charming swill about,  
To treat her thirsty neighbours.

'Neath friendship's mask she sometimes lurks,  
And smiling, fawns around you;  
Concealed, she more securely works,  
And kisses but to wound you.

Datedest pest of social joy,  
Thou spoiler of life's pleasures;  
Like Sampson's foxes would destroy  
What's more than all our treasures.

## AN INTERESTING STORY.

## Midwatch in a Merchantman.

BY A MIDSHIPMAN ON HALF PAY.

It was on the night of the 10th July, 18—in lat.—, long.—, that the good vessel, the Brothers, was on her passage home from Antigua. She was about 450 tons register, barque-rigged, and a very fine vessel for her class—but which is not saying much for her speed—for being built for the West India trade, for burthen and not for fast sailing, she was not what one would call a clipper; but still, though rather bluff about the bows, she was a good sea boat, and a nice roomy ship for a passenger. Her captain—I should say master—had been a long time in the trade, and had saved sufficient money to purchase the half ownership of the vessel he commanded. He had for his mate, a man who had served for many years during the war as a master's mate in the Navy. The two together kept the craft very ship-shape, more so than I have ever seen a merchantman before or since.

My fellow-passengers were a Mr. Melville and his son. The father was a man who was thoroughly just from principle, always strictly honest and honourable, both in word and deed, once a wealthy planter, but having suffered from the fluctuations and depreciations in colonial property, he was now returning to England, ruined in fortune, and broken in health and spirits. The son partook of his father's melancholy; and the poor boy's pale and transparent cheek, told plainly of the approach of death, through death's dreadful helpmate, consumption. As if in contrast to these, we had Lieut. Edward Fergus Blake, Esq., of H. M.—Regiment of Foot, a rattling, thoughtless Irishman, who, with his friend, Ensign John Horton of the same Regiment, were about to spend their six months' leave in their native land. This same Ensign was a self-styled poet; he always had about him a volume of Spenser or Byron, from which he continually made ill-applied quotations; as for his own verse, it was so grand that it was perfectly unintelligible to common understandings, but therein, no doubt, lay its beauty. Moreover, he was so brimful of sentiment, that he could not open his mouth without some of it running over.

The wind was S. S. W. light but steady; and the Brothers, with her royals set, and both larboard and starboard studding-sails out, was going through the water at about six and a half knots an hour. There was on the deck the two officers, young Melville, Gore the mate, and I, being then "a young gentleman," who had the privilege of writing R. N. after his name. The moon was at full, and shed a clear and strong light on the heaving waste beneath.

We were leaning over the taffrail watching the sparkling appearance of the eddy in the ship's wake.

"What a beautiful night," said I to Horton, wishing to draw him out. "What does it put you in mind of? what does it most resemble?"

Looking upward he began:—"The moon, like the Queen of Beauty, beautiful, yet vain; she, surrounded by her nymphs, delights in seeing her beauty multiplied and reflected by the bowing waves beneath, who, though they live but one moment, give that moment to the adoration of—"

"Blarney!" interrupted Blake, as the other was proceeding in tones that melted us to tears—of suppressed laughter. Blake was a bit of a wag, and Horton having a dreadful horror of everything that was not perfectly genteel, he had often some fun with him, by assuming the brogue and peculiar quaintness in which the lower orders of his countrymen are rich. The ensign folded his arms with an air of offended dignity; but afterwards, pointing upward with his right hand, asked, "What would you say yourself of such a night as this?"

"Say of it? why it's a capital night for a cigar."

Half choked with a puff of smoke that accompanied the reply, and which the wind blew into his face, Horton coughed out—

"Pooh! pooh! you have no soul for the beautiful, no soul for poetry. I would, however, forgive you if you could make a verse."

This was said in a tone of so much pity, that the Irishman broke out with a grin.

"Och, honey, poethry! hear to that now—poethry! faith, an' the poethry ye'd make would hother a blind donkey; yet it was kind of you—it was, to let us into the trick. He told us one night, when he'd taken a trifle too much sangaree made rayther strong, that he looks into the rhyming dictionary; and when he gets the rhymes he can do the rest comfortable; this kind o' way—

When to make a verse you try,  
I'll recommend a useful book:  
Before you do so, on the sly,  
In your rhyming dictionary look.

