

Miscellany.

[From Harper's Magazine.]

PROMISE UNFULFILLED.

A TALE OF THE COASTGUARD.

The Rose had been becalmed for several days in Cowes harbor, and utterly at a loss how else to cheat the time, I employed myself one afternoon in sauntering up and down the quay, whistling for a breeze and listlessly watching the slow approach of a row-boat, bringing the mail and a few passengers from Southampton, the packet-cutter to which the boat belonged, being as hopelessly immovable, except for such drift as the tide gave her, as the Rose. The slowness of its approach—for I expected a messenger with letters—added to my impatient weariness; and as, according to my reckoning, it would be at least an hour before the boat reached the landing steps, I returned to the Fountain Inn, in the High street, called for a glass of negus, and as I lazily sipped it, once more turned over the newspapers lying on the table, though with scarcely a hope of coming athwart a line that I had not read half a dozen times before. I was mistaken. There was a Cornwall Gazette among them which I had not before seen, and in one corner of it I lit upon this, to me in all respects new and extremely interesting paragraph:

"We copy the following statement from a contemporary, solely for the purpose of contradicting it: 'It is said that the leader of the smugglers in the late desperate affray with the coast-guard in St. Michael's Bay, was none other than Mr. Geo. Polwhele Hendrick, of Lostwithiel, formerly as our readers are aware, a lieutenant in the royal navy, and dismissed the king's service by sentence of court martial at the close of the war.' There is no foundation for this imputation. Mrs. Hendrick, of Lostwithiel, requests us to state that her son, from whom she heard but about ten days since, commands a first class ship in the merchant navy of the United States."

I was exceedingly astonished. The court-martial I had not heard of, and having never overhauled the Navy List for such a purpose, the absence of the name of G. P. Hendrick had escaped my notice. What could have been his offence?—Some hasty, passionate act, no doubt; or of misbehaviour before the enemy, or of the commission of deliberate wrong, it was impossible to suspect him. He was, I personally knew, as eager as flame in combat; and his frank, perhaps heedless generosity of temperament, was abundantly apparent to every one acquainted with him.

I had known him for a short time only; but the few days of our acquaintance were passed under circumstances which bring out the true nature of a man more prominently and unmistakably than might twenty years of hum-drum every-day life. The varnish of pretension falls quickly off in the presence of sudden and extreme peril—peril especially requiring presence of mind and energy to beat it back.

It was in such a position that I recognised some of the high qualities of Lieutenant Hendrick. The two sloops of war in which we respectively served, were consorts for a while on the South African coast, during which time we fell in with a franco-Italian privateer or pirate—for the distinction between the two is much more technical than real. She was to leeward when we sighted her, and not very distant from the shore, and so quickly did she shoal her water, that pursuit by either of the sloops was out of the question. Being a stout vessel of her class, and full of men, four boats—three of the Scorpion's and one of her consort's—were despatched in pursuit.

The breeze gradually failed, and we were fast coming up with our friend when he vanished behind a headland, on rounding which we found she had disappeared up a narrow, winding river, of no great depth of water. We of course followed, and, after about a quarter of an hour's hard pull, found, on suddenly turning a sharp elbow of the stream, that we had caught a Tartar. We had in fact come upon a complete nest of pirates—a rendezvous or depot they termed it. The vessel was already anchored across the channel, and we were flanked on each shore by a crowd of desperadoes, well provided with small arms, and with two or three pieces of light ordnance among them. The shouts of defiance with which they greeted us as we swept into the deadly trap were instantly followed by a general and murderous discharge of both musketry and artillery; and as the smoke cleared away I saw that the leading pinnace, commanded by Hendrick had been literally dashed to pieces, and that the little living portion of the crew were snatching about in the river.

own fate would inevitably be a similar one. The men knew this and with a loud cheer swept eagerly toward the privateer, while the two remaining boats engaged the shore forces, and I was soon involved in about the fiercest melee I had ever the honor to assist at. The furious struggle on the deck of the privateer lasted but about five minutes only, at the end of which all that remained of us were thrust over the side. Some tumbled into the boat, others like myself tumbled into the river. As soon as I came to the surface, I had time to shake my ears and look about me, I saw Lieutenant Hendrick, who, the instant the pinnace he commanded was destroyed, had with equal daring and presence of mind, swam towards a boat at the privateer's stern, cut the rope that held her with the sword he carried between his teeth, and forthwith began picking up his half-drowned boats crew. This was already accomplished, and he now performed the same service for me and my crew. This done we again sprang at our ugly customer, he at the bow, and I about midships. Hendrick was the first to leap on the deck; and so fierce and well sustained was the assault this time, that in less than ten minutes we were undisputed victors so far as the vessel was concerned.

