



LITERATURE.

"GIVE TO HIM THAT ASKETH THEE."

If the poor man pass thy door,
Give him of thy bounteous store;
Give him food, and give him gold,
Give him shelter from the cold;
Aid him his lone life to live,
For 'tis angel-like to give.

Though world riches thou hast not,
Give to him of poorer lot;
Think thee of the widow's mite—
In the holy Master's sight,
It was more, a thousand fold,
Than the rich man's hoard of gold.

Give, it is the better part,
Give to him, 'the poor in heart';
Give of love in large degree,
Give of hope and sympathy;
Cheer to them who sigh forlorn,
Light to him whose lamp is gone.

Give the gray-haired wanderer room,
Lead him gently to the tomb;
Let him not in friendless clime
Float adown the tide of time;
Hear the mother's lonely call,
She, the nearest one of all.

And the lost, abandoned one,
In thy pathway do not shun;
Of thy kindness she hath need,
Bind with balm the bruised reed;
Give, and gifts above all price,
Shall be thine in paradise.

THE PICAROON;
OR, THE SPANISH MAID.

THE deep-mouthed guns of the Moro castle were signaling the hour of sunset, and as the long echoes reverberated from the heavy ordnance over the beautiful harbour of Havana, the splendid state ship of the Spanish Governor loomed distinctly into view from the far offing of the Gulf, along whose heaving waters it now proudly dashed, homeward bound with its lordly passengers. Gallantly the salute was returned from the Governor's ship, and plunging her foam-marked path, through the quiet wavelets, with her pennons proudly floating, she was about to pass on into the noble harbour, when abruptly a shot whistled past her bows and buried itself in a bed of spray so near its mark, that old ocean's dew drops sprinkled the faces of those who stood upon her decks. It could not of course proceed from the fortress itself, and the startled Spaniards looked anxiously around for the secret source of this daring insult.

A beautiful proud-eyed Spanish maiden, of surpassing loveliness, almost bewildering in its brilliancy, its proud, passionate outbreathing of the soul, who stood leaning affectionately upon the arm of the haughty but lordly-looking old governor, was the first to call the attention of his excellency to the secret cause which the next moment stood revealed.

Dauntlessly, with all the rash temerity of a Spaniard, there now shot boldly out from the secrecy of a jutting promontory, behind which it had remained to all appearances carefully concealed until now; a periagua of small tonnage, swift sailing, and which to the eye presented the doubtful aspect of a vessel framed solely for speed or warfare, to the exclusion of all other purposes, with her crowded decks and powerful armament so comparatively disproportioned to the inferior size of the vessel itself.

"Governor of Havana, heave to your ship!" a loud, commanding voice now cried from the strange periagua's deck, as swiftly the vessels approached each other, and the Spaniards could see that the numerous crew of their insulting neighbour was, strange to say, composed exclusively of negroes!

The rage and astonishment of the Governor at this unaccountable conduct, it would be hard to describe. Cuba's haughty commander thus to be insulted in his own harbour, under the very guns of the Moro Castle and in his own state-ship! it was insufferable.

"Insolent braggart!" he shouted, when he could find voice for his rage; "who are ye, villains, that ye dare put this affront upon Havana's governor? By San Jago ye shall pay dear for this bravado, accursed blackamoors! Ha, by our Holy Mother, has it come to this, that even the negro slaves are rebellious, dare insult their masters thus? Ho, fearful vengeance will I take!"

"Your excellency does us the honour to ask our name," in calm, utterly unmoved tones, uttered he who first hailed the ship, his conspicuous position as he sprang boldly into the ratlines of his own craft at once giving his figure prominence as the periagua captain. "Governor

of Cuba, the Picaroon Pedrigo commands your ship to heave to."

Like a maddened lion turned the proud Spaniard to his followers:—

"Death to the accursed bravo! Sink the Slave to the bottom, I command ye! your lives shall answer for it.—These are the black pirates, of whose desperation I have latterly heard so much, all along our coast—blackamoors all even to the chief! The Picaroon shall die—he and all his band—ay, were the slave my own son he should die."

"O God, dear uncle, mention not that son again!" cried the beautiful Spanish girl by his side, while her radiant face, on which it were paradise to gaze, became quickly convulsed with a shudder of startling reminiscence. "Least of all should thy lip, haughty man, cruel father, speak the name of thy poor wronged boy, the victim of thy tyranny and harsh injustice. Remember, Don Paulo," she uttered in a strong paroxysm of feeling, "remember, that your jealous heart disowned your child, even in the very hour of its birth, heaping causeless contumely on the pure, true wife, who died in giving existence to that poor innocent, and forget not how a villain minion, by your order, drowned the infant ere it was three days old. Let heaven judge, stern parent, whether it becomes yourself to talk of him. O, never, uncle, save in repentance, should you breathe allusion to that murdered boy, for the guilt of infanticide is on your soul."

