

RESPECTABILITY.

Respectability! Mysterious word? Who will presume to say, authoritatively, what thou art? Where is the lexicographer gifted with powers to define thee accurately, satisfactorily, so that the general voice shall cry aloud, 'That is the meaning of the word,' and every individual whisper to his neighbour, 'That was my meaning.' As for the explanations of the existing race of dictionaries, they are mere evasions of the question. Like light and life, thou art every where; or, at the least, wherever civilization is there art thou to be found, despotically ruling the minds of men of every grade and station, from the doctor to the dustman, from the lawyer to the labourer. Thou hast more distant relations than a Scotchman likely to do well in the world, even though his name be Campbell. And it is curious to mark the different ways in which thy multitudinous kith and kin infer a connexion. Some are respectable by descent, some by dress, some by the situation of the dwellings in which they have temporarily located themselves. A man in very low circumstances, if he has no better claim is consanguineous on the strength of a hat with a brim, or a stocking without a hole,—two precious items in the poor man's eye; the spruce mechanic's dapper coat, or his wife's silk gown, leave no doubt, in his own eyes at least, how closely he is allied; the small tradesman's snug house, tiny flower-spot before the door, and neat green railings distinctly mark him for thine own. Some men neglect their personal appearance, and concentrate their claims to respectability in a brass knocker, a plate with their name engraved thereon, Venetian blinds, or any other pretty additament to their domiciles; others are respectable by virtue of their connexions; others are respectable by virtue boxes at the theatre; others by a pew next the parson at church; others by the people they visit; others by having every thing in season. Yet, difficult as it is for the mind of man to comprehend all these things, and to decide properly and justly, the women, taking advantage of their superior powers of penetration and delicacy of discrimination, divide and subdivide respectability as easily as quicksilver. They have their 'respectable sort of people, very respectable, highly respectable, extremely respectable, most respectable,' which makes the thing about as difficult to understand or explain as political economy or electro-magnetism. About the boldest and most decided opinion concerning this particle of the English language that I am acquainted with, was that given by a witness in a swindling transaction, who, on being asked by the judge his reason for affirming that the defendant was a respectable man, replied, 'that he kept a gig.'—*Crayon Sketches.*

FROM TRADITIONAL STORIES OF OLD FAMILIES.

UNEXPECTED VENGEANCE.

The castle of Corgarff, in Scotland, containing 27 persons, among whom were the wife and children of Alexander Forbes, having been burnt by Sir Adam Gordon in 1551:

Subsequent to the tragical affair at Corgarff, a meeting for reconciliation took place between a select number of the heads of the two houses, in the hall of an old castle in these parts, probably Drimminor.

After much argument, the difference being at length made up, and a reconciliation effected, both parties sat down to a feast in the hall, provided by the Forbes's chief. The eating was ended, and the parties were at their drink—the clansmen being of equal numbers, and so mixed, as had been arranged, that every Forbes had a Gordon seated at his right hand.

'Now,' said Gordon of Huntly to his neighbour chief, 'as this business has been so satisfactorily settled, tell me if it had not been so, what it was your attention to have done.'

'There would have been bloody work—bloody work,' said Lord Forbes—and we would have had the best of it. I will tell you: see, we are mixed one and one, Forbeses and Gordons. I had only to give a sign by the stroking down of my beard, thus, and every Forbes was to have drawn the skein from under his left arm, and stabbed to the heart his right hand man; and as he spoke, he suited the sign to the word, and stroked down his flowing beard.

'God Almighty!' exclaimed Huntly, 'what is this?'—for in a moment a score of skeins were out, and flashing in the light of the pine torches held behind the guests. In another moment they were buried in as many hearts; for the Forbeses, whose eyes constantly watched their chief, mistaking this involuntary motion in the telling of his story for the agreed sign of death, struck their weapons into the bodies of the unsuspecting Gordons.

'The chiefs looked at each other in silent consternation. At length Forbes said, 'this is a sad tragedy we little expected—but what is done cannot be undone, and the blood that now flows on the floor of Drimminor will just help to slacken the auld fire of Corgarff.'

LOVE OF FLOWERS.—Byron according to Lady Blessington, whose sketches of the noble bard are now in a complete shape) was peculiarly fond of flowers, and generally bought a large bouquet every day of a gardener whose grounds he and her ladyship passed at Genoa. He told me, says her ladyship, that he liked to have them in his room, though they excited melan-

choly feelings, by reminding him to the evanescence of all that is beautiful, but that the melancholy was of a softer and milder character than his general feelings.

