



LITERATURE.

THE BROKEN DOWN TOPER.

AIR.—"Exile of Erin."

There came to the bar a poor tattered old toper,
The rents on his thin coat were not few nor rare,
For his brandy he sighed, when at noon-day repairing,
To sun him, alone, on the tavern-bench bare
But the whiskey attracted his eye's sad devotion,
For he knew to his grief it had oft proved a lotion,
When once in the fervor of youth's warm emotion,
He had sung the bold anthem of "Brandy go bragh."

Sad, sad is my fate, said the heart-broken toper,
The pig and the cat have their swizzles scot-free,
But I've not a drop my poor carcass to comfort;
Not a cock-tail nor julep remains now to me.
Oh! never again, by the well lighted table,
Shall I tiddle and sing 'till I'm no longer able,
Or stagger about with a footstep unstable,
Or shout to the chorus of "Brandy go bragh."

Brandy my darling! though sad and forsaken,
In dreams I revisit the bottle once more;
But alas! in the gutter, or watch-house I waken,
And sigh for the dreams I can swallow no more.
Ah, cruel fate! wilt thou never replace me
In a tavern so safe that no watchman can chase me?
Never again shall the "Rum Club" embrace me,
They're all in State's prison, or in Lethe's shore.

Where is the old grog-shop fast by the way side,
Toppers and soaks, did ye weep for its fall?
Where is the bar-maid that smiled on my passion?
And where is the whiskey-punch dearer than all?
Ah! my sad soul, long abandoned by pleasure,
Why did it doat on a fast fading treasure,
Rum, like the rain drops, may be without measure,
But for one single dram I'm unable to call.

Yet all its fond recollections suppressing,
One dying wish my lone bosom shall draw;
Brandy, a toper bequeath's you his blessing,
Best of all drinkables—brandy go bragh!
Buried and cold, where my heart stills its motion,
Loved may'st thou be, thou dear, sweetest portion,
And all dram-swilling soaks shout aloud with devotion,
"Brandy ma vourneen! Brandy go bragh!"

DANISH JUSTICE.

The war had broken out between England and France; Bonaparte had broken the treaty of Amiens: all was consternation amongst our countrymen in India, particularly those who had valuable cargoes at sea, and those who were about to return to their native land. I was one of the latter class; so I joyfully accepted a passage home on board a Dane—Denmark, as yet, remaining neuter in our quarrel.

So far as luxury went, I certainly found her very inferior to our regular Indian; but as a sailer, she was far superior, and in point of discipline, her crew was as well regulated, and as strictly commanded, as the crew of a British man-of-war. In fact, such order, regularity, and implicit obedience I could never have believed to exist on board a merchantman.

The chief mate was one of the finest young men I ever saw. He had just been promoted to his present post—not from the mere fact of his being the owner's son, but really from sterling merit. He was beloved by the crew, amongst whom he had served, as is usual in the Danish service, five years, and was equally popular with his brother officers and the passengers returning to Europe.

The only bad character we had on board was the cook, a swarthy ill-looking Portuguese, who managed somehow or other daily to cause some disturbance amongst the seamen. For this he had often been reprimanded; and the evening when this sketch opens, he had just been released from irons, into which he had been ordered for four-and-twenty hours by the chief mate, for having attempted to poison a sailor who had offended him. In return for having punished him thus severely, the irritated Portuguese swore to avenge himself on the first officer.

The mate, who was called Charles, was walking in the waist with a beautiful young English girl, to whom he was engaged to be married, stopping occasionally to admire the flying-fish, as they skimmed over the surface of the water, pursued by their cruel destroyer, talking over the anticipated bliss their union would confer, their hopes and fears, the approval of their parents, their bright prospects, indulging in future scenes of life as steady as the trade-wind before which they were quietly running—when suddenly, ere a soul could interpose, or even suspect his design, the cook rushed forward and buried his knife with one plunge into the heart of the unfortunate young man, who fell without a cry, as the exulting Portuguese burst forth into a demoniac laugh of triumph.

Unconscious of the full extent of her bereavement, the poor girl hung over him; and as a friend, who had rushed forward to support him, drew the knife from his bosom, her whole dress, which was white, was stained with his blood. With an effort Charles turned towards her, gave her one last look of fervent affection, and as the blade left the wound, fell a corpse in the arms of him who held him.

By this time the captain had come on deck. He shed tears like a child, for he loved poor Charles as his own

son. The exasperated crew would instantly have fallen on the assassin, and taken summary vengeance, so truly attached had they been to their chief mate, and were only kept within bounds by their commander's presence. The cook, who appeared to glory in the deed, was instantly seized and confined. The corpse was taken below, while the wretched betrothed was carried in a state of insensibility to her cabin.