Her words rankled, O how deep; the arrow seared his heart like a heated brand, but too proud and haughty to show the remorseless pangs he felt, Don Paulo's eye shot fierce anger as he imperiously exclaimed: "Beware, girl, how you thus dare taunt me! Too much do you owe to my kindness, Isabel, to trifle with your uncle so; fortunately, girl, you are my niece, or my forbearance should not screen you! Enough that I have seen my error, and deeply repented it; but 'tis useless now, had your cousin lived, he would now have been your husband; had jealousy not urged me to his death, he and you would have been destined for each other from your infancy."

"NEVER!" shrieked the fair Spaniard, starting impassioned back. "Never would I have wed your son, had he lived till this day!" she said, with all a woman's vehemence when she loves. "My love for years has been another's—not even the lordly heir of Cuba's Governor, if he could this hour be raised from the dead, should wrest from Edmundo the heart I have given into his keeping!"

"Edmundo de Torres! ha, ha!" echoed the Governor, with a sardonic laugh; "once an humble officer of my guard—and Don Paulo d'Estello's haughty niece in love with such as he? But, ha, ha, I prevented this stain on my blood! Dismissed from his post—outlawed in his native Cuba by my efforts, where is thy low-born lover now?"

"God only knows," iterated the unhappy girl in all the fervour of sorrowing loveliness: "he is lost to me—he, the noble, the bravest of his sex; but think not the wronged, the bereaved Isabel shall ever wed another, though Edmundo is lost!" and her proud eyes flashed with the pure thought of woman's constancy.

The haughty Spaniard could hear no more; but at this moment the tempest of passion which raged in the incensed Governor's breast was fortunately averted, to be concentrated upon the daring stranger. On, on, though now the Spaniards fire had opened on her from the ship—on and onward came the picaroon's periagua, without one answering shot or one lighted match. As on she came, intent on running them aboard, she presented a strange picture—that daring Picaroon. Every living being visible upon her decks was evidently of the degraded race of the Cuba blacks—fierce, savage desperadoes, half-naked to the waist. That crew, so similar in aspect, with the curved shanks and crooked limbs, and the fat-nosed peculiarities of their race, presented a fearful group. Their leader, he who had hailed with such vaunting bravado the astonished Spaniards, was like his savage crew, a blackamoor—but more commanding, with good features and well-made limbs, and consequently less of the negro attributes about him. But it his more comely countenance had less of natural ferocity in it, the time and occasion had given it an equally savage expression. The garrison of the Moro Castle, in alarm at all these strange manoeuvres, had already opened their fire upon the suspicious periagua of the Picaroon; but careless of the shots which every moment riddled her hull, boldly the daring pirate, between two fires, pressed forward until the two vessels ran abreast. The blackamoor chief, who had with quick agility run out upon the bow-sprit, was the first to leap aboard the Spaniard, with his sable crew at his heels.

"Abandon the periagua—board the ship all!" cried the sable Picaroon, sword in hand. "She is riddled with shot—she is already sinking! There is no retreat, men—we must carry the Spaniards' decks!"

They knew it—that savage crew, and like incarnate devils they fought, rioting in an ocean of blood. The fast falling Spaniards stood aghast—their sable foes seemed to them like a legion of fiends let loose on the waters, to destroy doomed men. The resistless ferocity with which they fought, favoured too fearfully the belief; and there came over the beleaguered crew a panic they in vain attempted to withstand.

"Follow me, men! 'tis madness to fight against demons! What can brave men do with a legion of devils at their sword points? Save yourselves, Spaniards!" cried the Spanish captain, precipitating headlong into the sea.

His example was followed by the survivors of the ship's crew, and the Governor and his beautiful niece were left alone among the savages!

"Traitor and coward!" cried Don Paulo with terrific rage, as he clutched a pistol, directing it at the swimmer's head: "You, at least, shall not escape the doom you have left us to!"

The sea-air echoed to a stunning report, and the treacherous captain, with a wild yell sank beneath the crimsoned waters which he had vainly hoped was to prove the

means of his preservation!

The victorious blackamoors circled around the uncle and niece with their hideous visages threatening death. Their sable chief sprang amid them, and sternly waved them back.

On the beautiful girl gazed the Picaroon, and then started back as it recoiling from an electric shock.

"Savage! we are at your mercy!" said Don Paulo with forced calmness, and folding his haughty arms.—"Cuba's Governor thought not thus to perish by the hands of slaves, yet can he show you how to die!"

But the Picaroon heeded him not—he sprang forward, knelt at her feet, whispered a few quick words in her ear, while a wild shriek from Isabel pierced the twilight air.

