

Poetry.

A SIGH FOR THE POOR.

A sigh for the poor, without shelter or friends,
Exposed to the blast and the storm,
A hand ever ready to ease their distress,
And a heart that with pity beats warm;
Oh, why is our lot not as abject as theirs—
Do we differ one jot in the mould?
And why have we kindred, and riches, and health,
And why are we screened from the cold?
Then a sigh for the poor without shelter or friends,
Exposed to the blast and the storm—
A hand ever ready to ease their distress,
And a heart that with pity beats warm.

I loathe the proud giver who boasts of his deeds,
And plays with the coin he lets ows;
But give me the one who is cheerful withal,
Though a mite 'midst profusion he throws.
True charity comes like the widow of old,
And not as the rich men I ween,
The one came with sympathy, shunning all gaze,
The others, alas, to be seen!
Then a sigh for the poor, without shelter or friends,
Exposed to the blast and the storm—
A hand ever ready to ease their distress,
And a heart that with pity beats warm.

Select Tales.

THE PILOT'S REVENGE.

BY SYLVANUS COBB, JR.

It was toward night, on the 21st of September, 1854. A small English war brig, which had been fitted out for the suppression of smuggling, was lazily creeping along over the heavy monotonous swells, just off the coast of Galway, and on her deck was being enacted a scene of more than common interest. The day before she had captured a small boat laden with contraband articles, together with an old man and boy who had charge of them; and the captain of the brig whose name was Dracutt, had ordered that the smuggler should be put in irons. To this indignity the old man made a stout resistance, and in the heat of the moment he had so far forgotten himself as to strike the captain a blow which stretched him on the deck—Such an insult to a British officer was past endurance, and in punishment of his offence, the smuggler had been condemned to die.

A single whip was rove at the starboard fore-yard arm, and all hands were called to witness the execution. The rope was noosed and slipped over the culprit's head, and the running end was rove through a small snatchblock in the deck.—Until this moment not a word had escaped the lips of the boy. He trembled as he beheld the awful preparations; and as the fatal noose was passed and drawn tight, the colour forsook his face, and he sprang forward and dropped on his knees before the incensed captain.

"Mercy, sir, mercy."

"For whom," asked the officer, while a contemptuous smile rested upon his lips.

"For that old man whom you are about to kill."

"He dies, boy."

"But he is my father, sir."

"No matter; if he were my own father, that man who strikes an English officer while in the performance of his duty, must die."

"But he was manacled, he was insulted, sir," urged the boy.

"Insulted!" repeated the captain, "who insulted him?"

"You did, sir," replied the boy, while his face was flushed with indignation.

"Get up, and take care that you do not get treated in the same way," said the captain in a savage tone.

The old man heard this appeal of his son, and as the last words dropped from the mouth of the captor, he raised his head, and while a look of defiance passed over his features, exclaimed—

"Ask no favours, Robert. Old Karl Kintock can die now as well as any time; let them do the worst."

Then turning to captain Dracutt, he changed his tone to one of the deepest supplication, and said—

"Do what you please with me, sir, but do not harm my boy, for he has done no wrong. I am ready for your sentence, and the sooner you finish it the better."

"Lay hold of the whip, shouted the captain.—Lay hold every man of you, and stand by to run the villain up."

In obedience to this order the men ranged themselves along the deck, and each one laid hold of the rope.

Robert Kintock looked first at his father, and then he ran his eyes along the line of men who were to be his executioners. But not one sympathising or pitying look could be trace. Their faces

were all hard and cold, and appeared anxious to consummate their murderous work.

"What!" exclaimed the boy, while a tear started from his trembling eye, "is there not one even who can pity?"

"Up with him," shouted the captain.

Robert buried his face in his hands, and the next moment his father was swinging at the yard-arm. He heard the passing rope, and the cracking block, and he knew that he was fatherless.

Half an hour afterwards the boy knelt by the side of a lifeless corpse, and a simple prayer escaped his lips. Then another low murmuring sound came up from his bosom, but none of those who stood around knew its import. It was a pledge of deep revenge.

Just as the old man's body slid from the gang-way into the water, a vivid flash of lightning streamed through the heavens, and in another moment the dread artillery of nature sent forth a roar so long and loud that the men actually placed their hands to their ears to shut out its deafening roar. Robert Kintock started at the sound, and what had caused a dread in others' bosoms sent a thrill of satisfaction to his own.

"Oh! revenge, revenge!" he muttered to himself, as he cast his eyes over the foam-crest waves which had already risen beneath the sudden storm.

The darkness had come on as quickly as did the storm, and all that could be distinguished from the deck of the brig, save the breaking sea, was the fearful shore, as flash after flash illuminated the heavens.

"Light ho!" shouted the man forward, and the next moment all eyes were directed to a light which had flashed up amongst the distant rocks.

The wind had now reached its height, and with its giant power it set the ill-fated brig directly upon the surf bound shore of rocks and reefs, and and every face, save one, was blanched with fear.

