

LITERATURE, &c.

PASSAGES FROM THE DIARY OF A TRAVELLER.

BANDITTI.

The wind blew hollow and cold, the lagodi Guarda seemed troubled and foamy, and every thing tended to induce us to think bad weather was approaching. It was nearly ground dark when we reached the inn, standing solitary on the border of the Lake, and on alighting, I anxiously asked if they had two bed chambers nearly adjoining. They said they had, but on examination I found them not even within call. I returned to the carriage, and my sister (for the first time) begged I would proceed on to the next station, rather than stop at this place. I enquired what objection she had, but she could not tell me:—

'I do not like thee Doctor Fell!

The reason why I cannot tell:—

But this I know, and know full well,

I do not like thee Doctor Fell!

As she urged me to leave this uncomfortable lonely-looking mansion, I was about to proceed in equal defiance of storm and Banditti, when the master asked me if I would object to take chambers in the gallery. I looked at them, and finding them passable, we at length made up our minds to stay—for the clouds by this time had thickened, and night had rapidly come over us.

Our Chambers adjoined, either of them with glass doors opening on a balustrade and gallery running parallel, with intermediate doors of communication, which when open, allowed through the chambers a passage from gallery to gallery. In one of them, as is the custom on the continent, we took our dinner, not a little interrupted by the violence of the wind, by thunder dreadfully loud, and by a continuity of lightning which might well have suggested the economical expedient of saving our candles. These terrific phenomena were soon accompanied by the pouring out from the heavens of masses of water which, together with the wind seemed to swell the lake into mountainous waves, giving more the appearance of the convulsions of the ocean, than any inland navigation. At length, in the middle of our repast, a squall, more frightful than any foregoing blast, shook the whole massy fabric, and a crash ensued which made it clear some part of the premises had been found more vulnerable than that we were fortunate enough to inhabit; while the simultaneous splashing of the waters informed us how far the force of the tempest had driven the lake beyond its usual bed, into which the rain was now hurled. In equal surprise and apprehension, I raised my looks towards the window, and in spite of the violence of the tempest, I found we were the interesting subject of contemplation of a daring Brigand, who had probably concluded the storm had driven us to some obscure corner. The instant he found himself observed he withdrew; and I remarked this was the first evidence of rudeness I had experienced on the continent.

The storm continued to rage with unabated violence; but the fatigue of the journey overcame us, and I said I would see if there appeared any chance of its abating, so that we might retire to rest, with some hope of enjoying it. Rising to approach the window, I found to my still greater surprise, that we were still overlooked, on which I called aloud to know the object of this insolence; and receiving no answer, opened the door, but no living object was visible; and passing on to three or four chambers on either side found them unoccupied, and could no longer account for the difficulty of obtaining contiguous chambers, while so many seemed vacant.

My sister now entreated me—and it was the first time she appeared doubtful of my care and caution—not to forget to examine the fastenings and secure the apartments so soon as I should return to my room. I immediately proceeded to do so, and having drawn the bolts, I added the fastenings I carried with me for this especial purpose; and then retired, leaving the door of communication between the chambers partially open. I slept soundly for two or three hours, and was then awakened by the call of my sister, informing me she had been annoyed from the time she had gone to bed, by lights thrown through the window into the chamber, sometimes lighting up even in her face. The thunder and lightning were still dreadfully raging, and hardly conscious of what she said, and with eyes opened hardly enough to see the flames that flowed in uninterrupted succession, I answered it was only the storm that alarmed her, and begged she would go to sleep. In less than an hour, however, fresh cries awakened me, and my sister now called out she was certain the chambers were beset, for she had seen lights thrown into both chambers, and was sure there was some sort of communication. To satisfy her, I said I would set up in my bed and keep watch, and had scarcely taken position, when to my utter astonishment the glare of the dark lantern was thrown in my eyes,

and from the window close adjoining to the drawers on which I had placed my pistols. My first alarm was, lest these had been reached from the window; and, jumping out of bed, I flew to the drawers, and felt pleasure I can hardly describe in finding them safe, and the windows still secure. I then called through the window to know what these successive intrusions could mean, and flourished my arms; but getting no answer, and some seeming shadows having flitted away, I returned to bed—not to sleep but to watch, placing my pistols on a table by my bedside. Sometime after this, I thought I heard, as well as the roar of conflicting elements would allow, some creeping footsteps near my door, and softly pacing by my window. I left my bed again, but the lightning was no longer so continuous; I could, however, from intermittent flashes, see plainly enough for my satisfaction, bandits passing out of the court-yard. At length dawned the morning, after one of the most tedious nights I had ever seemingly experienced; and hearing voices below, I rose to call my man, when, to my inexpressible astonishment, I found all the usual fastenings of the doors in both chambers withdrawn, leaving those only I had fortunately added, which had constituted our sole security.—No wonder the lanterns had been put in such frequent requisition. With an eye tolerably mechanic, closely did I examine the doors for the means of effecting the purpose the assassins must have had in view, but I could nowhere trace any contrivance, and the ingenuity practised baffled examination.

