

LITERATURE, &c.

FROM THE UNITED SERVICE JOURNAL.
THE DEATH.

How long I lay insensible, I, of course know not; suffice it to say, that on opening my eyes I was agreeably surprised to find myself in the centre of a furze-bush; and, at the same time so overcome with sleep, that, on being assured of my situation, I immediately closed them again, with the intention of taking a nap. Fortunately, however, I had but very recently read an account of the Russian campaign written by a French officer; and to that beautiful work I may say I am indebted for my life;—for his description of the drowsiness that seized the soldiers, and which, if indulged, was always followed by death, immediately recurred to me; and I saw, as if in a dream, poor Napoleon's pride lying frozen around me, and, at the same time, if I ever heard anything in my life, a small silvery sounding voice whispered in my ears,—“If you sleep you wake no more!” This aroused me from my lethargy, and awoke me to a sense of my real situation: but the spirit alone was awake—my body was almost as lifeless as if in the grave! No person but he who may have experienced the effects of the night mare, to which I have already alluded—can form any idea of my feelings at that moment. I wished to rise—indeed my very existence depended on my doing so; but I felt as if an iceberg lay on my bosom, and my limbs appeared like blocks of marble of such gigantic dimensions, that on my first getting my hands together, every finger seemed of the size of a *setting fid*! The ground beneath me fortunately had a rapid descent from the sea (which had occasioned my heavy fall, and led me to believe I was falling down the cliff,) and with some struggling, I worked myself out of the furze-bush, and rolled downwards some distance. This, in some degree, broke the spell that appeared to bind me to the spot—and taking the precaution to keep my head in shore, I kept tumbling about till the blood began to circulate; and shortly after, I began to feel that acute pain, that none but persons who have been frost-bitten can form any idea of. At length, I also felt the prickles of the furze-bush, with which I was covered all over like a porcupine; and I can with truth say, that that moment was one of the happiest of my life!

Having gained some little command over my benumbed limbs I stripped off my ‘Flashings,’ and left them *and sorrow hanging on a furze-bush together*; and thus mentally and physically lightened, and directing my course inland, I went staggering along like a drunken man, till I got into a ploughed field, which, after a little consideration, as I could see no signs of a house, I proceeded to skirt, expecting to find a pathway on one side of it; and I had not gone very far, before the marks of cart wheels assured me I had hit on the very best way for falling in with a habitation. Resolved to follow the wheel-ruts, led where they would, I went, sometimes on my feet, and sometimes on my knees, through two or three fields, and got as many heavy falls over the gates that separated them. At length, I caught sight of a barn before me, and shortly after found myself close to a good warm dung-hill; while the smell of cows assured me a cow-house was not far distant. The sight of a *gallooner* could not have given me greater pleasure!—and the warmth and the warm smell were delightful! For a moment I stood doubtful which of the two snug berths I should occupy; but the thoughts of the unfortunate fellow behind me spurred me forward, and I shortly afterwards found myself at the foot of a wall in the rear of a house. There I called lustily some short time, but getting no answer I scrambled round to the front, where I found a high wooden gate, railed on the upper part, which separated me from a very respectable-looking house a few yards distant, and finding the gate secured, I clung to the rails, and again commenced calling for assistance as loud as I was able. ‘My stars!’—thought I—‘*how people on shore do sleep!*’

I called till I could hardly call any longer; and I was just thinking of taking a berth till daylight on the dung-hill, or in the cow-house if I could get into it, when one of the upper lattices slowly opened, and I heard the gruff interrogatories—‘Who the devil’s that?—what the devil do you want?’ Aware that the duty I had been employed on was not very popular alongshore, and not knowing my man, I thought it might not be exactly prudent to answer the first of the two; so merely said in reply, in as doleful a strain as possible—(and indeed there was little occasion to sham,) ‘That I was a poor cast-away seaman, and wanted shelter for the night.’ ‘Cast away, eh! where were you wrecked?’ said he in a milder tone. ‘Under the cliffs, in the direction of the barn.’ ‘Did you get up there?’—‘Yes.’ ‘Ha, ha, young fellow, that story would do,—a cat could not get up there! Go out of that, or I’ll soon settle you;’—and here my interrogator chuckled, at the ingenious manner in which he thought he had caught me tripping. In short, to top all my misfortunes, I was now taken for a thief!!!