Eight bells had struck the following evening, when I received a summons to attend on deck. I therefore instantly ascended, and found the whole of the crew dressed in their Sunday clothes, together with all the officers of the ship, and the male passengers assembled. The men off duty were lining either side of the deck; the captain, surrounded by his officers, was standing immediately in front of the poop; and the body of the unfortunate victim lay stretched on a grating, over which the national flag of Denmark had been thrown, immediately in the centre. In an instant I saw that I had been summoned to be present at the funeral of the chief mate, and my heart beat high with grief as I uncovered my head and stepped on the quarter-deck.

It was nearly a dead calm; we had passed the trades, and were fast approaching the Line; the sun had begun to decline, but still burnt with a fervent heat; the sails hung listlessly against the masts, and the mainsail was brailed up, in order to allow the breeze, should any rise, to go forward. I had observed all the morning a still more sure indication of our approach to the torrid zone. Through the clear blue water I had remarked a couple of sharks following the vessel, accompanied by their usual companions—the pilot-fish. This the sailors had expected as a matter of course, as they superstitiously believe that these monsters of the deep always attach themselves to a ship in which a dead body lies, anxiously anticipating their dreadful meal. In their appearance, however, I only saw the usual announcement of our vicinity to the Line.

In such weather, placed in a ship, which seems to represent the whole world—shut out from all save the little band that encircles us, with the wide and fathomless element around us—the ethereal throne from which God seems to look down upon us; at one moment our voice rising in solemn prayer, for one we have loved, and the next, the splash of the divided waters, as they receive in their bosom the creature He has made—all these, at such a moment, make the heart thrill with a deeper awe, a closer fellowship with its Creator than any resident on shore can know—a consciousness of the grandeur of God and the feebleness of man, which those alone can feel who "go down in ships, and see the wonders of the deep."

I took my place with the other passengers. Not a word was spoken, for we all believed we were about to witness the last rites performed over our late friend, and consequently stood in anxious silence; when suddenly a steady tramp was heard, and the larboard watch, with drawn cutlasses, slowly marched down the waist, escorting the murderer, whom they conducted to the side of the corpse; then withdrew a few paces, and formed a line, which completed the hollow square.

We now began to exchange glances. Surely the assassin had not been brought here to witness the burial of his victim; and yet what else could it be for? Had it been for trial (as we had heard that the Danes often proceeded to instant investigation and summary punishment), we should probably have seen the tackle prepared for hanging the culprit at the yard-arm. This, however, was not the case—and we all, therefore, felt puzzled as to the meaning of the scene.

We were not long kept in doubt. The second mate read from a paper which he held in his hand the full powers delegated to the captain to hold court-martial, and carry their sentences into effect, the law in similar cases, &c. &c.; and called on the prisoner to know whether he would consent to be tried in the Danish language. To this he willingly assented, and the court was declared open.

The flag was suddenly withdrawn from the face of the corpse; and ever the monster who had struck the blow shuddered as he beheld the calm, almost seraphic look of him whom he had stricken.

The trial now proceeded in the most solemn manner. Evidence of the crime was adduced, and the deed clearly brought home to the accused. I confess, that my blood turned cold when I saw the knife produced which had been used as the instrument of the murder, and the demon-like smile of the prisoner as he beheld it, stained as it was with the blood of one who had been forced by his duty to punish him.

After a strict investigation, the captain appealed to all present, when the prisoner was unanimously declared guilty.

The officers put on their hats, and the captain proceeded to pass sentence. Great was my surprise (not understanding one word which the commander said) to see the culprit throw himself on his knees, and begin to sue for mercy. After the unfeeling and obdurate manner in which he had conducted himself, such an appeal was unaccountable; for it was quite evident he did not fear death, or repent of the deed he had committed. What threatened torture could thus bend his hardened spirit I was at a loss to conjecture.

Four men now approached and lifted up the corpse.—A similar number seized the prisoner, while ten or twelve others approached with strong cords. In a moment I understood the whole, and could not wonder at the struggles of the murderer, as I saw him lashed back to back, firmly, tightly, without the power to move, to the dead body of his victim. His cries were stopped by a sort of gag, and, writhing as he was, he, with the body was laid on the grating, and carried to the gangway. The crew mounted on the nettings and up the shrouds. A few prayers from the Danish burial-service were read by a chaplain on board, and the dead and the living, the murderer and his victim, were launched into eternity bound together!

As the dreadful burden separated the clear waters, a sudden flash darted through their transparency, and a gen-

eral shudder went round us, each one felt it was the expectant shark that rushed forward for his prey. I caught a glance of the living man's eye as he was falling; it haunts me even to this moment; there was more than agony in it!

We paused only for a few minutes, and imagined we saw some blood-stains rising to the surface. Not one amongst us could remain to see more. We turned away, and sought to forget the stern and awe-inspiring punishment we had seen inflicted.

