

LITERATURE.

ITALIAN BOAT SONG.

The moon shines bright,
And the bark bounds light,
As the stag bounds o'er the lea;
We love the strife
Of the sailor's life,
And we love our dark-blue sea.

Now high, now low,
To the depths we go,
Now rise on the surge again;
We make a track
O'er the ocean's back,
And play with his hoary mane.

Fearless we face
The storm in its chase,
When the dark clouds fly before it;
And meet the shock
Of the fierce siroc,
Though death breathes hotly o'er it.

The landsman may quail
At the shout of the gale,
Peril's the sailor's joy;
Wild as the waves
Which his vessel braves,
Is the lot of the sailor boy.

THE WINDOW IN THE FOREST.

BY GEORGE L. ALLEN.

The inmates of a little tavern in a secluded valley in Germany, gather without the door, awaiting the approach of a horseman, the distant sound of his horse's tread having apprised them of his coming.

He rides rapidly up and springs lightly from his saddle, giving his horse in charge of the hostler, who, after receiving his instructions, leads him away to the stable.

The new comer observed the looks of wonder cast upon him, and was at a loss to account for the curiosity he excited. He was a man of about thirty-five years of age, of medium height, well proportioned, and tolerably good looking. He was attired in the uniform of a dragoon in the German service.

"Well my good people," he exclaimed, at length, "what do you see in my appearance so surprising, that it makes you gaze upon me with open mouth?"

"Is it possible that you are alive?"

The astonishment of the host caused this somewhat singular interrogation to escape from him.

"Faith, to the best of my belief, I am so," replied the dragoon pleasantly. "Do I look like a dead man?"

"No, no—I mean not that," said the host, as he seemed to be revolving some matter in his mind which puzzled him. "You came by the forest road?"

"Certainly, and gloomy enough it is too; a lonely path to traverse when a man has no companion but his own thoughts."

"Better have your thoughts, than the fearful companion some have met in the forest."

"Indeed! What sort of person is he?"

"We know not; none that have seen him have lived to tell of their encounter."

"This is a strange affair you are telling me."

"Did you see nothing on your way through the forest?"

"Nothing; yet stay—now I bethink I do remember of noticing in the forest, a short distance from the road, a small cottage window—"

"Ah! a window?"

"Yes; I thought it singular that a cottage should be situated in such a peculiarly lonely neighborhood."

"You did not approach it?"

"No—I should not have observed it, but for the glimmering light of a taper which betrayed it to my eyes. I was too hungry to stop to examine it; I knew of the locality of your inn, and hurried on, as I wished to pass the night here."

"Ah! I remember you now, is it not Capt. Ernest?"

"The same."

"You stopped here on your way to join the army for the last campaign?"

"Yes; the war is over now, the Emperor has concluded a peace, and I am on my way home. But come, serve me up something in the shape of a repast, and while I satisfy the cravings of nature you shall narrate to me the

particulars of this strange story. What little I have heard has greatly excited my curiosity."

The host led the way into the principal apartment of the inn. A hasty meal was soon spread upon a small table, and Capt. Ernest commenced a vigorous attack.

"You must know," commenced the host, seeing that he was prepared to listen, "it is now nearly a year since that window was first seen."

"Then I presume that the cottage was built about that time," replied Capt. Ernest.

"Cottage! there is no cottage."

"What, no cottage? oh, but my good fellow I saw the window of it myself."

"True, yet still there is no cottage."

"Well, I have heard of houses without windows, but I never before heard of a window without a house."

"Yet it is the fact. Traverse the road by day-light—carefully examine every portion of it—penetrate a short distance into the forest on either side, and you will find no vestige of any human habitation."

"There is some mystery in this."

"Aye, and a deep one; for soon as the shades of evening begin to fall, the traveller beholds the light shining with sickly lustre amid the dense foliage around."

"Ah, I have it: this is nothing more nor less than a Jack o'lantern—a Will o' the Wisp."

"You are wrong; the window has been seen—the very number of pains counted; there are six; my boy Heinrich, there, has seen it."

The host pointed to a stout lad of eighteen who had been attending to the stranger's wants.