The fight on the shore continued obstinate and bloody, and it was not till we had twice discharged the privateer's guns among the desperate rascals that they broke and fled. The dashing, yet cool and skilful bravery evinced by Lieutenant Hendrick in this brief but tumultuous and sanguinary affair was admirably remarked upon by all who witnessed it, few of whom while gazing at the seawy, active form, the fine, pale flashing countenance, and the dark, thunderous eyes of the young officer—if I may use such a term, for in their calmest aspect a latent volcano appeared to slumber in their gleaming depths—could refuse to subscribe to the opinion of a distinguished admiral, who more than once observed that there was no more promising officer in the British navy than Lieutenant Hendrick.

Well, all this, which has taken me so many words to relate, flashed before me like a scene in a theatre, as I read the paragraph in the Cornish paper.

The Scorpion and her consort parted company a few days after this fight, and I had not since then seen or heard of Hendrick till now.

I was losing myself in conjecture as to the probable or possible cause of such a disgraceful termination to a career that promised so brilliantly, when the striking of the bar clock warned me that the mail boat was by this time arrived. I sallied forth and reached the pier steps just a minute or so before the boat arrived there. The messenger I expected was in her, and I was turning away with the parcel he handed me, when my attention was arrested by a stout, unwieldy fellow, who stumbled awkwardly out of the boat, and hurriedly came up the steps. The face of the man was pale, thin, hatchet shaped and anxious, and the grey, ferret eyes were restless and perturbed; while the stout round body was that of a yeoman of the bulkiest class, but so awkwardly made up that it did not require any very lengthened scrutiny to perceive that the shrunken carcass appropriate to such a lanky and dismal visage occupied but a small space within the thick casing of padding and extra garments in which it was swathed. His light brown wig, too, surrounded by a broad-brimmed hat got a little awry, dangerously revealing the scanty locks of iron grey beneath. It was not difficult to run up these little items to a pretty accurate sum total, and I had little doubt that the hasting and nervous traveller was fleeing either from a constable or a sheriff's officer. It was, however no affair of mine, and I was soon busy with the letters just brought me.

The most important tidings they contained was that Captain Pickard—master of a smuggling craft of some celebrity, called, *Les Trois Freres*, in which for the last twelve months or more he had been carrying on a daring and successful trade throughout the whole line of the southern and western coasts—was likely to be found at this particular time near a particular spot at the back of the Wight. This information was from a sure source in the enemy's camp, and it was consequently with great satisfaction that I observed indications of a breeze, and in all probability a stiff one.

I was not disappointed; and in less than an hour the Rose was stretching her white wings beneath a stiff north-wester over to Portsmouth, where I had some slight official business to transact before looking after friend Pickard. This was speedily despatched, and I was stepping into the boat on my return to the cutter when a panting

"The telegraph has just announced," said the admiral, "That Sparkles, the defaulter, who has for some time successfully avoided capture, will attempt to leave the kingdom from the Wight, as he is known to have been in communication with some of the smuggling gentry there. He is supposed to have a large amount of Government money in his possession; you will, therefore, captain Warneford, exert yourself vigilantly to secure him."

"What is his description?"

"Mr. James," replied the Admiral, addressing one of the telegraph clerks, "give Captain Warneford the information transmitted."

Mr. James did so, and I read:—"Is said to have disguised himself as a stout countryman; wears a blue coat with bright buttons, buff waistcoat, a brown wig and a Quaker's hat. He is of a slight lanky figure, five feet nine inches in height. He has two peck-marks on his forehead and lips in his speech."

"By Jove, Sir!" I exclaimed, "I saw this fellow only about two hours ago!"

I then briefly related what had occurred, and was directed not to lose a moment in hastening to secure the fugitive.

The wind had considerably increased by this time, and the Rose was soon again off Cowes, where Mr. Roberts, the first mate, and six men, went on shore with orders to make the best of their way to Bonchurch—about which spot I knew, if any where, the brown wigged gentleman would endeavor to embark—while the Rose went round to intercept him seaward; which she did at a spanking rate, for it was now blowing half a gale of wind. Evening had fallen before we reached our destination, but so clear and bright with moon and stars that distant objects were as visible as by day.

I had rightly guessed how it would be, for we had no sooner opened up Bonchurch shore or beach than Roberts signaled us that our man was on board the cutter running off at about a league from us in the direction of Cape La Hogue. I knew too from the cutter's build, and the cut and set of her sails, that she was no other than Capt. Pickard's boasted craft, so that there was a chance of killing two birds with one stone. We evidently gained, though slowly, upon *Les Trois Freres*; and this, after about a quarter of an hour's run, appeared to be her captain's own opinion, for he suddenly changed his course and stood toward the channel islands, in the hope, I doubt not, that I should not follow him in such weather as was likely to come on through the dangerous intricacies of the iron bound coast about Guernsey and the adjacent islets. Master Pickard was mistaken; for knowing the extreme probability of being led such a dance, I had brought a pilot with me from Cowes, as well acquainted with Channel navigation as the smuggler himself could be.—*Les Trois Freres*, it was soon evident, was now upon her best point of sailing, and it was all that we could do to hold our own with her. This was vexatious; but the aspect of the heavens forbade me showing more canvass, great as I was tempted to do so.

