

Poetry.

[From the London Working Man's Friend.]

THE LONG AND THE SHORT OF IT.

BY J. BURBRIDGE.

There were days when a man with a thought in his head,
Had been watched like a rascally thief,
When the rich and the great were the people that read,
And the rest were shut out from a leaf;
When the question was asked what they wanted with schools,
And some wondered however they thought of it;
For they fancied the poor were all made to be fools,—
And that was the long and the short of it!

But the Press—like the sunbeam that scatters the cloud,
By degrees broke the darkness of night;
And the murmur arose from the down-trodden crowd,
That soon settled this question of right.
The Bible was found on the laborer's shelf,
Though little he'd ever been taught of it;
But now he determined to read for himself—
And that was the long and the short of it!

And the light has now reached to the lowliest shed
Where the toil-worn and ignorant dwell,
And the man can now over his crust of "cheap bread,"
Teach his children to read and to spell.
No longer he's frightened to read 'the debate,'
Nor trembles to say what he thought of it;
No more in the dust of the feet of the great—
And that is the long and the short of it.

Then honor to those who would banish the tax
That keeps knowledge away from the poor,
They will lighten the load upon millions of backs,
And bring joy to the laborer's door.
Cheap bread, and cheap books, he demanded, though some

In the height of their wisdom ne'er thought of it;
The first he has got, and the other must come—
And that is the long and the short of it!

Literary Selections.

THE CAPTURED BANNER.

A Yarn of the Montevidean War.

"WHAT insolence!" These words were uttered by a lovely woman, whose flushed cheek, flashing eye, and knitted brow spoke even more than words of the indignation which filled her heart.

She was the young wife of commodore Coe, the commander of the small navy of Montevideo. The lady was Spanish by birth, as well as in feeling; and the cause of her anger was the sight of a ship, which had been for two days standing off and on before the harbor, using every signal of insult and defiance to induce the vessel of Coe to come out and fight him. This the latter could not do, for two reasons. The first was illness, which confined him to his cot; the second that he had not one-third of a crew, not even men enough to work his battery.

At the moment when she uttered the words which commence this sketch, Brown, the commander of the *Buenos-Ayres* ship, had hoisted a flag at his gaff, whereon was embroidered, in large, legible letters, the inscription: "COE, THE COWARD!" This was more than his noble, fiery wife could stand; for she knew her husband's truth and valor. After gazing one instant at the flag, she raised her jeweled hand; taking therefrom a diamond of great value, she said to the officers and men who stood around her on the deck, "I will give this diamond to any man who will bring me yonder flag!"

For a moment there was no response. The men looked at their officers, the officers glanced at each other, but volunteers for a service so desperate seemed scarce.

"What! Is there not one of you who will dare the trial? Is my husband's ship indeed manned with cowards?" exclaimed the lady while her beautiful lip curled with scorn, and her flashing eye gleamed with the fire of contempt.

A young officer, an Englishman, who had been lately appointed, stepped forward, and modestly said—

"I was only waiting for my seniors to speak, senora. Had any of them volunteered, I should have begged to accompany him. As it is, I pledge myself to bring you yonder flag before the sun rises again—or to die! But I ask not your jewel as a prize for my success; one tress of your glossy hair shall be my reward."

"You shall have both, brave lad!" replied the lady; and her cold look of scorn changed into a sweet smile as she asked his name.

"It is Frank Bennett, senora," replied the young man; and he blushed beneath her earnest gaze.

He was slim, but well formed; looked very

young, but in his dark blue eye and compressed lips an observer could read one whose manhood was not made by years alone.

The sun was setting behind a bank of slowly-rising clouds, which threatened darkness and storm. The moment that his services were accepted, young Bennett turned to the crew, and as he glanced among them, said—"I want six men to man the whale-boat which hangs at the after-davits!"

Struck by his gallantry, nearly one-half of the crew started forward. Now that they had a leader, volunteers were plenty. Bennett glanced his eye over them, and in a few moments chose six by name, men whom he knew to be both daring and firm. They were Americans.

"Go sharpen your cutlasses," said he; "I shall not have a pistol or musket in the boat. If we fight it must be steel to steel and breast to breast; for we succeed or die!"

Those men answered only with a look.—They were of that class whose motto is "Deeds not words." They hurried below to obey his orders, while others proceeded by his directions to muffle the oars of the boat, to put sails, water, &c. in it.