"Ah, that alters the case, though I must say this light in the window is rather a strange affair. But how chanced it he could approach so near this dangerous object, and not be the worse for it, when I understand you to say all others have perished?"

"You shall hear; it must have been through the mercy of Providence. One evening, as Heinrich was returning from the town, some twenty miles beyond here, he got belated in the forest. It grew so dark he could hardly see his way by the time he got within five miles of here. Feeling somewhat tired, he stopped to rest by the road side, when looking into the forest, he beheld the light gleaming from the window—"

"What! five miles from here?" interrupted the captain, "why, where I saw it to-night it must be all of ten miles from here."

"I have no doubt of it—it is seen at all distances along the road, but he saw it five miles from here, on the right hand side of the road."

"The right hand side? it was on the left hand side when I saw it."

"Oh for the matter of that, it is seen on either side by different persons; in fact, no two ever saw it in the same place."

"The deuce! but go on."

"The moment that Heinrich beheld the light, feeling thirsty, he determined to approach the cottage, and request a draught of milk; mind, this was before it had become so noted—naturally supposing that he was near the cottage of some woodman. He made his way through the underwood towards it, wondering at the taste of a man who could build his house amid a thick wood of brambles. It seems he miscalculated the distance, for when he thought he should have gained the light, it was as far off as when he first saw it. He continued to press on for about fifteen minutes, yet the light maintained the same distance. He paused bewildered; for a moment it grew more distinct—he could count the pains of glass, he almost saw a strange, wild face gazing out upon him, and he turned and fled. That terror saved his life; had he followed that fearful light an instant longer, he would be lost. He reached home more dead than alive, and it was more than an hour before he could find breath, to tell us what I have just related."

"So you think the fiend himself has something to do with this travelling window."

"I do not know what to think. You know this inn of mine lies half way between the towns of Waldburg and Moritz. Many rich travellers leave one of these towns for the other, yet one out of every two never reach their

destination. They are missed between here and Madburg."

"Robbed and murdered, perhaps, by some ruffians who infest the road."

"Their bodies are never found!"

"Have the police investigated these mysteries?"

"Yes, but without, discovering any signs of a band of robbers. We told them of the window; they watched for it, but as they could never see it, laughed at us, and told us our light was nothing but a fire fly."

"Strange that it did not appear to them."

"It was so; after they left the neighborhood the window again became visible, and the travellers disappeared as before."

"Was there anything singular connected with the disappearance of these travellers?"

"Yes, one thing; all that were missed had journeyed alone. Strange to say, those who travelled in parties of two or three invariably escaped."

"Well, my worthy host, do you know that a strange desire has seized upon me to penetrate this mystery? It seems that I am the only solitary traveller who has escaped the dangers of this mysterious window, that is—a prestige of success. I have nothing better on my hands at present. I have passed through some scenes of danger, and may be allowed to remark that I am no coward. This is a promising adventure to a soldier, who finds it somewhat hard to settle down into a quiet life, after the bustle and strife of a long campaign. So, if my stout Heinrich, here, will bear me company I'll even undertake a solution of this enigma."

"With all my heart, captain," cried Heinrich promptly.

"Then let us set forth at once."

"Aye, to-night," replied the Captain; it is scarcely ten o'clock, and I am in excellent trim; so prepare my lad, and we will set forth at once."

The captain examined the priming of his pistols carefully, and then thrust them into his belt; he then buckled on his sabre. Heinrich was ready armed with a stout cudgel. In this manner they sallied forth.

After proceeding a few paces up the road, the captain paused to give his companion a few instructions.

"Heinrich," he said, "a skillful commander always conceals the number of his force; for the furtherance of my plan of action it is necessary that we should pass for one man."

"You are the guide—consequently you must go first; I will lock-step with you; tread lightly, and our mingled footsteps will sound like the tread of a single man. In this manner—ah! you understand—not a bad soldier for a beginner. Now, whatever you see or hear, keep your tongue between your teeth, if you wish to call my attention to anything, nudge me with your elbow; if you see the light on the left, the left elbow; if on the right, why the right. Now then, forward—march!"