In vain they tried to lay the brig to the wind; not a sail would hold for an instant, until at length the men managed to get up a fore and main stay sail, and then the brig stood bravely up against the heaving sea. But it was evident that should she even succeed in keeping to the wind, she must eventually be driven ashore, for the power of the in-setting waves was greater than that of the wind.

"Boy, do you know what light that is?" asked the captain, as he stood holding on to the main rigging to keep his feet.

"Yes, sir, it is Bullymore's crag?" said the boy.

"What is it there for?"

"It marks the entrance to a little harbor, which lies at the back of it."

"And can it be entered by a vessel of this size?" asked the captain, while a gleam of hope shot across his face.

"Oh, yes sir, a large ship can enter there."

"And do you know the passages?"

"Yes sir, I have spent my whole life on the coast, and know every turn in it."

"Can you take the brig in there in this storm?"

"Yes sir," answered the boy, while a light shot from his eyes.

"And will you do it?" eagerly asked the captain.

"On two conditions."

"Name them."

"The first that you let me go in peace, the second that you trouble none of the smugglers, should there happen to be any there."

"I promise. But mark me, if you deceive me by St. George, I'll shoot you on the moment."

The brig was soon put before the wind, and Robert stationed himself upon the fore yard-arm, from whence his orders were passed along to the helmsman. The bounding vessel soon came within sight of the rugged crags, and the heart of every man leaped with fearful thrills as they were swept past a frowning rock which almost grazed them as they passed. On flew the brig, and thicker and more fearful became the rocks which raised their heads on every side.

"Port!" shouted the boy.

"Steady, ho!"

At this moment the vessel swept on past an overhanging rock, and just as a vivid flash of lightning shot through the heavens, and revealed all the horrors around, a loud shout was heard from the young pilot, and in a moment all eyes were turned towards him; he stood upon the extreme end of the yard, and held himself by the lift. In a moment more, he crouched down like a tiger after his prey, and then with one leap he reached the projecting rock.

"Revenge! Revenge!" was all that the doomed men heard, and they were swept away into the boiling surge beyond.

"Breakers, a lee!" screamed the man forward.

"Starboard, quick!"

But it was too late. Ere the helm was half way up, a low, tremulous grating of the brig's keel was distinctly felt, and the next moment came a crash that sounded high above the roar of the elements, and the heavy masts went sweeping away to leeward, followed in a few moments by large masses of the ill-fated vessel's wreck and cargo. Shriek after shriek went up from those doomed men, but they were in the grasp of the power that knows no mercy. The storm king took them all for his own.

The next morning a small party of wreckers came down from the rocks, and moved along the shore. It was strewn with fragments of the wreck, and here and there were scattered along the mutilated forms of the brig's crew. Among the party was Robert Kintock, and eagerly did he search among the ghastly corpses, as though there was one he would have found. At length he stopped and stooped over one on whose shoulders were two golden epaulets. It was the captain of the brig—the murderer of his father! The boy placed his foot upon the prostrate body, and while a strange light beamed from his eyes, and a shudder passed over his countenance, he muttered—

"Father, you are fearfully revenged!"

The boy spoke truly. Fearful in its conception and fearful in its consummation, had been the, "PILOT'S REVENGE."

CATHERINE "THE GREAT,"
OF RUSSIA.

It was during the reign of this Empress that Poland was partitioned, that the Crimea was conquered, that Suwarrow fought, that it became a settled object of Russian policy to annex Turkey. She was originally a German Princess, Sophia Augusta, of Anhalt Zerbst; but on embracing the Greek religion, she assumed the name of Catherine Alexiowna. She was born about the year 1729, and in 1745 was married to Peter, a grandson of Peter the Great, and afterwards Emperor under the title of Peter III. Their union seemed at first to promise happiness; but soon the young husband was deprived, by the small pox, of that which alone had rendered him agreeable to his wife, a handsome countenance. From that hour he was an object of disgust to Catherine, and she began a career of debauchery more enormous, more shameless, than any other recorded in history. Lovel succeeded lover with capricious rapidity, and there is reason to suppose that Paul who was afterwards Emperor, and the Father of the late Nicholas, was not the legitimate child of his mother. Peter, meanwhile, who was a "smoker, a drunkard, a gamester, and a debaucher," was kept in ignorance of that which was a standing jest among the courtiers.

At length, however, the eyes of the stupid husband were opened and he hastened to the reigning Empress to demand vengeance upon one the lovers of his wife, a high functionary of the Empire. The man was deprived of his office. Catherine, in disgrace, abandoned by the fawning crowd of courtiers who till now had lavished upon her all their flatteries, was obliged to accompany her husband to a distant fortress. There she continued to receive the visits of her favorite, who entered the fortress each time in a new disguise. He was caught at length, and taken into the presence of Peter, who at first in furious tones threatened to hang him, but in a few moments his anger cooled, and, struck with some absurdity in the lover's disguise, he burst into roars of laughter.—Thenceforward Catherine appears to have gone on in her revolting career unhindered and unregarded by her husband.

