

Literature, &c.

FROM BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE FOR MARCH.

Extracts from a Letter to "Sir Christifer."

Ye remember wee Johnny Henderson, the white head laddie that lived wi' me ever since his mither, my niece, died o' a consumption, poor thing; he was aye a mischevous callant, an' I hope ye've fergien him for the tricks he played upon us baith.

Weel, we got him appointed a midshipman on board of the Jennyveeve, a frigate of war, with thirty-six guns in her. When the news cam down, he was just wild wi' joy—he gaed about the house singing 'Cease, rude Boreas,' and 'The Gallant Harry Thusa,' till my maid—do ye mind auld Jenny?—declared he was fey, and naething gude would come out of it. The time cam on at last, when he had to gang up to England an' join his ship. He had his uniform on—I mind him so weel—wi' his little dirk hingin' at his side, and looking sae bonny, wi' a little cockit hattie upon his head—oh, he didna look like as if he was gangin' to the wars; an' I thought he was a bit orphan, an' that he might have staid sae happy at home wi' his auld auntie—and my heart nearly misgave me, and I was sorry I had agreed to let him gang. He hadna been gone from me above a month, when he writ me a letter, tellin' me his ship was ordered to go to a station in South America, an' stay there for three years—an' I wasna to see him for a' that time! It made me regret a thousand times that ever I allowed him to gang, but it couldna be mendit noo, so I consoled myself as weel as I was able.

The three years at last past ower, an' a letter cam frae him to say, his ship would be at Portsmouth some time in the end of July or beginning o' August. This cam to me in June, and I couldna sleep for thinkin' o' my dear wee Johnny's comin' back to me again. At last I made up my mind I would gang up myself and receive him when he cam back; for, thinks I, the bit laddie will need some decent person who knows the ways o' the world to take care o' him, after being sae lang awa' frae the dry land. I telled my resolution to no living; and upon the fifteenth day of July, I took my place in the James Watt steam boat for London, and intended to tak the coach the minute I got there, and wait at Portsmouth till the Jennyveeve cam home.

I needna tell you ony thing about the journey down, but it was a lang way o' gate, and altho' the ither leddy was particular kind, and telt me a' the places, as we passed along the road, I'll no say but at the end o' the day I was very ow'come with sleep. At last I got into the hotel, the George, where the coach stoppit, and they telt me the house was unco croudet, because the Prince was in the town, and a great army o' officers come to wait on him.

Weel, the next morning I gat up, and after my breakfast, I askit the Landlord if he could telt me ony thing about the Jennyveeve, for I expectit her in about that time. He was a very polite man, and promised the minute she cam into the 'hoffin', which I thought was maybe some part o' the harbor, he would let me know. A' the forenoon I gaed walking about the town ca'in every noo and then at the hotel, just to ask about the vessel; but at last I thought I wad gang doon to the harbour myself. Weel, the first thing I sees is a gentleman, wi' a prospect glass in his hand, and, after keekin' through it a lang time, he turned about to his friend and said 'Jennyveeve in the offin', I know her by her trim.' Noo a thought struck me I would like to surprise wee Johnny; and as the sea was quite calm and the day was warm as could be, I agreed wi' a man to tak me out to her in a boat. Away we went through the water, an' amang a' the ships, quite enchantit. We sailed, and sailed, and at last we reached the side o' the Jennyveeve. A gentleman lookit over the bannister at the side o' the ship, and I telt him I wantit him to let me come on board, as I had a friend in the ship, that I was very particular to see. Weel he gaed awa' for a while, and then he cam back, and in a few minutes a stair was let down, and up I gaed, and fand myself on the floor o' the vessel, standin' beside the gentleman that had spoken to me first. I telt him who I was, and that I wantit to see wee Johnny Henderson, that was a bit muddie in their ship. He

