

## Literature, &amp;c.

## THE SAILORS RETURN;

OR, THE EVILS OF IMPRESSMENT.

By Hawser Martingale.

KATHERINE WILSON, was fondly attached to her husband. His handsome features, his graceful form, and frank and easy manners, with the air of interest which in the eyes of a youthful maiden is always attached to the gallant spirits who voluntarily brave perils at sea, and by land, had first won her heart—while his affectionate disposition, his generous nature, and his sterling integrity, increased her affection and secured her respect. He was the beau ideal of human perfection; and the regret the deep seated sorrow which the young wife experienced when her truant husband parted from her, almost in the honey moon, to encounter dangers on the mighty deep, may be more easily imagined than described. But there are few ills of life for which time does not bring a panacea—and although when the stage drove off, carrying with it the dearest friend which she had on earth, she was overwhelmed with grief and refused all consolation, in a few days the natural buoyancy of her spirits prevailed, and she listened to the whisperings of hope, and gazed fondly on the images of joy to which the enchantments pointed in the distance. Her thoughts, however, sleeping or walking, centred on her husband, and although she attended to her domestic duties with unremitting assiduity, and lost no opportunity of administering to the happiness of her parents who loved her as fondly as ever parents loved a child, she was constantly looking forward to the return of her husband as to the brightest hour of her existence.

The Rabican was expected to be absent from eight to twelve months, according to circumstances; and the "Marine Lists" in the newspapers were scanned with great care by Katherine, in the expectation that they would furnish her with occasional intelligence of the progress and safety of the ship, in whose fortunes she now took so deep an interest.—But the Rabican on her outward passage was not spoken by any homeward bound vessel, much to Kate's vexation and disappointment. In a few months she began to expect letters from her husband, but no letters came. At length one day, to her great joy, while examining the shipping department of the Boston newspapers, she saw the arrival of the Rabican at Bahia, in a passage of sixty days from Boston. Now she should certainly receive letters from Jack Wilson. Day after day she visited the post office on the arrival of the mail, but returned slowly to her home sad and disappointed. She consoled herself with the idea that Jack had written, but that the letters had been miscarried.

Time passed away, and the return of the Rabican was daily expected. A year had effected an astonishing change in the condition and character of Katherine Clifford. From a lively, good humoured, laughing, hoydenish girl, she was transformed into a sedate matron—a wife, who has tasted the cup of matrimonial happiness, to have it dashed from her lips—a mother who gazed upon her new born with all a young mother's pride and tenderness. She regarded him as a new tie of affection, and eagerly looked forward to that blissful hour when she could present him to her husband.

The Rabican arrived in Boston. The news sent a thrill of joy through the frame of Katherine. Her husband had returned! She should soon be pressed to his heart! And she fondly hoped that they would never again be separated, except by death—for she secretly resolved to use all her influence with Jack to quit the Sea forever. While she was thus anticipating one of the richest enjoyments of which human nature is capable, seated in the front parlour of her father's house with her infant smiling in her lap, a letter from Captain Thompson was received, informing her that her husband had been impressed on board an English man of war! In a few days Captain Thompson himself, with a kindness of feeling, characteristic of the profession to which he belonged, hastened to the young wife and mother agreeable to Jack Wilson's request and communicated all the details of the barbarous transaction.

This was a dreadful blow to Katherine, and one for which she was entirely unprepared. She had often heard her husband speak of the horrors of impressment—and now that he was forcibly seized, and carried on board of an English frigate, bound for the distant East Indies whose unhealthy climate was proverbial, she felt notwithstanding the hopes held out to her in her husband's message, that he was lost to her forever.

Years passed away, and nothing was heard of Jack Wilson. An American vessel arrived at Boston from Bombay, and brought intelligence that the frigate Freebooter had lost more than half her crew by the cholera, which broke out on board. Katherine fully believed that if the life of her husband had been preserved, he would have returned to his home or have found some means of communicating to her the grateful intelligence. And she reluctantly acquiesced in the general belief that Jack Wilson had fallen a victim to a system of relentless tyranny, adverse to the prospects of civilization, laws of nations, and the laws of God. And deeply did she lament the loss of her husband, and bitterly did she rail against a government which could look quietly on, while its citizens were ruthlessly seized, when peaceably pursuing their avocations upon the high seas, and carried into slavery of the most cruel and degrading kind.