"Say it again—say it again!" she shrieked; that beautiful girl, with white hands wildly clasped, and her black eyes fixed on the sable Picaroon.

Pedrigo, the Picaroon rose—again that low thrilling whisper—and the lip which had hissed it in her ear—ay, the lip of the blackamoor tasted the honey of her own!

"Slave! that kiss is dishonour to a daughter of my race!" thundered the Spanish Governor, and forward leaped with deadly eye. But the sight that he saw caused him to hold.

"I am Edmundo!—I, the Picaroon—thine own!"

"Impossible!" cried both maiden and Governor.

"Not so—and I will prove it!" replied the pirate, calmly.

The Picaroon's strange tale was quickly told to his startled auditors. Disgraced and outlawed by the act of the Governor, the young officer had put himself at the head of a band of sable desperadoes, and staining his features to the dusky African hue, had passed for weeks unsuspected among them. No disguise could have been selected so impeneable as that of the black, and secure in its concealment, his heart thirsting for revenge upon Don Paulo, the bold Picaroon, Edmundo, had resolved upon the rash act of attacking the state ship which he had learned was homeward bound for Cuba, with his hated, but powerful foe. He knew not that Isabel was accompanying her uncle, and his surprise at the discovery had been not less violent than that of the beautiful girl, at the doubtful recognition of her lover.

"The blackamoor Pirate is then, after all, a true-born Spaniard!" ejaculated the deeply surprised and awed Governor, for the moment forgetful in his amazement of his treasured hate!

"Yes, a true Spaniard I have ever deemed myself though my birth and parentage are an unknown mystery! A good old monk in yonder convent has been my sole protector!" answered calmly the disguised Edmundo.—Then he turned to the proud and beautiful girl, more softly adding:—"Dear Isabel, I cannot now abandon this incognito—to do so were unsafe, for my savage crew would be wrought up to revengeful frenzy, did they know their leader was not in truth of their race! Caution, dear girl—caution, Don Paulo, and for thy niece's sake, will I forget my hatred towards thyself. Isabel, the Black Picaroon and thy Edmundo in his true guise look strangely unlike. Soon you shall see your lover in his real character, if still, through all, your heart is true to him: who first won its love?"

"True as the heavens—O, my Edmundo!" replied the Spanish maid, and then the proud spirit which had unshrinkingly withstood her uncle's frown, and quailed not before the deadly carnage, was overcome by love's influence, and the lovely girl swooned with emotion, and was carried below by the alarmed Don Paulo.

By Edmundo's orders the captured state ship now stood on quite out of the harbour, and at the same moment the shattered and riddled periagua, sacrificed, that a greater prize might be gained, sunk like a slain leviathan to the harbour's depths, near the scene of the late fearful drama.

Edmundo, occupied, like a true lover, with thoughts of his recovered, his idolized Isabel, appeared not again among his men; and the blackamoors, worn down and exhausted by their fiendish exertions, sought repose from their labours, leaving all, as usual, to the guidance of their sleepless leader. Thus the hours passed on.

It was perhaps midnight, when the musing lover in his cabin was faintly conscious of a hurried trampling overhead, muttered oaths and curses, and the sharp clashing of steel, and then a long comparative silence, broken only by the stifled sounds of voices cautiously subdued. In alarm Edmundo grasped his sword, and rushed upon deck. The moment that he cleared the hatchway, an unseen hand seized from behind and flung him prostrate upon the deck, with a sabre's point pricking his defenceless throat, he found himself ere five minutes were past, fettered and in irons. The young Picaroon succeeded in raising his head, partially, so as to allow of a brief survey around and not long was he left in doubt as to the causes of his startling surprise.—Not a pistol-shot distant rode a Spanish gon-brig, that Edmundo knew had been all day previously lying under the walls of the Moro, and he immediately guessed the truth, that the war vessel had been sent to avenge the Picaroon's daring outrage; and which, favoured by the darkness, had succeeded, during the temporary relaxation of vigilance which usually marked the pirates after some successful, desperate achievement, in gaining unperceived the decks of the prize. Not a man of his slumbering night-watch had been slain, in the recapture; sleeping, unmindful of their neglected duty, the guard had been awakened from their oblivion of repose, only to find themselves ironed and gagged. The major portion of the crew in the hammocks below, were secured by battering down the hatches; and before sunrise the overjoyed Governor with his beautiful charge were safe within the walls of the Castle; while in a few hours more, the whole crew of blackamoors found themselves inmates of the government prison-ship!

Days passed on thus, and at a week's expiration, the pirates had not only been publicly tried, but sentence of death was already passed upon them, and now the morrow was to witness the execution, by the fearful instru-