PHILOSOPHY OF LAUGHTER.—A hearty laugh occasionally is an act of wisdom; it shakes the cobwebs out of a man's brains, and the hypochondria from his ribs, far more effectually than either champagne or blue bills.

FIELD FLOWERS.

YE field flowers! the gardens eclipse you, 'tis true,
Yet, wildings of nature, I doat upon you,
For ye waft me to summers of old,
When the earth teem'd around me fairy delight,
And when daisies and buttercups gladden'd my sight,
Likes treasures of silver and gold.

I love you for lulling me back into dreams
Of the blue highland mountains and echoing streams,
And of broken glades breathing their balm,
While the deer was seen glancing in sunshine remote,
And the deep mellow crush of the wood-pigeon's note
Made music that sweeten'd the calm.

Not a pastoral song had a pleasanter tune
Than ye speak to my heart, little wildings of June;
Of old ruinous castles ye tell,
Where I thought it delightful your beauties to find,
When the magic of Nature first breathed on my mind,
And your blossoms were part of her spell.

Ev'n now what affections the violet awakes;
What lov'd little islands, twice seen in their lakes,
Can the wild water-lily restore;
What landscapes I read in the primrose's looks,
And what pictures of pebbled and minnowy brooks,
In the vetches that tangled their shore.

Earth's cultureless buds, to my heart you were dear,
Ere the fervour of passion, or ague of fear,
Had scath'd my existence's bloom;
Once I welcome you more in life's passionless stage,
With the visions of youth to revisit my age,
And I wish you to grow on my tomb.

THOMAS CAMPBELL.

A PASSAGE IN THE HISTORY OF SOUTH AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE.

THE history of the war of independence in the western states of South America is interspersed with numerous instances of remarkable adventure. Desultory in its nature, and unconnected in its details, that war was peculiarly fitted to call into activity the latent energies of those who participated in its perils; and the spirit of bold enterprise to which it gave rise was shared no less by those who fared on the sea, than by the scattered guerilla parties on the continent. The banner of freedom, had hardly been raised on the towers of Valparaiso, when numerous bands of hardy seamen fitted out their barks for predatory adventure; and privateers, in particular, received both encouragement and assistance from the insurgent government, whose policy it was to weaken, by every possible means the maritime power of the mother country. Foreigners as well as Americans, eagerly embarked in the business of legalised plunder, not from any principle of patriotism, it is obvious, but upon mere mercenary speculation. British sailors, more than those of any other country, were enamoured of the exploits which such a field of enterprise presented for their achievement and many of them left their peaceful London and Liverpool traders, to share, if not in the honors, at least in the anticipated profit and pleasure of a course, perhaps a life, of perpetual hostility.

Previous to the arrival of Lord Cochran's fleet on the coast of Chili, privateering was nearly at its height in the South American Seas, and it is to that period, namely, to 1818, that the following isolated passage of history belongs.

Soon after Valparaiso had fallen into the hands of the revolutionary forces, a few British seamen resolved to set up as privateers on the Chilean and Peruvian coasts. With this view, having in the first instance, procured the Governor's license, they purchased an old West-Indian druggier-boat, as sorry a looking craft as ever ventured a league to sea, but the small stock of dollars which they had succeeded in scraping together, did not enable them to purchase one better fitted for their purpose. Having taken a few additional hands into partnership, they soon put a deck upon her, and otherwise rigged her out in pretty tolerable style. They next collected a quantity of old arms, consisting of muskets, pistols, cutlasses, boarding pikes, and two small swivels, which they mounted on the boat's timber heads; but as they were to trust chiefly to boarding, they took on board no cannon—their bark, indeed, was, from its diminutive size, utterly unfit for this grand instrument of war. Altogether, their outfit and the object of it, seemed somewhat of a burlesque upon ordinary privateering; but they were good-humoured fellows, fond of a joke, and their own masters, so they did not mind the mirth and harmless ridicule which their armament excited.