One half hour later the sky was covered with clouds, and darkness had set in. Bennett had been careful to take the compass-course of the enemy's ship when the last light of the dying day gave opportunity, and by this alone he hoped to find her. At this time the lady was on the deck, standing by the binnacle-light, regarding the preparations of the little party who were about to shove off. At the moment when the boat's crew cried out that all was ready for a start, their young leader came aft to the side of the senora, and taking from his neck a miniature, he handed it and a letter to her saying—

"If I am not on board at sunrise, lady, please send that miniature to the direction of the letter."

The lady looked at the picture. It was the likeness of a young and beautiful girl. A tear filled the senora's eye.

"You need not go!" said she. "No; you love—perchance are beloved. Your life is precious. I will not expose it. This is—"

"My only sister, whom I almost adore!" interrupted the youth; "but one who would scorn me if I played the coward, or dishonored my name. Send that letter and likeness to her if I fall. Farewell till to-morrow—or for ever!"

The lady was about to answer, and again to entreat him to stay; but ere she could speak he was over the bulwarks, and the boat was gone. The night was pitchy dark. A calm was on the sea and in the air, but it was portentous of a storm. A small binnacle-light and compass had been placed in the boat, and by these Frank shaped his course, himself taking the tiller and steering.

"Give way cheerily, men!—a long, strong, and steady pull!" said he, in a low tone, as he left the ship's side; and he soon felt, by the trembling of the frail boat, that his directions were obeyed. Out right into the offing he pulled, regardless of the rising clouds, keeping his eye fixed steadily on his compass, until he knew, if the vessel had remained hove-to as she was at sun-set, that he must be very near her. But he looked in vain for a light which might guide him to her. Admiral Brown was too old a fox to be showing his position by lights.

At this moment, when he was completely at a loss which way to steer, the dark clouds which had been gathering over him burst with a long vivid flash of lightning and a peal of deafening thunder. He heard not the thunder, he headed not the rising storm. That flash of lightning had shown him the vessel, not one cable's length from him.

"Steady boys!—steady!" he whispered, when the thunder ceased; "I shall pull directly under her stern, and get on deck by the carved work, and netting on her quarter."

The men rowed slowly and silently on, and as he had marked well her position, the young officer in a moment found himself under the vessel's stern. At this instant another flash of lightning illuminated the sky and water; and then as he glanced up at the gaff, where the flag had been hoisted, he saw that it was not there! It had been hauled down.

He paused, thought for a moment what he should do, and then formed his resolution.—"I will go on board alone, men," said he; keep the boat where she is. If the flag is where I think it is, in the Admiral's cabin, I will have it. If I am not back in five minutes, and you hear an alarm, shove off, send back to our ship, and tell them that Frank Bennett died like a man. You must be cautious; reef the foresail, for the storm will be down upon us in less than ten minutes."

All of this was whispered to the men, whose heads were bent forward to hear the orders which they dared not disobey, much as they wished to share their leader's peril.

Springing lightly from the boat, Frank caught the quarter-nettings with his hands, and noiselessly ascended to the bulwarks. He could hear the regular tread of the officer of the deck who having already had everything reefed down for the blow, had nothing to do but pace the deck; but it was so dark that he could not see him.

A second more, and the brave boy was down on the deck and at the cabin door which stood slightly ajar. He peeped in through the narrow crack, and saw the red-faced old Admiral seated at his round table, with two of his officers by his side, engaged over the contents of a square bottle, which looked very much like that generally found to contain schnapps.

A glance at the settee just to the left of this table showed the object of the enterprise. The flag for which he had periled his life lay there where it had been carelessly thrown after it was hauled down.

The young officer did not pause long to consider what to do, but quietly walked into the cabin, and taking off his cap, bowed very politely to the officers; and, as he stepped toward the flag, said, in a calm and courteous manner to the Admiral—

"I have come to borrow this banner, sir, to wear to-morrow if you please!"

"Who the devil are you? What does this mean?" cried Brown, as he and his officers sprang to their feet.

"I am Midshipman Bennett, sir, of the Montevidean service!" said Frank who had now seized the flag, "and I mean to carry this flag to Commodore Coe."

As he said this he bounded to the cabin door, followed closely by a bullet from Brown's pistol, which grazed his ear, and ere the alarm became general, he stood upon the taffrail of the vessel.

"Look out for me below!" he shouted, and flung himself into the sea without a moment's hesitation. His boat's crew recognised his voice, he was caught in a moment and dragged into the boat, while a volley of pistol balls was sent down at random by those who were above.