In 1792, Peter III. and Catherine were crowned Emperor and Empress of Russia. On assuming the reins of government, it is conceded by Russian historians that Peter performed many wise and clement actions. He forgave those who had offended him during the previous reign; he recalled a large number of exiles from Siberia; he suppressed the "Secret Chancery," a kind of political inquisition, the very name of which made Russians tremble; he gave some new privileges to the nobility, and enfranchised the serfs on the estates of the Church; he introduced some reforms into the administration of justice. But unfortunately, his exertions, which might have conciliated the favor of the nation, were baffled by his obstinacy in introducing Prussian tactics into his camp. He had been brought up in Germany, and conceived a fantastic admiration for Frederic the Great. He dressed in the Prussian uniform, and aped the Great Frederic in some of his well known peculiarities of speech and manner, to the disgust of the Russian populace.—Catherine went all lengths in an opposite direc-

tion, and sought by every means to flatter the national prejudices. She attended the churches, wore the national costume, and took frequent opportunities of displaying her fine person in public. Her lovers and the nobles who aspired to her arms, seconded her efforts to acquire popularity, and to deepen the popular dislike of the Emperor.

The unhappy Peter, aware of his wife's permanent infidelity, and suspecting that she aimed at the supreme power, determined at length to rid himself of her. On the night named for her arrest, Count Orloff approached the bed of the Empress and awoke her from a profound sleep; she started up suddenly, and saw him by the side of her couch. "Your majesty," said he, "has not an instant to lose; prepare to follow me."—He immediately disappeared. Catherine quietly called her maid, and both dressed themselves hurriedly, and disguised themselves, so as not to be recognized by the sentinels who guarded the castle. Scarcely were they ready, when Orloff came to conduct them to the carriage which awaited them at the end of the garden; he seized the reins, and drove towards St. Petersburg with such rapidity, that the strength of the horse gave way, and the Empress was compelled to complete her journey on foot. Fatigued and ail covered with dust, she reached the capital at seven o'clock in the morning. She repaired immediately to the quarters of the guards, many of whom had been gained over; for, says a writer, "if there be a Russian who can resist flattery, there is not one who can resist gold." On her arrival, the soldiers, half dressed, rushed from their barracks and crowded around her with loud shouts. In a faltering voice she said, that she had fled to them to escape from the fury of the Czar, who that very night had intended to put her to death as well as her son, the heir to the throne, and that she relied upon the protection of her faithful troops. The guards responded enthusiastically, swear to die for her. A priest was sent for who, crucifix in hand, received their oaths. Thus sanctified by religion, the contagion spread until every regiment in St. Petersburg was enlisted upon her side.

Without waiting for the enthusiasm to subside, she proceeded immediately to a church, where everything had been previously prepared for this astounding usurpation. An archbishop clothed in his robes, and surrounded by priests of venerable age, awaited her at the altar, and placing the imperial crown upon her head, he loudly proclaimed her Empress of all the Russias, under the name of Catherine the Second. The nobles awoke to hear at once of the conspiracy and its complete success; with Russian facility they hastened to swear fidelity to the new Empress. Ere noon, she was riding along the ranks of the assembled army, clothed in the uniform of the guards, and receiving the acclamations of the whole population. She dined before an open window, at each moment saluting the people, and the sun went down on a bloodless and undisputed revolution.

Peter, meanwhile, was journeying gaily into the country, in a truly Bacchanian fashion, surrounded by giddy youth, and giddier women.—When the news reached him he was overcome with terror, and amid the multitude of counsellors could come to no resolution. The imperial party at length directed their way to Cronstadt, then as now, a great naval depot, and a fortress defended by the sea. "Who goes there?" exclaimed the sentinel as Peter approached. "I, the Emperor," said Peter, advancing. "There is no Emperor," was the soldier's reply; and all along the line arose the cry, "Long live the Empress Catherine." Baffled everywhere, the miserable monarch wrote to his wife confessing his errors, and offering her a share in the empire. She disdained a reply. Then Peter offered to cede the empire to Catherine, only asking permission to retire into Holstein with his mistress and a friend. The answer was a command to repair to St. Petersburg, which the craven Czar obeyed. There was still a deeper deep of humiliation to which the unhappy man was destined to descend. As he and his friends approached the palace of the Empress, they were seized and insulted by his side; and himself, the Czar, stripped of his orders and at length of his clothes, with only a shirt on his back, remained for some time standing on the staircase of the palace exposed to the unrestrained derision of the guards. Soon he was conducted to prison, where, after confessing his incapacity to govern, and abdicating the throne, he was secretly strangled by the faithful Orloff. An imperial ukase announced on the following day that it had pleased the Almighty to remove Peter to eternal life. Thenceforward, for more than thirty years, Catherine awayed the destinies of the Russian people.