

## Literature, &amp;c.

## The British Magazines.

## THE PIRATE'S TREASURE.

A TALE OF THE SEA.

AFTER many months of anxious and painful expectancy, I at length succeeded in obtaining my appointment to the situation I had ardently wished for. Dispairing at my apparent want of success, I had given up all hopes, and had engaged to go surgeon in the Clydesdale to the East Indies, when the favourable result of my friend's exertions changed the aspect of my affairs. My instructions set forth the necessity of my being at Surinam by a certain day, otherwise I should be too late to join the corps to which I was appointed, which on the ceding up of the place to the Dutch, was to proceed to Canada. As it wanted only two months of that period, it became necessary to inquire for some vessel without loss of time. Giving up my engagement with the Clydesdale, I proceeded to the harbour, and after a toilsome search, succeeded in discovering a ship chartered by a Glasgow company, lying ready at the west quay, and to sail with that evening's tide. While I stood examining the vessel from the pier, two sailors, who seemed to be roaming about, stopped and began to converse by my side.

'Has the old Dart got all her hands?' said the one, 'that she has her ensign up for sailing?—They say she is sold to the lubberly Dutchmen now—what cheer to lend her a hand out, and get our sailing penny for a glass of frag?' 'No no, bad cheer,' replied the other; 'Mayhap I didn't tell you I made a trip in her four years ago, and a cleaner or livelier thing is not on the water? But there is a limb of the big devil in her that is enough to cause her to sink to the bottom. It was in our voyage out that he did for Bill Burnett with the pump sounding rod, because the little fellow snivelled a bit, and was not handy to jump when he was ordered aloft to set the fore royal. It was his first voyage, and the toy was mortal afraid to venture; but the captain swore he would make him, and in his passion took him a rap with the iron rod and killed him. When he saw what he had done, he lifted, and hove him over the side; and many a long day the men wondered what had become of little Bill, for they were all below at dinner, and none but myself saw the transaction. It was needless for me to complain, and get him overhauled, as there were no witnesses; but I left the ship, and births would be scarce, before I would sail with him again.'

Knowing what tyrants shipmasters are in general, and how much their passengers' comfort depends on them, I was somewhat startled by this piece of information respecting the temper of the man I purposed to sail with. But necessity has no law. The circumstance probably was much misrepresented, and from a simple act of discipline, exaggerated to an act of wonton cruelty. But be this as it might, my affairs were urgent. There was no other vessel for the same port. I must either take my passage, or run the risk of being superceded. The thing was not to be thought of; so I went and secured my berth. As my preparations were few and trifling, I had everything arranged, and on board, just as the vessel was mooring from the quay. During the night, we got down to the Block-lighthouse, and stood off and on, waiting for the captain, who had remained behind to get the ship cleared out at the Custom House. Soon afterwards he joined us, and the pilot leaving us in the return boat, we stood down the Firth under all our canvas.

For four weeks we had a quick and pleasant passage. The Dart did not belie her name, for, being American built, and originally a privateer, she sailed uncommonly fast, generally running at the rate twelve knots an hour.

As I had expected, Captain Mahone, proved to be, in point of acquirements, not at all above the common run of shipmasters. He was haughty and overbearing, and domineered over the crew with a high hand; in return for which he was evidently feared and detested by them all. He had been many years in the West Indies; part of which time he had ranged as commander of a privateer, and had, between the fervid suns of such latitudes and the copious use of grog, become of a rich mahogany colour, or something between vermilion and the tint of a sheet of new copper. He was a middle sized man, square built, with a powerful and muscular frame. His aspect, naturally harsh and forbidding, was rendered more so by the sinister expression of his left eye, which had been nearly forced out by some accident—and the lineaments of his countenance expressed plainly that he was passionate and furious in the extreme. In consequence of this, I kept rather distant and aloof; and except at meals we seldom exchanged more than ordinary civilities.