It was lucky I did not. The stars were still shining over our heads from an expanse of blue without a cloud, and the full moon also as yet held her course unobscured, but there had gathered around her a glittering halo-like ring, and away to windward huge masses of black cloud, piled confusedly on each other, were fast spreading over the heavens. The thick darkness had spread over about half the visible sky, presenting a singular contrast to the silver brightness of the other portion, when suddenly a sheet of vivid flame broke out of the blackness, instantly followed by deafening explosions, as if a thousand cannons were bursting immediately over our heads. At the same moment the tempest came leaping and hissing along the white crested waves, and struck the Rose abeam with such terrible force, that for one startling moment I doubted if she would right again. It was a vain fear; and in a second or two she was tearing through the water at a tremendous rate. The smuggler, however, had not been so lucky; she had carried away her topmast, and sustained other damage; but so well and boldly was she handled, and so perfectly under command appeared her crew, that these accidents were so far as it was possible to do so, promptly repaired; and so little was she crippled in comparative speed, that, although it was clear for a time that the Rose gained something on her, it was so slowly that the issue of the chase continued extremely doubtful. The race was an exciting one; the Gaskets, Alderney, were swiftly passed, and about two o'clock in the morning we made the Guernsey lights. We were, by this time, within

on passing through a narrow opening between the small islands of Herm and Jethon, abreast of Guernsey—the same passage I believe, by which Captain, afterward Admiral Lord Saumarez, escaped with his frigate from a French squadron in the early days of the last war.

Fine and light as the night had again become, the attempt, blowing as it did, was a perilous, and proved to be a fatal one. *Les Trois Freres* struck upon a reef on the side of Jethon—a rock with then but one poor habitation upon it, which one might throw a biscuit over; and by the time the Rose had brought up in the Guernsey Roads, the smuggler, as far as could be ascertained by our night-glasses, had entirely disappeared. What had become of the crew and the important passenger was the next point to be ascertained; but although the wind had by this time somewhat abated, it was, under the pilot's advice, till near 8 o'clock that the Rose's boat with myself and a stout crew, pulled off for the scene of the catastrophe. We needed not to have hurried ourselves. The half-drowned smugglers, all but three of whom had escaped with life, were in a truly sorry plight, every one of them being more or less maimed, bruised, and bleeding. *Les Trois Freres* had gone entirely to pieces, and as there was no possible means of escape from the desolate place, our arrival, with the supplies we brought, was looked upon rather as a deliverance than otherwise. To my inquiries respecting their passenger, the men answered by saying he was in the house with the captain. I immediately proceeded thither, and found one of the two rooms on the ground floor occupied by four or five of the worst injured of the contrabandists, and the gentleman I was chiefly in pursuit of, Mr. Samuel Sparkes. There was no mistaking Mr. Sparkes, notwithstanding he had substituted the disguise of a sailor for that of the jolly agriculturist.

"You are, I believe, sir, the Mr. Samuel Sparkes for whose presence certain personages in London are just now rather anxious?"

His deadly face grew more corpse-like as I spoke, but he nevertheless managed to stammer out, "No; Jamth Edward, thir."

"At all events that pretty lisp, and those two marks on the forehead belong to Samuel Sparkes, Esq., and you must be detained till you satisfactorily explain how you came by them. Stevens, take this person into close custody and have him searched at once. And now, gentlemen smugglers," I continued, "Pray inform me where I may see your renowned captain?"

"He is in the next room," replied a decent-toned chap sitting near the fire; and he desired me to give his compliments to Lieutenant Warneford and say he wished to see him alone.

"Very civil and considerate, upon my word.—In this room, do you say?"

"Yes, sir; in that room." I pushed open a rickety door, and found myself in a dingy hole of a room, little more than about a couple of yards square, at the further side of which stood a little, sinewy man in a blue pea jacket, and with a fur cap on his head. His back was toward me; and as my entrance did not cause him to change his position, I said, "You are Captain Pickard I am informed?"

He swung sharply round as I spoke, threw off his cap, and said, briefly and sternly, "Yes, Mr. Warneford, I am Captain Pickard."

To be concluded.

MILKING BEARS.—A friend of ours, says the *New York Journal*, who has recently returned from a little jaunt in the country, happening to stay at the house of an old Methodist deacon, has handed us the following specimen of that pious gentleman's commentary on a passage in the Bible. As it is quite equal to anything we have seen lately, we do not feel disposed to keep it entirely to ourselves. It appears that for many years past the deacon had observed the custom of reading daily a chapter from the sacred Scriptures to the family, and of making a running extemporaneous commentary upon each particular passage that seemed to require elucidation.

Coming to that part of the Bible which says, "Now these seven did Milcha bear unto Nahor," he cleared his throat and explained it thus:

"The object in this here passage is to show how unfortunate the people used to be in old times. Then they didn't have no dairies, but was obliged to milk bears, and it took six to hold the bear, while tother milked it, and they had to go to Nahor to git the bears."

A TOUGH STORY.—A correspondent in East Boston says that the weather was so severe in that vicinity recently, that the cats walked upon their hind legs thrashing their fore paws to prevent them from freezing.