For many miles after I left this inn, I kept up the strictest vigilance to prevent surprise and renewal of the danger we had escaped. It is curious that this was the first place, from our leaving England, into which my sister entered with reluctance she could not account for. So strong were her objections, that she heard with delight the master say he had no contiguous chambers, and that we must put up with one large double-bedded room, or chambers he was pleased to describe as very nearly adjoining, but which on examination turned out to be beyond call. It has often since occurred to me that it was intended purposely to separate us—or why allow us nearly to leave the premises before the gallery chambers were pointed out, which were really unobjectionable! This, I am sorry to say, forms a sort of connecting link between mine host and the designs of the night. The storm was taken advantage of; and it was intended, under cover of the noise of the raging elements, to force the doors and complete the mischief;—but this very storm fortunately constituted our security; for so greatly had it alarmed my sister, she had not yet been able to sleep when the experiments commenced, and she detected the lights. The roaring of the winds would most certainly forbid any chance of hearing my sister's call for assistance, so that it was utterly unknown without that we were in a communication within. The storm, then, called in as an auxiliary, became a tower of strength for our safety.

FROM DIALOGUES OF THE DECK IN THE METROPOLITAN.

MARCH-OF-MIND.

* * * 'But come, come,' interposed the original mover of the original question—'come, I say—I say, we've taken a precious, precious wide yaw from our course. What's the meanin' on it?—I axes afore for that—I wants no more nor the real, reglar-built meanin' o' the matter—*March o' Mind!*; *March o' Mind!*—I'm blest if it isn't a thoro'-bred pauler; isn't it, Joe?' 'Why at first sight Jim, at first sight,' returned the interrogated tar, assuming all the air and consequence of oracular authority—'at first sight, 'twould sartainly seem as much; but I thinks I can clear the kile—I thinks I has it. You see, Jim, this here *March-o'-Mind*—(that's the word isn't it?) well, this here *March o' Mind* means, you see; yes, it *must*, means, you see, when a chap—a chap's a *mind to march*, he may! * * * 'But where's the man as can tell me—tell me, the real meanin' o' this mysty matter?' 'Why here he is,' cried an elderly tar, pointing to a fellow fore-castle man who had just taken up a close order station in the centre of the seated circle. 'Here's the man as 'ill soon come to the marrow o' the matter. I say Ned, as knows summit o' summit, and knows what's what, better nor most, in course you can take the thund'ring tho'ropout out o' this precious mess. Here's Jim here, jamm'd like Jackson, hard up in a clinch, an' can never get no one to clear the kile, or give him the real dical meanin' of this here new lanch'd lubberly phrase, as seems to puzzle us more afloat nor even the long headed fellows ashore.' 'What! ye means the *March-o-Mind*.' 'That's you Ned—you has it; that's the ticket bo.' 'Then I can tell you, Tom,' returned the now welcome interpreter to the puzzled party—'I can tell ye, it means no more nor *this*—Prate!—prate!—prate!—gab!—gab!—gab!—Pretendin' to know, and do every thing better than the *best o' your betters*, a likin' to lay down the law, to deal in *lip*, to use long-winded words 'thout knowin' a word o' their meanin', to pour