Thrown flat aback by the suspicions of the good gentleman at the casement, and consoling myself with the idea, that they would never have entered his head, could he but have seen my pretty, honest countenance, I remained for some time, anxiously expecting to be warmed with a dose of small shot; till the lattice—that appeared hinged on my heart—grated on its hinges in the act of being closed; when with chattering teeth, I again struck up on a mighty low key:—‘I assure you Sir, I am not a thief;’—(natives of every country in Europe, with brother Jonathan at their head, might here have said,—‘twang;’ for I had made a great deal of prize-money in my time)—‘Indeed, indeed, I’m not a thief! but if you wont let me in, will you have the goodness to tell me where I can procure shelter?’—‘Go to Kingsware.’ ‘How far off is it?’—

‘A mile and a half.’ He might as well have said—go to New South Wales!—‘I cannot walk twenty yards farther; so if you wont give me shelter, you will find my corpse at your gate in the morning!’ This pathetic wind-up had no sooner escaped my lips, than I heard a feminine voice say—‘My dear, do go down and see who it is!’ Never before or since did lovely woman’s voice sound sweeter to my ears!—Heavens! could I have only flown through the casement, and had my ability only seconded my inclination, what a squeeze I would have given the fair speaker!—the pressure of a jack-in-the-box would have been child’s play compared to it! Bless the pretty creatures! I have liked to hear them talk ever since; and love them *all* so much in consequence, that I have never been able to love *one* in particular!

This humane expression was immediately followed by—‘Well, I will come down and see who you are.’ The lattice then closed. I will not compare my situation just then to that of a lover watching his sweetheart’s window, because I never tried the experiment, having always found it the handiest way to get in at the door;—but certainly, I think Doctor Herschel never watched the growth of a cauliflower in the moon with greater solicitude, through his great, long telescope, than I watched the lately closed lattice through the rails of the gate. In a short time, repeated flashes accompanied by as many click-clicks, told me there was a desperate squabble between the flint and steel; and I sympathized with the tinder, for every spark appeared to warm me. Presently, I saw a pale, flickering light for a few seconds, and again all was darkness: the blower appeared flurried or asthmatic,—I wished him in better wind with all my heart! Again and again, did I observe the same phenomenon.—‘Confound the match!’ said I to myself—‘there’s no brimstone on it;’ and I blew involuntarily, as if the tinder-box had been under my nose. Shortly after, however, a bright steady light assured me all was right;—it vanished—again appeared through a lower lattice—bolts grated—the door opened—and I saw to my great delight, a respectable-looking middle-aged gentleman, in his shirt and ‘inexpressibles.’—Never saw a nicer-looking man in my life, nor one whose appearance gave me one-thousandth part the satisfaction.

Holding the light above him, to prevent its glare from dazzling his eyes, he at first cautiously poked his head out, and at the same time looked warily around, as if he expected to have seen all the robbers in the United Kingdom congregated around his dwelling; when observing nothing to excite suspicion, he advanced slowly towards the gate, and thrusting his arm through the rails, felt my wet shirt, and at the same time looked me anxiously in the face. Now, whether my pretty, honest countenance, as aforesaid, or my wet shirt worked the charm, I know not, but certain I am that suspicion thawed in an instant, and a look of the warmest benevolence beamed in its place, while, with the exclamation, ‘Well, dang it, poore fellow, you are in a bad way zure enough,’ the gate flew open. This movement, however, nearly upset everything for a second or two—at any rate it nearly upset me, who had been hanging on it for so long—for the good gentleman, seeing me as he thought, spring forward, and thinking, I suppose, that I wished to make a *grab* at him, very naturally sprang back in the opposite direction, and appeared very much inclined to try the weight of the candlestick on my *braincase*. Seeing, therefore, on my recovering myself, that he was again rather *dubbersome* (as Jack would say) of his visiter, I assured him the accident proceeded from weakness alone, and begged him not to be alarmed; and he perceiving the truth of the assertion, with ‘O dang it, I bea’t at all afraid of you young fellow,’ kindly gave me his arm, and we toddled up to the house as cozily together as if we had sailed round the world in company, and I shortly found myself on the *right side* of the threshold.

Having effected a ‘lodgment,’ (as I believe our friends in the army call it,) my first thoughts were about the poor fellow on the rock. I accordingly immediately made known who I was, and related every thing that had taken place, and requested that men might be sent to remain on the cliffs with lights during the remainder of the night; for, although I was well aware that they could render him no assistance, yet I thought the bare sight of the lights, and the noise of their shouts, would cheer up his spirits, and enable him to hold out till daylight. My request was instantly complied with; and from the kind attention of all around me, I found I had lost nothing by the communication, for everything the house afforded was eagerly pressed on me, and could I have eaten gold, I feel assured I should have been treated with a dish of seven-shilling pieces at least, notwithstanding the bad state of the markets.

The good lady, whom I may say was the first cause of my admittance, immediately proceeded to brew her hyson and gunpowder, while the plump, kind-hearted maid piled such a heap of faggots on the fire, that in a few minutes the house was in a blaze, and a looker-on would have been led to believe it was insured above its value, and that she wished to make a bonfire of it for the amusement of the underwriters. The kind owner of the mansion was as busy as the rest, for he shortly appeared with dry clothes and the brandy bottle; the latter received strong proofs of affection, and I also shipped a dry shirt and a shooting-jacket, after I had disposed of my satisfaction of some of the bristles with which I had been accommodated by the furze-bush; but, as my worthy friend had nothing but inexpressibles, an article of rigging which I had never sported in my life, and which I feared would disable me from reaching the vessel after daylight, I preferred drying my trousers by the fire, before which I consequently sat, smoking like a lime-kiln.