They proceeded in silence for over an hour, and Heinrich's right elbow was then thrust gently into the captain's ribs; at his whispered halt, they both stopped. Amid the tress they both saw distinctly a faint, twinkling light, having the appearance of a taper in a cottage.

"Now, Heinrich," said the captain, "if the devil owns this light he has no power to harm us; if it belongs to mortal man, we shall see which is the strongest. Keep a bold heart in your breast, and press steadily on."

They entered the forest; the captain still keeping close behind Heinrich, so governed his movements that they seemed as one man.

As they proceeded, the light almost imperceptibly retreated. To the eye of an unsuspecting person, the movement would have had the effect of miscalculation in distance, but the keen senses of the captain were not deceived; he beheld the light receding slowly but steadily, as they advanced. He strained his eyes to discover the cause, but in vain. As they threaded the mazes of the wood, it would suddenly disappear, and after proceeding a few minutes without beholding it, they would pause, thinking it had vanished entirely, when again its light would glimmer before them, as of inviting them to proceed. One thing the

captain had discovered; they were pursuing a beaten path through the forest, and he felt a slight shudder thrill even to his stout heart as he reflected that it might have been worn by the feet of the unfortunate travellers who had fallen victims to this mystery.

A quarter of an hour had passed since they had entered the forest, and yet they were no nearer the light than they were before. The captain began to grow impatient. Again the light disappeared; this time it seemed to be gone in reality; they walked steadily on—all was dark. The captain was about to relinquish the pursuit, when lo! there was the light quivering as before.

Heinrich stepped briskly forward; there was a crackling sound, as of breaking of twigs.—The captain drew back and grasped an overhanging bough. There was a sound of a heavy fall, a cry of pain—then all was still. The captain was standing on the brink of the pit into which Heinrich had fallen. By the aid of the bough he had seized he drew himself back from his perilous situation. Scarcely had he regained a firm footing before he saw the light rapidly approaching the pit. With a painful effort he repressed his breathing. As it neared him, he perceived it was nothing but a frame work, in which a taper was placed, borne in the hands of a man of wild and ferocious aspect. The truth instantly flashed upon the captain's mind; he understood the devilish artifice which this monster had used to entrap the unwary.

The robber placed his window by the side of the pit, and sinking on his knees, peered curiously into the depths; a long knife which glittered in his hand, told plainly what awaited Heinrich if he had survived the fall.

The captain drew forth one of his pistols and cautiously cocked it; slight as was the sound, the robber's ear detected it, and he sprang to his feet; the captain fired as he rose. The aim was true and fatal; with a loud shriek the ruffian fell to the earth: a few convulsive struggles shook his frame, and he lay perfectly motionless.

The captain moved cautiously round the sides of the pit and gained his side. He was quite dead. He examined his person, his garments were of the roughest kind and much worn; his feet were protected by a covering made of felt, which prevented his footsteps from being heard. He then turned and examined the window; it was nothing but a common frame that he had obtained from some cottage; the taper was backed by a small green board, which served to throw the rays of light straight forward, while it concealed the person of the bearer.

Feeling anxious for the fate of Heinrich, the captain called loudly upon his name, but received no answer. Fearing the worst, he retraced his steps, to the best of his ability, in the direction of the inn. By pursuing the path which he had before noted, he succeeded in regaining the road without much difficulty, and arrived at the inn a little before daybreak.

The host, though anxious to ascertain the fate of his son, advised a short delay in order to procure the assistance of the neighboring villagers; the captain acceded.

In about two hours after, a strong party proceeded to the scene of nocturnal adventure. The captain found all as he had left it, and his heart was considerably relieved by hearing the voice of Heinrich shouting lustily for help. He was soon relieved from his unpleasant situation; though stunned by the fall, he had received no other hurt than a few bruises. This pit was the robber's burial place as well as trap; they cast his body among those he had slaughtered, and filled it up with earth.

The place was soon deserted. Captain Ernest, after a hearty good bye, exchanged with the host and Heinrich, proceeded on his journey. The circumstances became known, and the Government rewarded his courage with a pension.

Heinrich had the window placed in the front side of the inn, where it may be seen to this day by the curious traveller.

A recent Paris paper has the following remark:—"The American and English educate their children in the fear of God and the love of money."