The storm had now broken, and the wind began to come in with fierce and fitful gusts. "Up foresail! Be quick lads! Up foresail, and let her slide!" cried the young hero, as soon as he could draw breath after his ducking.

The crew did so, and the next moment the little boat was flying in towards the harbor, before the blast, like a glad sea-bird winging its way to its young one's nest.

The enemy opened a harmless random fire of grape in their direction, but it only served to tell the anxious watchers on board of Coe's vessel that something had occurred. The latter, therefore, showed lights, and enabled Frank to shape his course directly for her.

It was but half an hour after the first gun had been fired by Brown's vessel, that the boat of the young adventurer rounded to along side of his own craft.

"Have you captured the flag?" cried the senora, as Frank Bennett bounded over the side.

The only answer she received was the banner, wet as it was from the water, and cut in two pieces by the ball which had been fired at its captor.

The lights of the vessel gleamed not half so bright as did that lady's eye when she caught the noble youth to her arms, and kissed him again and again.

THE NEWS OF WATERLOO.

Since news was invented, perhaps no news ever electrified the world as did that which told the result of the battle of Waterloo. In one of the works which the death of the Duke of Wellington has called forth, there is a passage which describes with remarkable vividness the effects of that intelligence upon the people of Edinburgh. We have seldom met with a more stirring piece of writing. It is as follows:—

"The author witnessed the effects of the news in Edinburgh. It met him as he entered the outer hall of the courts of law, still called the Parliament House, from having been the hall of the Scottish Parliament, before the Union. The unwonted words were passing from mouth to mouth, 'Wellington is defeated! He has retreated to a place called Waterloo! The game is up! The hero of a hundred fights quails before the eagles of Napoleon! The Prussian army is annihilated!'"

And thus and thus was Pandora's box emptied;—

"But hope, the charmer, lingered still behind."

A retreat is not necessarily a defeat, began some one to recollect—a retreat, moreover, to a named place, most likely a previously chosen position, infers a stand at that place. A detachment only has been engaged, and necessarily fell back on the concentrated main body. The retreat of the Prussians would have exposed its flank. Wellington had yet to put forth its strength. The French had never, since they first met him, gained the smallest advantage over him; on the contrary, had been beaten in every action, and that so steadily, that Napoleon was known to have exclaimed pettishly to the unlucky bearer of the news of yet another Peninsular disaster, *Bah! Les Anglais toujours battent les Francois!* "No! no!" said one more sanguine reasoner of the long robe, "we shall have news of a victory yet, and as it must be near at hand, one way or the other, I should be more delighted than surprised if the Castle guns should wake us to-morrow morning."

Another barrister, quite as patriotic, but less sanguine would cheerfully pay a guinea for every gun fired for a victory, to any one who would take very easy odds. The bet was taken, the taker patriotically wishing to win, the offerer still more patriotically wishing to lose. The business of the morning had scarcely proceeded two hours, when a gentleman rushed into the great hall, and almost breathless shouted "Victory!" He was mobbed. "How had the news come?" "By express from the Lord Provost of Edinburgh, then in London. The French were completely routed at the place called Waterloo, by one grand bayonet charge of the whole British army!" Such was the brief flourish for a lengthened struggle of ten hours, which was first sounded by fame's trumpet.

The bearer of the glad tidings was soon in the court where the judges were sitting; the cheers of the outer hall were suspended only to be renewed in the inner. Further law proceedings were out of the question; adjournment was ruled; and judges, advocates, agents, and officers, were speedily in the streets, already crowded by their excited and exulting townsmen. Nobody would stay at home. The schools were let out. Business was suspended and a holiday voted by acclamation. Everybody shook hands with everybody; and as the Lord Provost's brief express, got by heart by the whole population, could not be made longer or more particular than it was, the most restless were perforce obliged to wait, with what patience they might, for the dawn of the next day.

The sun of that morning saw no "sluggard slumbering 'neath its beams." The streets were crowded before the post arrived. The mail coach was described approaching, adorned with laurels and flags, the guard waving his hat; and soon it dashed into town amid cheers that made the welkin ring. The accounts were now official. All was confirmed; and, as early as seven o'clock, the Castle flag rose, and nineteen twenty-four pounders sounded in the ears and filled the eyes—for the effect was overpowering—of the excited throng. Need we say that the nineteen guineas