Katherine was still beautiful—and being regarded as a young and blooming widow, the heir expectant of a handsome property, it is not

surprising that eligible opportunities were offered her of again changing her condition in life but she could not banish from her mind the remembrance of her gallant sailor—and when she looked upon the countenance of her son, and saw there the living miniature of his father she would give free vent to her tears—and declared she would never wed again. Even the suit of Simon Elwell, whom she had always esteemed for his good qualities and who cherished the affections he had entertained for her before her marriage, was kindly but decidedly rejected. Indeed, notwithstanding the proverbial volatility and inconstancy of woman, it is highly probable that Katherine Wilson would never have married again, if her father had not been attacked with a severe and fatal illness which decided her destiny. On his death bed feeling the destitute condition of his daughter left upon the wide world without a protector, he besought her as his last request to give her hand to his friend Simon Elwell. It is a strange what a propensity for match making is often manifested by persons who are about quitting all the sorrows and pleasures of life—it is sometimes productive of good, but is often the cause of many affliction to the living.—In this case however, it seemed likely to conduce to the happiness of both parties. Simon loved Katherine with ardent affection—and Katherine, although love was out of the question, respected and esteemed him—and if see had been required to choose again a partner for life would probably have preferred him to any of her admirers. They were married in the chamber of the dying man, whose last moments were solaced with the reflection that he had secured the happiness of his child.

It was about sixteen years after the commencement of our narrative, that one cold morning in December, a poor, forlorn looking object, miserably clad in the garb of a mariner, was seen advancing with tottering steps, on the road leading from Boston toward Dover, N. H. This was Jack Wilson—but it did not resemble the Jack Wilson whom we have introduced to our readers. A long series of sufferings and exposures in a tropical climate, and hardships, had brought on premature old age. His figure was no longer erect and graceful, and youthful Apollo, but bent with infirmities—his complexion was no longer ruddy, the emblem of health, but bronzed by exposure to the sun, and sallow from disease—his features were no longer regular and handsome, exciting the envy of the one sex and the admiration of the other, but his visage was disfigured by a hideous scar, caused by a sabre cut which he had received on board the piratical proa on the coast of Sumatra—his hair was no longer dark and glossy, but grizzled and thin—and his countenance no longer beamed with good humor, as if he was at peace with himself and all the world, but was clouded with care and sorrow. His noble spirit had been broken with the lash—and a smile had been a stranger to his features for many a long day. After an absence of years, he was about returning to his native home. He knew not—but he was anxious to learn something of the fate of his mother and of the fair being to whom, in his youth, he had plighted his vows of affection at the holy altar. He had prepared for the worst—for hope had long been a stranger to his bosom.

The Freebooter, on board which Frigate Jack Wilson has been pressed, proceeded to the East Indies—and it was not long before he attempted to redeem the promise which he had made of escaping from his irldom. He was recaptured and cruelly flogged. He twice afterwards repeated the experiment, but was unsuccessful. When he was apprehended the last time, he was tried by a court martial, and sentenced to be flogged through the fleet! His defence, that of being an American citizen—although urged with much eloquence did not avail him—and he was compelled to submit to this dreadful punishment, which is a refinement on the cruelties inflicted by savages on their captured enemies. For his repeated attempts to escape, he was regarded with dislike by the officers, and was treated with much want on cruelty and oppression. When the Freebooter returned to England, Jack was transferred on board another ship—and in this manner had served on board several of his Britannic Majesty's vessels. He had been in several actions by sea and by land, and received a number of wounds—he had been several times attacked with diseases incident to a tropical climate, among others by cholera and yellow fever—he had been subjected to contumely and abuse, until his kind feelings and affections were paralyzed within his bosom. At length after having been severely punished for some neglect of duty he made his escape from a sloop of war, while she was lying at anchor in Batavia roads, swam a mile and a quarter to an American vessel, in spite of the sharks which escorted him on his way—was safely stowed away by the generous hearted crew, until the vessel sailed for New York—and at last returned to his native land, a decrepid, broken down man of war's man; destitute of money, and even of clothes, and so far as he knew without a single friend in the wide world. But although Jack Wilson was but the wreck of his former self, his heart was as noble and generous as ever.

Worn out with fatigue, Jack Wilson reached the confines of the little village in which he was born, about six in the evening. The wind blew furiously from the northeast, and a severe snow storm had commenced. Having passed many years in a warm climate, and being but thinly clad, the wintry wind chilled his frame—but he trudged slowly onward, anxious to hear tidings of those dear ones, whose memory he still cherished in the inmost recesses of his heart. When within a mile of the village, he was overtaken by a good looking youth who seeing from Jack's rig that he was a sailor, and that he was fatigued with travel, addressed

him in tones of kindness, and asked him how far he was travelling.