over newspapers, as far as't *mean* more mischief nor type would tell, to prate in a pot-house, to talk large and larn'd over your pipe and likor, to growl like a landsman, an' rig like a lubber, to sham a small smat-terin' of every trade, and to never know *nothin' o' your own*.—An' d— it, to clinch the whole, to end your days, and die like a dog in a ditch, for darin', darin' to dabble out o' your depth.' 'Hurrah! well done, Ned! I know'd you was the fellor as 'ould soon give us the English o' the matter.' 'Ay, ay, Tom; but Ned has given us more nor *one* meanin', you know, I wants the *one* real, reglar-built meanin' of 'he matter; for, and I said afore, it must be a double deceiver, as means more nor the *one* identical thing.' 'Well, Jim,' returned the interpreter, 'you has your choice; take any one o' the few I gave ye. I've only given you the standin' part of a few o' the meanins as stand for the phrase.—But, I can tell ye *this*, there's more mischief in the *thing* nor people thinks.' 'Well, isn't that exactly, *exactly* what I says?' 'To be sure, Jim, to be sure it is. Why, I was lately paid off from a ship-sloop-o'-war (I'll keep her name to myself, for I doesn't like to disgrace a craft as deserves the name of a clipper;) but I was lately paid off from a craft, as was all as one as a floatin' parliment-house. There never was gather'd together such a beggarly bunch of pratin' polytishins. There was the captain of the maintop, as took in the *'Times'* as reglar, ay, as he took his daily allowance.—Let the ship go where she would, the newspaper reg'larly followed the fellor. 'Stead of lookin' after his top, an' the likes o' that, he was always skulkin' below, pourin' over papers, or, as was mostly his favourite fashun, readin' out loud to a large lazy set of haddock-mouth'd listners, the whole o' the parliment-palaver as was cramm'd chock o' block in every colum o' the *'Times*.—In as many minutes, he'd make as many remarks as 'ould fill a Liner's log for a month. There he'd lay down the law, say, if he was prime minister, *he'd do this*, that the First Lord o' the Admirallity ought to do *that*; if he was First Lord, *he'd know well* what to do—' 'Well,' interrupted the long fore-castle man, 'I only wishes I was the First Lord, I knows well what I'd do.' 'What?' asked an inquisitive topman. 'What? why, take care o' myself for *life*, make myself *cook o' the Callydony*.' 'Well, you might do worse than that.—But, bless your heart,' continued *'knowing Ned'*, (for here the cognomen cannot be considered a *'breach of privilege'*); 'but, bless your heart, this *March-o'-Mind* was reg'larly playin' the devil afloat.—Fellors 'oud cut such capers, thoughts comed into their heads as never was know'd afore.—Them as was spliced, reg'larly *twice* a week, (days we didn't wash below,) must send off to their lovin' ribs long lubberly letters, criss'd and cross'd fore-an'-aft, and abtath-ships, for all the world like the square meshes of a splinter nettin'; an' if they didn't reg'larly receive by return of post, for they all had their stated days, an' looked for letters from the cryin' craft, as reg'larly as they did for pipin' to dinner; you'd see the poor devils the whole day long pinin' below, and doin' far worse, neglectin' their duty on deck. But *that* wasn't all—I remembers one day fittin' out in Hamoze, the chief boson's mate, as one 'oud suppose, ought to know more of the sarvus.—Well! this chap, as was long in the doctor's list, comes aft to the first-lieutenant, and clappin' on a mug o' mis'ry, axes for *two days' liberty* ashore.—'Ashore!' says the first-lieutenant, thinkin' the man was mad, and well he might, a man in the doctor's list ax for liberty ashore, why, my man,' says the first-lieutenant, 'this is comin' it *strong* indeed! 'I thought,' says the boson's mate; 'I thought, Sir,' says he, 'you didn't *divine* my drift!' 'Oh! I axes your pardon,' says the first-lieutenant, opening a frolicsome fire on the fellow, 'I axes your pardon, pray explain if you please.' 'Well, Sir,' says Pipes, as stiff as a sduky soger; 'it seems Sir, said he; 'that's, it seems so to me, when a man's unwell, it becomes,' says he, 'becomes no more nor his duty to recover his health as fast as he can, the sarvus,' says he, 'the sarvus demand it. So, Sir,' says Pipes, 'as I'm terribly troubled with the roomatis, an', as I well knows from 'sperienc', there's never no other way to cure me, I want's,' says he, 'with your permission, two days' liberty ashore to take, take a dozen or two *warm-baths*.' I'm blest if the first-lieutenant didn't nearly drop down on he deck in a fit a laughin'. Well, you must know, his same captain o' the main-top, this same identical chap as took in the *'Times*, was one of your fiddleaddle fancy-men wi' the women, a terrible chap for sayin' a-sof things, an' dealin' in that delicate lip, as you know, as most ladies like. Well, I 'members one time, a-layin' in K—e harbour, when two or three o' the petty officers' wives as went to sea in the ship were all ashore but the *one*, an' she was the *she-gunnermate*, well, this here Vaux, (for that was the fellow's name, and moreover, he used to boast and brag a *he* was the *first o' the family*), well, this here Vau took a terrible likin' to this she-gunner's-mate, anshe, sartainly, a liken' for he. She used to say 'he said such things;