"That's what I call rale poethry; bate it if you can."

The indignant ensign turned away; and seeing poor Melville's pale face, asked him to what he could compare the appearance of the firmament.

"It seems to me," was the answer, "that the stars are small apertures in the sky, through which glimpses of God's glory and the heavens, are visible to us on earth."

"Well," interrupted Gore, "it was just such a night as this—"

"A yarn Gore, give us a yarn," said I; "here Blake, bring yourself to an anchor on that gun, (the Brothers carried two guns on her quarter-deck, and four very respectable carronades in her waist.) Melville coil yourself away to the leeward of Horton and me. Now, Gore, saw wood, 'it was just such a night as this.'"

"Well, Gore, why do you not go on, he's started you."

"Yes, but not in man-o'-war fashion."

"But, Gore, if you freshen your way, you shall freshen your nip at the same time; and that's a better start than a boatswain's rattan. Here, boy, go to the steward and tell him to bring on deck a bottle out of the starboard lockery water and glasses."

"Well, 'aint for the sake of the grog, but I don't mind spinning ye a bit of a yarn; but ye must wait till I leave the log."

The glass was turned, the log hove, the line ran out, and five and a quarter marked on the board; and the old seaman having stowed away about half a pint of half-and-half, began.

"It was about the end of the year eleven, that I joined the St. James, one of your jackass frigates; she was as tubberly a lot of timber as ever was put together; what was the use of building such a craft I never could find out. 'Sail—yes, she'd sail, but it was all to leeward like a haystack. We were ordered to the West Indies, and a dreary spell we had of it. There wasn't a man fore and aft that did not wish himself out of her; for while we heard of other men-o'-war on the station picking up prizes we got nothing in such a slow-going tub as ours, but one little privateer schooner; we cut her out during a calm."

"It was about the middle of May, in the year 1814, the war was over in that part of the world, and we were all wishing for the end of our three years' broil, and to return to old England; for though going home with no prize money wasn't pleasant, or what we expected when we left, but as the chance of getting any was gone, we were eager to get back. We were on a cruise from Port Royal, and it was just such a night as this, as I was saying when you asked for the yarn. (your health sir)—it was just such a night as this, that the look out forward reported a sail right away to windward; she came down upon us hand over hand; she was a West Indian."

"We hailed her, and ordered her to heave-to; she was named the Coquette, as pretty a craft for a trader as ever swam, about fifty tons larger than this we are in now, only much neater about the bows, and a better run aft; she wasn't built for carrying sugar, like us. She could have beat us easy; and as for the frigate, she could sail round her. Bound from London to Jamaica, left England about a month. When she ranged up alongside, there was something that induced our Captain, under pretence of hearing the news, and with his permission, many of the officers, to go on board."

"The moonlight was as bright as day, and we saw on her deck two ladies, round whom were playing some children; noisy, rosy, fair children, most of the hands came up to look at 'em. If for two years an a half you had seen nothing but dirty little black picanninies, to come near to such a sight, made a man think of home. Some would have given up their grog sooner than missed it. A landsman can't understand the feelin'; how should he? he never felt it."

"I was one of those who went on board. You may guess the captain was very polite to the ladies; the elder one was about twenty-six, a very fine handsome woman indeed, but the younger, who was not more than nineteen, ah! she was the beauty, just such a face and figure

as young men, like you, make themselves half-crazy about.