As soon as I had sufficiently recovered the use of my fingers to enable me to write, I despatched a note to the commanding-officer of the vessel, acquainting him with the accident, and

directing him to hoist the cutter out, and send her alongshore for the relief of the man; and having done all in my power, I then, and not till then, (barring the bandy, however,) quietly enjoyed all the good things before me, to the infinite delight of my kind host and hostess. May they meet their reward, and be living to read this.

The people sent to the cliffs continued shouting and showing lights during the remainder of the night; but, owing to the height and steepness of the land, they were neither seen nor heard, as we afterwards discovered. At daylight, however, they saw a boat pulling to the westward, which, on being waved into an adjoining cove, proved to be the same one we had spoken in Torbay during the night. The crew, being informed of what had taken place, continued pulling as close to the land as prudence would admit, and at the same time narrowly watched the foot of the cliff, but had not proceeded far before they discovered something on a rock that looked like a bundle, and which, on nearing, they found to be my unfortunate late companion. He was almost lifeless, and the sea was too heavy to allow of their landing. They had no alternative, therefore, but to throw him a rope, with a long bowline knot at the end of it, which he had barely sufficient strength to put under his arms, and he was then hauled into the sea, and afterwards into the boat. On being taken on board he was confined to his hammock many days, and it was three weeks before he resumed duty. Had I remained with him, neither of us, in all human probability, would have been found alive.

I have already said that not a splinter of the boat was ever picked up that I know of; some of the gear, however, was; for a day or two after, the crew of a Torbay boat were rather surprised at seeing a spar floating *an end* in the water near them. On sending their punt to pick it up, it was discovered to be a boat’s mast, with a corpse hanging to the end of it by one hand firmly clenched round the tie. The body was buried in Brixham churchyard.

Another remarkable circumstance was, that of the other five hands who were drowned, two were Maltese, who swam like fishes; to which I may add that report said the poor marine had been upset but a little time before, and had been the only survivor of eleven hands. Surely he was our Jonah.

Having thus feebly related the way in which, in the short space of less than three hours, I escaped drowning twice, breaking my neck twice, being frozen to death once—(I’ll say nothing about guns or candlesticks)—I have only to add, that the rascally rock that caused our misfortune (and which, as if ashamed to show its ugly face, only shoved its peak above the surface at dead low water, and was consequently almost unknown, even to the fishermen,) has since been called—’s rock, as I was informed some years after, when I went into Dartmouth harbour in a ‘copper-bottomed Serpent’—(she deserved the name for more reasons than one)—that I then commanded. I was also informed, at the same time, that pic nic parties visited the cliff in the summer, and that the part I scaled went by the name of—’s pass; and both it and the rock will, in all probability, continue to bear the same when the melancholy accident that occasioned their being so called shall have been forgotten, and when the writer of this lies low in the grave. In other words, when the aame, as far as I am concerned, shall no longer pass current at the Pay-office for twenty-three pounds at the end of a *long* quarter, and when it shall consequently have disappeared from Mr. Murray’s list of ‘Luffo,’ which it may yet grace twenty years hence, if I am neither ‘burked’ nor ‘cholera-morbused’ before; for, notwithstanding I have served His Majesty (good luck to him!) and those of Glorious memory who rode at his present moorings before him, almost without intermission ever since I parted company with my grandmamma, and have ever been ready for anything from manslaughter to tub and chaw-hunter, I begin strongly to suspect that—thanks to Waterloo, (I can’t bear the very sight of the nasty medals—what a number of good spoons are spoilt!)—it will never shine on any other

‘Till He who all commands
Shall give, to call life’s crew together,
The word to pipe all hands.’

INFLUENCE OF MEN OF GENIUS.

Some one has desired me to describe the influence which men of genius have in this land: that can be done in a word—they have none. The editors of two or three leading newspapers have more to say with the country and government than all the bards who have breathed for these fifty years. The influence of genius is recorded in its fortunes. Chatterton drank poison, for he could not find bread; Johnson was refused the means of improving his health abroad; Burns at his death, had neither bread in his house, nor a penny in his pocket; Crabbe died a poor parson—preferment did not find him out; Scott crushed himself in attempting independence and his country refuses to save his books from the auctioneer; Byron was exiled, and died all but cursing the land his genius adorns; Coleridge has been deprived of his small pension; Wordsworth lives by distributing stamps; Southey has a pint of thin wine a-day from the King; Moore has found verse, like virtue, is its own reward; Hogg picks a mutton bone on Yarrow; and Wilson lives by moral philosophy. I bid the subject farewell.—*Allan Cunningham in the Athenæum.*

PUNS.—Burns disliked puns, and was seldom civil to those who uttered them.—‘After all, a pun is an innocent thing,’ said one of his companions.—‘Innocent?’ said Burns; ‘no, sir; it is committing a deed without a name’ with the language.’