said I wad see him belive, but in the meantime he wad introduce me to the Captain. He was standin' on the raised up part o' the floor, givin' his orders, and speakin' to me, a' in the breath. 'You want Mr Henderson, I think, madam? excellent young man—highly pleased with him'—and then he said somethin' about the ship. 'Oh, I was sure ye wad be that captain, for I aye brought him up myself wi' the greatest care.' The captain laughed and spoke very familiarly, as if we had known one another for long; but in a while he turned to the gentleman I spoke till, and desired him to send Mr Henderson. The gentleman—for he was a lieutenant o' the ship—turned awa' in a moment, but as he passed me to execute the order, I could hear the birkie was humming the tune o' Black-Eyed Susan. Weel, in a short time up cam wee Johnny; but I declare to ye, Mr. North—Sir Cristifer, I should say—I wad not hae known him he was sae changed. He had grown tall and strong, and in naething like the stripling he had been, save in his bonny, wild-looking blue ee;—but he saw me, and rushed forward and kissed his pur auld auntie, I kent he was the same warm-hearted creature he used to be—I'll not say but I grat wi' perfect happiness at seem' the lad again—and I think Johnny himsell was unco near the greetin'.

The captain and the ither gentleman had gaen awa, which was very considerate, but they soon cam back again, when they saw us in conversation. 'Oh, Johnny,' said I, 'what a great chield ye have grown! the breeks that I mended for ye'll be o' nae use to ye now, and the sarks'll be perfectly thrown awa.' He began to laugh, when I said this, wi' the same wild laugh he used to do at home; and said, 'What! auntie, always thinking about the pence yet?'—'It'll maybe be the better for you some day, if I do; for, if ye're no greatly changed, a bawbee aye burned a hole in your pocket unco soon.' But now began a great blazin' awa o' the guns, much the same as the day before; a' the ships gettin' covered up wi' the smoke, but sometimes atwixt twa o' the clouds we could see a boat rowed wi' somebody in't o' great consequence, and some ither boats followin' to keep it company. I telt them it was the Lord High Admiral, the King's brither, seein' the ships; but the captain cried out it was very unlucky—he had not known it before—but that they must exert themselves noo. Accordingly he ordered every one to his station, to get the ship in the grandest order, in case the Prince should come on board to inspect her. So for a good while I was left to my own reflections.

Weel, when I was tired wi' joukin' my head, an awfu' fear cam upon me, that the guns in our an ship would be obleegated to be fired; an' I weel kent, if I wasna killed by the burstin' o' the cannons, I wad die o' the fright. So says I to the captain, 'Oh, Captain Pagan, Captain Pagan, do ye think ye'll hae to fire aff the guns o' the ship? It'll just kill me outright.' Then he laughed extraordinary, and said, 'Fire!' said he; 'yes, egad, old Billy's a bluff one, and if we don't give a royal salute, he'll blow us up sky-high!'—'Oh Lord hae a care o' me!' says I, 'he wad surely never do such a cruel thing as blaw us a' up for no firin' a salute? Oh, they're weary things, thae salutes, baith for auld and young!' I sat down just perfectly overcome wi' my apprehensions, when, to my great delight and astonishment, wee Johnny comes up to me, and telt me that a flag or signal o' some sort or ither was put up, to gie them to understand that the Lord High Admiral didna want to be saluted; but he wad just come in about half an hour, and see how they were after being three years from home.

Weel pleased, as ye may imagine, was I to hear the news; for I was sure a' the danger was over; and I couldna help thinkin' how very kind it was in the Prince, net to let the sailors, poor fellows, run the risk o' firin', noo that they had come sae near to the shore in safety. But just in the midst of my keekling and rejoicin', up comes wee Johnny again, and telt me, that as the Admiral didna like to see petticoats on board, I must be stowed away into some quiet corner were His Royal Highness wadna see me! Oh! I was willing to gang any place, I was sae perfectly happy to have escaped the guns. But oh, Sir Cristifer! whar do you think that neer-do-weel callant persuaded