"To the next tavern," said Jack, "I have walked a long distance to day, and feel the need of rest and refreshment."

"From your dress, you must be a sailor," said the youth, "I always like sailors—for my father was a sailor—and if you will go home with me, I know my mother will be glad to see you and give you a supper and a bed."

"Where is your father," said Jack.

"Oh," answered the kind hearted lad, "he died in the East Indies, a good many years ago."

"What was his name?" asked Jack.

"Jack Wilson!" returned the youth. "He was pressed on board an English man of war and never returned."

Jack started as if a bullet had entered his breast. This then was his son—the son of his loved Katherine! He grasped the hand of the youth, and eagerly asked, "Your mother! your mother! What of her. She is still living, you say where?"

"My mother," answered the boy, surprised at the manner of his companion, "married again some years after my father's death—and now lives with her husband, Mr. Elwell, in yonder white house," pointing to a large and handsome mansion about a hundred rods further on their path.

"Your mother married again?" exclaimed our weather beaten mariner, "then," added he in a low tone, "all the hopes which began to gather around my heart are again blasted—and blasted forever."

This was an event which Jack Wilson had dreaded—for he could not persuade himself that Katherine, with her personal charms, and surrounded by powerful influences would remain for so many years, faithful to the memory of the husband of her youth, whom she had no longer reason to believe was in the land of the living.—And with magnanimity, characteristic of American tars, he had resolved, although with a painful effort to conceal his name, if he found his gloom anticipated realized, and resume the occupation to which so many years of his life had been devoted. He felt that his sands were nearly run—and if he could not add to the happiness of her he loved, resolved not to be the means of making her miserable. But his mother! He wished to know her fate.

"Did your father leave no parents?" asked he of his son.

"Only a mother," answered the youth, "and she died about six years ago, and lies buried in the churchyard by the side of her husband. I often visit her grave—for I dearly loved my grandmother."

"You are a noble boy," said Jack—"and your mother, you say, still feels an interest in those who follow a seafaring life?"

"Yes," replied the lad, "I have heard her say that a sailor in distress should always find a friend in her. You appear to be tired, the snow falls thicker and faster. It is yet some distance to the tavern—you cannot do better than go with me. My father and mother both will be glad to entertain you for the night."

Jack followed his son into the house of Simon Elwell.

There was an air of comfort and prosperity about the establishment, which is often witnessed among our New England farmers. A fire burnt briskly on the hearth—Simon Elwell, a good looking farmer, hardly past the meridian of life, was seated in the midst of his family, with two of his younger children on his knee—and Katherine, a comely, motherly looking dame, was briskly engaged in making preparations for the evening repast.

"Father," said the lad, as he ushered the woe worn stranger into the room, where the family were assembled, "on my way from Colonel Veasey's I overtook a seafaring man. He appears to have been unfortunate and is almost perished with the cold. I told him that you and mother would give him a kind reception—and he has very wisely accepted my invitation."

"You have acted quite right, my son," said Mr. Elwell. "My friend," continued he, addressing Jack. "I am glad to see you. Take a seat near the fire and make yourself comfortable."

"Yes," said Mrs. Elwell, "we are always glad to extend our hospitality to these adventurous men, who expose themselves to all the perils of the ocean, to furnish us with the necessities and luxuries of life. They meet with hardships enough on the seas, and have a claim upon the kindness of landmen, which should never be disallowed."

Supper was soon ready, and Jack took a seat at the table. Every thing was conducted with the utmost propriety. It was evident that Simon Elwell loved and respected his wife—and Katherine, united to a worthy man who could appreciate her excellence, and surrounded by a group of cherubs, could hardly be otherwise than happy.

"Oh," said Jack to himself, as he gazed once more on the handsome features of the woman to whom he had plighted his marriage vows, "what a treasure I have lost. I cannot bear to witness even her happiness with another."

He had eaten nothing since the day before—but he had no appetite. He felt sick at his heart and a tear started in his eye.

Katherine saw with the kindness of a woman's perception, the sorrow of her guest. She addressed him in the most kind and gentle manner, and endeavored to discover the cause of his distress. He listened to her a few moments with eager attention—for her voice and manner reminded him of the blissful days, which had long since passed away, never to return. But when she ceased and Simon Elwell spoke, the charm was dissolved.