Of course strange sights were related as having appeared to the watches that night. For myself, I can only say that I was glad when a sudden breeze drove us far away from the tragic scene.

RATTLE OF OTTERBOURNE.

In the year 1388, the Scottish nobles had determined upon an invasion of England upon a large scale, and had assembled a great army for that purpose; but, learning that the people of Northumberland were assembling an army on the eastern frontier, they resolved to limit their incursion to that which might be achieved by the Earl of Douglas, with a chosen band of four or five thousand men. With this force he penetrated into the mountainous frontier of England, where an assault was least expected, and, issuing forth near Newcastle, fell upon the flat and rich country around, slaying, burning, and plundering, and loading his army with spoil.

Percy, Earl of Northumberland, an English noble of great power, and with whom the Douglas had often had encounters, sent his two sons, Sir Henry and Sir Ralph Percy, to stop the progress of this invasion. Both were gallant knights; but the first, who, from his impetuosity, was called Hotspur, was one of the most distinguished warriors in England, as Douglas was in Scotland. The brothers threw themselves hastily into Newcastle, to defend the important town; and as Douglas, in an insulting manner, drew out his forces before the wall, they came out to skirmish with the Scots. Douglas and Henry Percy encountered personally; and it so chanced that Douglas got possession in the struggle of Hotspur's spear, to the end of which was attached a small ornament of silk, embroidered with pearls, on which was represented a lion, the cognizance, as it is called, of the Percies. Douglas shook his trophy aloft, and declared that he would carry it into Scotland, and plant it on his castle of Dalkenith. 'That,' said Percy, 'shalt thou never do. I will regain my lance ere thou canst get back into Scotland.' 'Then,' said Douglas, 'come to seek it, and thou shalt find it before my tent.'

The Scots army, having completed the purpose of their expedition, began their retreat up the little river Reed, which afforded a tolerable road running towards the Scottish frontier. They encamped at Otterbourne, about twenty miles from the frontier, on the 19th of August, 1388. In the middle of the night the alarm arose in the Scottish camp that the English host were coming upon them, and the moonlight showed the advance of Sir Henry Percy, with a body of men, equal, or superior in number to that of Douglas. He had already crossed the Reed water, and was advancing towards the left flank of the Scottish army. Douglas, not choosing to receive the assault in that position, drew his men out of the camp, and with a degree of military skill which could scarce have been expected when his forces were of such an undisciplined character, he altogether changed the position of the army, and presented his troops with their front to the advancing English.

Hotspur, in the meantime, marched his squadrons through the deserted camp, where there were none left but a few servants and stragglers of the army. The interruptions which the English troops met with, threw them a little into disorder, when the moon arising showed them the Scottish army, who they fancied were retreating, drawn up in complete order, and prepared to fight. The battle commenced with the greatest fury; for Percy and Douglas were the two most distinguished soldiers of their time, and each army trusted in the courage and talents of their commanders, whose names were shouted on either side. The Scots who were outnumbered, were about at length to give way, when Douglas, their leader, caught his banner to advance, attended by his best men. He himself, shouting his war cry of 'Douglas!' rushed forward, clearing his way with the blows of his battle axe, and breaking into the very thickest of the enemy. He fell at length, under their mortal wounds. Had his death been known, it would probably have decided the battle against the Scots, but the English only knew that some brave man-at-arms had fallen. Meantime the other Scottish nobles pressed forward, and found their general dying among several of his faithful esquires and pages, who lay slain around. A stout priest called William of North-Berwick, the chaplain of Douglas, was protecting the body of his patron with a long lance.

'How fares it, cousin?' said Sinclair, the first Scottish knight who came up to the wounded leader.

'Indifferently,' answered Douglas, 'but blessed be God, my ancestors have died in fields of battle, not on down beds. I sink fast; but let them still cry my war-cry, and conceal my death from my followers. There was a tradition in our family that a dead Douglas should win a field, and I trust it will be this day accomplished.'

The nobles did as he had enjoined; they concealed the Earl's body, and again rushed on the battle, shouting 'Douglas! Douglas!' louder than before. The English were weakened by the loss of the brave brothers, Henry and Ralph Percy, both of whom were made prisoners, fighting most gallantly, and almost no man of note among the English escaped death or captivity. Hence a Scottish poet has said of the name of Douglas—

'Hosts have been known at that dread sound to yield,
And Douglas dead, his name has won the field.'

Sir Henry Percy became the prisoner of Sir Hugh Montgomery, who obliged him, for ransom, to build a castle for him at Eaglesham, in Renfrewshire, which he called *Painon*, from having been reared with pained money.

The battle of Otterbourne was disastrous to the leaders,