me to be hidden? There wasna a single part o' the ship, he said, that the admiral wadna see in a jiffy; he wad gasg intill every corner, till no a mouse wad be in the hail of the vessel that he wadna ken whar its hiding hole was; so, after threeping and telling me every thing was safe, he just prevailed on me to slip intill ane o' the guns. Weel, he telt me, and swore till't, that no salute was to be fired, and that there was no chance o' my being fund out in such a place as that; and so, at last, in great fear and tremblin', I let him lift me up, and put me in feet foremost, into ane o' the cannons at the side o' the ship. Ye ken what a wee jump body I am; and I assure you I've lain in many a waur situation than yon; I couldna turn myself to be sure, but I was in safety, and the Prince, they telt me, wadna stay more than twenty minutes. Weel, I hadna been lang in the gun when I heard the patter of oars in the water below where I was; then I heard the beat stop, and syne I heard a great stamping on the floor, or the deck, as they call it in a ship. Then the noise all ceased for nearly a quarter of an hour, and then the stamping began again. And as the party staid very near whar I was, I could even hear a wee o' what they were sayin'. But oh, Mr North!—there, I've forgotten yer teetle again—just fancy my feelings when I heard the Captain ask leave to salute his Royal Highness as he went away! Oh dear me, thinks I, I'll be sent fleein' through the air frae the mouth of a gun! And what sort of death is that for an auld maiden leddy to dee! Oh that I had never set my foot intill a ship! And wi' that I tried to scream to them to stop, but my throat was so dry I could mak' no sound;—I tried to creeep out, and hoped to tumble intill the sea and be drown'd; but I couldna move hand nor fit, I was so jammed intill the gun. And noo, tho' I was mair than half dead, I had a terrible consciousness o' everythin' that was gaun on. I heard the party gaun doon into their boat; I could fancy I saw them laughing and chatting awa' sae happy and contentit; and there was I, stuck into the mouth of a gun, ready to be fired away in honour of the Lord High Admiral!! I thought I could see the very part of the wall, about twa miles off, that I wad reach to, and yet I had na power to cry out and telt the Prince the jeopardy I was in. But very soon a greater degree of the fear cam ower me, for the ship shook and staggered as if a great blow had been hit, and then came the roar of the cannon, and I felt that the bitterness of death was begun; then gaed off anither; and then, in the pauses between, my ears were preternaturally sharpened, and I heard a voice saying, 'Oh, auntie, farewell—but do'nt be very much alarmed, for she is not loaded with ball—and you've a chance of being picked up by the boats.'

Then gaed aff anither gun, and I felt by the sound they were coming regularly up the row where I was—and then I heard the captain, standing just at the end o' my gun, say to the man that was firin' them aff—'Here—run out this old jade!' Mercu' me, could the cauld-hearted vagabond be speakin' that way o' me!—Raise up her breech a little, and lay on!—Here my senses a'thegither forsak me—to be spoken o' in such an undelicate manner before sae many great stardin' menfolk was waur than being shot out o' the gun; and being perfectly overcome wi' shame and fright, I sank into a dwam. The rest o' the story is very soon telt. The vagabonds kent a' the time they were never gaun to lie her aff; but the captain and that good-for-nothing creatur, wee Johnnie, did it a' for their ain amusement. However, when they gat me out o' the gun, they really behaved sae weel, and made sae many kind speeches about it, that I could not find it in my heart to be angry. So I just fergied them baith; but if ever onybody catches me playin' hide-and-seek in the body of a gun, they've my free leave to fire it aff, and send me a fleein' to the back of beyont.

EXTRACTS FROM NEW WORKS.

ANECDOTES OF PIPERS.—In the war in India, a piper in Lord MacLeod's regiment seeing the British army given way before superior numbers, played in his best style, the well known Cogadh na Smiths which filled the Highlanders with such spirit, that immediately rallying, they cut through their enemies. For this fortunate circumstance, Sir Eyre Coote, filled with