We were all introduced to the ladies; but the children, they did not wait for that, they introduced themselves.—We might kiss them without making a hole in our manors. The gruff old surgeon told the mother that the night air injured their health. 'If you had been asked as prettily as I was, I do not think even you would refuse for once,' was the answer, and when the little rogue he was playing with, looked up smiling in his face, and asked to be allowed to sit up a little longer, Bolus would as soon have thought of swallowing his own prescriptions as denying the child. Our captain having been on board an hour, and having no pretext for continuing his stay, after bidding good-bye to the ladies, unwillingly retreated on board the St. James, and the master of the merchantman wishing to take advantage of a fair wind, and make as quick a run as possible, squared his yards and soon left us astern. Our first Luff, who had not long joined, and was a nephew of, and a great favourite with the captain, was leaning over the hammock netting, watching the Coquette's decreasing size, when having occasion to go over to windward, I heard him say to his uncle, 'I should like to know more of that young lady, I feel deeply interested in her.' 'Nonsense,' laughed the captain; 'what, in love with a girl you have seen but once for an hour, and will never see again? How absurd!' He little thought, as he laughed, how nearly true his words proved. In less than two hours the trader was hull-down and before morning was out of sight. The people were at dinner next day, when the man at the mast head saw two vessels dead to leeward. There was something strange about them that he could not make out, and, as he thought, too, he heard the sound of firing, our captain went into the top to examine them; he could plainly make out through his glass that one was on fire. The frigate was directly put about, and all sail made to near them, a sharp look out being kept on both vessels. In about half an hour we noticed that the smaller, a schooner, filled her fore sail, and stood to windward, and, as she was evidently a very fast sailing craft, we soon lost sight of her. The other now occupied our sole attention, and in less than half an hour we were near enough to make her clearly out. Fancy our surprise and sorrow when we found it was the vessel we had so lately spoke with. Her foremast and mainmast were blazing away, their sails and most of their rigging were already tinder; her mizen and afterpart had escaped, but the smoke that escaped from her fore and main hatchway, proved that the flames were not confined aloft. When we got to windward of her we hove-to, and sent boats on board; we were much surprised to see one man on deck, but when we got alongside we were hailed by another, who was hanging on her stern by the pintles of the rudder.

"They told us a sad tale. During the short time they had left us the previous night, they had been boarded and taken by the pirate schooner we had seen go so slick to windward. It appeared she came up with the Coquette about ten in the forenoon. From the schooner carrying guns, and the union-jack she hoisted, they mistook her for one of our cruisers. If they had not been so deceived they would have fought her, and might eventually have been saved, by our coming to her assistance. After sailing a short time in company the schooner sent boats on board, with two officers in our uniform. A few questions were asked, when our captain, (said one of the men) expressing surprise at seeing them armed, they answered, they came to search for five of their men, who had deserted some time since in the schooner's gig. They requested that the crew and all on board might be called on deck for examination. When we were all aft they threw off their disguise; the one in lieutenant's uniform gave the signal by firing a pistol, and in an instant down went the schooner's colors, and in their stead they hoisted the black flag. At the same time the men on board drew, their cutlasses and pistols, which they had hid under their jackets.

"Pirates, by heavens!" cried our captain, and, turning to us, he said, 'My men, arm, arm yourselves.' He and the mate rushed towards the cabin; the latter was instantly shot dead, and the captain wounded and seized. We would have fought, but resistance was useless; for being unarmed and cooped together, we were quite in their power, though double their number: the schooner was also laid alongside, and the pirate captain, with many of his crew, came on board. Our captain whose name was Houghton, was questioned by the pirate, what his cargo was; and the last got greatly enraged on being told it consisted of negro-clothing, and other light goods.

"Have you any passengers; what is your cabin freight?" was quickly asked. Poor Houghton, who was bleeding fast from his wounds, owned that there were seven boxes of watches and plate in his cabin, and his passengers were ladies, whom he begged—, when he was stopped by a blow in the face that laid him senseless. The villain, after this cowardly act, entered the cabin, followed by five of his men. What there took place I do not know, but in a short time the two ladies were brought out insensible, and carried on board the vessel alongside; the plate was soon after transferred to the pirate, and the captain returned on deck, when the work of death was commenced. 'Throw those men overboard,' said he, pointing to the senseless body of the captain and the dead mate, who were quickly tossed into the sea. My shipmates were then called aft, one at a time, and examined. The whole of the crew, with the exception of three of the younger ones, who were allowed to volunteer, and myself, who escaped, were then murdered in cold blood; most of them were stabbed, and then tumbled over the ship's side; the others were shot. I was among the last that were to be called, and seeing that death was certain if I remained, I determined to make one desperate effort for my life. Breaking from the man that was guarding me, I ran forward, and jumped quickly on the ship's bulwark. I heard directly three shots fired, but, luckily, all missed me, and I sprang unhurt into the sea, where I took along dive, which I suppose made them think I was shot and had sunk. In the water I had a still more horrible danger to encounter; by what miracle I escaped