Thus equipped, and having stowed on board a few bales of dry jerk beef, with some other necessary articles of provision, they put to sea, determined to make the most of every thing they could meet with. The crew consisted of sixteen hands, commanded by one Mackay, a Scotsman, who had a short time before, resigned the office of Stewart in a South-sea whaler, and who had originally projected this mad-like scheme. They

had only one course to follow; for the trade wind which blows for a considerable part of the year constantly from the South, carried them briskly up the wide coast of Peru. On their voyage, which was extended to a considerable distance beyond Lima, they had not the good fortune to fall in with a single legitimate prize; but running short of provisions, they were soon forced to put under contribution such trading vessels and boats as they happened to fall in with. Supporting themselves entirely by compulsory levies, it was not long before they lost all proper sense of a distinction between plundering and privateering; but the plea of necessity was always at hand to satisfy their not over-scrupulous consciences, that in employing such means to supply their wants, they did nothing morally wrong—or at least that, circumstanced as they were, their doings amounted, at the utmost, to justifiable marauding. Their acts of depredation became so frequent, however, and in some instances of so aggravated a character, that they soon excited alarm throughout the whole coast. Even at Lima they were heard of. At one period, indeed, it was seriously intended by the authorities there, to despatch a small force to consign the druggier and her pilfering crew to the bottom of the ocean; but they were saved the trouble of carrying their threat into execution. The offenders soon brought on their own apparent ruin; for, dreaded by friends no less than by foes, they were in a few weeks shunned and run from by every bark that hove in sight. Smugglers, as well as people of their own calling, refused not only to relieve their wants, but to hold any intercourse with them; and they were at the same time denied all communication with the peaceable citizens on shore. Thus situated, both their provisions and water were speedily exhausted, and, to add to their distress, their little vessel became leaky to such a degree that she was almost wholly unfit for sea, while they were themselves worn out with the constant exertion which was necessary to keep her afloat.

They were, therefore, compelled to turn towards Valparaiso; but, under the difficulties they had to encounter, the attempt to reach that port was almost a hopeless one. The wind blew right a head, while they had neither provisions, nor were they in a situation in other respects, to venture upwards of a hundred miles from land, in order to fall under the north trade wind. In these painful circumstances, and not daring to touch at any of the intermediate ports, there was no alternative but to sweep back to Valparaiso. They were not without some apprehension too, that Spanish frigates might be cruising on the coast, into whose hands they knew it would be certain destruction to fall. No wonder, therefore, that their spirits flagged a little, and that they now crept along the coast with a degree of caution that contrasted strikingly with their former reckless disregard of all danger. It was only during the nights indeed, that they coasted along; during the day they skulked in close to the land, concealing themselves in unfrequented creeks and among the rocks, where they employed themselves in fishing, now the only means by which they obtained a subsistence.

While thus fighting their way against fortune and the winds, they chanced to fall in with an Indian Fisherman, whom they made prisoner, with the view of procuring from him information respecting the state of the coast; and they had an eye also to his fishing apparatus, as well as to the benefit of his superior skill in the art of using it, for by this time they were sorely pressed by the common wants of our nature. By the Indian they were informed that the coast was clear of King's ships—that an armed merchantman from Old Spain had arrived at Arica—a fortified town still in the hands of the royalists—a few days before, and that she was lying under the protection of the forts, ready to discharge a valuable cargo. Their disappointment at having missed the opportunity of falling in with so rich a prize, in consequence of useless, and in other respects, hurtful delays, was extreme, for they entertained no doubt whatever, that, had they been down in time, as they would have been but for these delays, the Minerva would have been the reward of all their privations. Disappointment is not a feeling that arises in the mind, and then instantaneously passes away; it recurs again and again, to vex the spirit, and to rouse its energies to redeem the mistaken or neglected step by which it had been troubled. With the crew of the druggier boat it operated with instantaneous effect, and they were at the same time stimulated, by the severe pressure of existing necessities, to form the desperate resolution of attempting the capture of the Minerva. But then on farther interrogation, the Indian added, that besides being armed with five and twenty guns, and lying, as the vessel did, within musket shot of a strong battery, she had received on board 250 Spanish soldiers, for the especial purpose of protecting her from any piratical or predal attack. These were difficulties which, to the ordinary run of mortals, would have been considered as absolutely insurmountable; but, by the handful of famishing tars, they were viewed in no such light. The crew of the Minerva did not enter into their calculation at all; for, once on board, with cutlass in hand, they would speedily be overcome; and the fort, though strong enough to blow them out of water in five minutes, would not surely (so they reasoned among themselves) be so regardless of Spanish life and Spanish property, as to sink the Minerva in order to destroy a few impertinent marauders already on board of her. The formidable guard of soldiers could not however, be so conveniently disposed of. To attempt a fair stand up fight with a force numerically so far superior, would be to count certain destruction. It therefore appeared to them that the only means by which the difficulty might, by possibility, be obviated, was to board the vessel by surprise at midnight, and to secure her hatches—a plan sufficiently simple in itself, and effectual too, provided it could be promptly accomplished. A council of war, consisting of all hands, having been held, the scheme underwent solemn, but by no means, deliberate discussion, and was pronounced quite practicable. This