Jack Wilson abruptly rose. "I have a long

journey said he, "to go—and I may not tarry by the way—I must bid you good night."

He seized Katherine by the hand. "Farewell," said he in a tremulous voice, "God will reward you for your kindness to a poor unfortunate sailor, who has not one friend on earth—may sorrow ever be a stranger to your bosom."

He could say no more. The tears coursed rapidly down his furrowed cheeks. He pressed the hand he held to his lips—seized his hat and rushed madly from the room. As he pursued his way towards the village meeting house, the steeples of which could be seen in the distance, he sobbed aloud.

Simon Elwell and his wife were astonished at the conduct of the stranger. They feared that he labored under a derangement of the mental system—and Katherine was much pleased when her eldest son, who seemed to feel a lively interest in the fate of the unknown wanderer, announced his intention of hastening after him, and guiding him on his way to the village tavern.

The snow had done falling, the clouds were breaking away, and the wind blew with violence from the north west, as Jack Wilson, with a heavy heart, proceeded down the road toward the village. Before he had accomplished half the distance, he was overtaken by his son who kindly offered to accompany him on the way.

"My noble boy," said Jack, "any man might well be proud of such a son—and I should even be willing to linger still a time longer in this troublesome world, provided I could be near you, and were able to advise you, and instruct you in your duties towards your fellow men and your God. But it cannot be. Show me the way to the public house. Perhaps that there I can obtain a lodging for the night—we will then part—you to enjoy all the bliss of a virtuous mother's affection—and I—to commune with the spirits of another world."

The youth was now convinced that the stranger was deranged, but he waded with him through the snow, in defiance of the freezing wind until they reached the door stone of the public house. "Here," said Jack, "I can obtain shelter. They will hardly turn away an old sailor from their door on such a night as this, even if I am unable to pay them for their hospitality."

He drew from his bosom a silken purse—but it contained not a single coin. "Here," said he, "my son, for I will call you such; take this and preserve it in remembrance of an old sailor. It is a page of affection which I have carried near my heart for many a long year. I have no further use for it now."

The boy took the purse in silence.

"You told me," continued he, "that your father's name was Wilson;—what is your given name?"

"Jack," replied the lad; "they call me Jack Wilson."

"Jack Wilson," exclaimed the unfortunate man—and he threw his arms around the neck of the astonished boy and kissed him—"Jack Wilson! may God ever bless you!"

The boy returned to his home wondering at the strange conduct of this singular man—but the unhappy victim of the barbarous system of impressment did not enter the tavern. He directed his steps toward the churchyard! He knelt upon the spot where the remains of his parents were buried—and prayed to his God for forgiveness of his sins. His heart was seared with disappointment—and his frame was chilled with the fierce northern wind. In the morning he was found stretched lifeless on the grave of his mother.

The particulars of this mournful event soon circulated through the village. When it was told to Katherine Elwell, a new light seemed to burst upon her. She asked her son for the purse which was given him by the stranger the night before. It was old and much faded. She saw marked upon the edge the letters J. W. and Katherine then knew that the poor forlorn, decrepid and destitute sailor, was no other than her first husband.

## New Works.

Kohl's Ireland. This is the title of a work recently published in London. We give below some of the impressions of the author, while travelling through that romantic country.

## DARK VALLEY.

From Killarney, which lies on the low shore, one sees the mountains on the other side rising like a dark wall, and reflected in the clear lake that lies like a mirror at their feet; and the prospect was beautiful when a glimpse of it could be caught through the walls, palings, and hedges, that almost shut it out. Near the town, along the lake, runs the hippodrome, or race course of Killarney, for even such small places in Ireland as this must have their race course. In the villages we passed through, we again saw the little Irish boys running to school, each with his slate and book under one arm, and his sod of turf for the schoolmaster under the other. \* \* As we trotted through the pass we could not avoid eyeing a pair of eagles which were hovering high in air over our heads, although we were very well mounted on stout, sagacious, and active little Kerry horses. Their caparison is the most wretched I ever saw, consisting of nothing more than straw platted together. Straw is indeed much in use throughout Ireland for various purposes;—they take the pigs to market, for instance, with a wisp of straw round the leg; in other countries too, straw is sometimes twisted into the shape of a rope, but a horse with bridle and harness all of straw, is a sight to be seen nowhere but in this poorest part of the west of Ireland. Be it remembered also, this is not a mere make shift, the whim of an individual, but a general cus-