By our reckoning, our ship had now got into the latitude of the Bermudas, when one evening at sunset, the wind, which had hitherto been favourable, fell at once into a dead calm. The day had been clear and bright; but now huge masses of dark and conical shagreened clouds began to tower over each other in the western horizon, which, being tinged in the rays of the sun, displayed that lurid and deep brassy tint, so well known to mariners as a token of an approaching storm. All the hands were of opinion, that we should have a

seamanship could suggest was taken, to make the vessel snug before the gale came on. The oldest boys were sent up to hand and send down the royal top gallant-sail, and strike the mast, while the top stays and sails were close reefed. These precautions were hardly accomplished, when the wind shifted, and took us a-back with such violence, as nearly to capsize the vessel. The ship was put round as soon as possible, and brought too till the gale should fall; while all hands remained on deck in case of any emergency. About ten, in the interval of a squall, we heard a gun fired as a signal of distress. The night was as black as pitch; but the flash showed us that the stranger was not far to leeward, so, to avoid drifting on the wreck during the darkness, the main-top-sail was braced round and filled, and the ship hauled to windward. In this manner we kept alternately beating and having to as the gale rose or fell till the morning broke, when through the haze we perceived a small vessel, with her masts carried away. As the wind had taken off, the Captain had gone to bed; so it was the mate's watch on deck. The steersman, an old grey headed seaman, named James Gemmel, proposed to bear down and save the people, saying he had been twice wrecked himself, and knew what it was to be in such a situation. As the captain was below, the mate was irrefragable what to do; being aware that the success of the speculation, depended on their getting to Surinam before it was given up: however he was at length persuaded—the helm was put up, and the ship bore away.

As we neared the wreck, and were standing by the mizen shrouds with our glasses, the captain came up from the cabin. He looked up with astonishment to the sails, and the direction of the vessel's head, and in a voice of suppressed passion, said, as he turned to the mate, 'What is the meaning of this, Mr Wylie? Who has dared to alter the ship's course without my leave—when you know very well that we will hardly be in time for the market, use what expedition we may?' The young man was confused by this unexpected challenge, and stammered out something about Gemmel having persuaded him. 'It was me sir!' respectfully interferred the old sailor, wishing to avert the storm from the mate; 'I thought you wouldn't have the heart to leave the wreck and those people to perish, without lending a hand to save them, we would be neither christians or true seamen to desert her, and—' 'D—n you and the wreck, you old canting rascal! Do you pretend to stand there and preach to me?' Thundered the captain, his fury breaking out: 'I'll teach you to disobey my orders!—I'll give you something to think off, and seizing a capstan bar which lay near him, he hurled it at the steersman with all his might. The blow was effectual—one end of it struck him across the head with such force as to sweep him in an instant from his station at the wheel, and to dash him with violence against the lee bulwarks, where he lay bleeding and motionless. 'Take that and be damned!' exclaimed the wretch as he took the helm, and sang out to the men, 'Stand by sheets and braces—hard-a-lee—let go!' In a twinkling the yards were braced round, and the Dart laid within six points of the wind, was flying through the water.

Meanwhile Gemmel was lying without any one daring to assist him; for the crew were so confounded, that they seemed quite undetermined how to act. I stepped to him therefore, and the mate followed my example, we lifted him up. As there was no appearance of respiration, I placed my hand on his heart—but pulsation had entirely ceased—the old man was dead. The bar had struck him directly on the temporal bone, and had completely fractured that part of his skull.

'He is a murdered man, Captain Mahone,' said I, laying down the body, 'murdered without cause or provocation.' 'None of your remarks, Sir,' he retorted, 'what the devil have you to do with it? Do you mean to stir up my men to mutiny? Or do you call disobeying my orders no provocation? I'll answer it to those who have a right to ask, but till then let me see the man who dare open his mouth to me in this ship.' 'I promise you,' returned I, 'that though you rule and tyrannize here at present, your power shall have a termination, and you shall be called to account for your conduct in this day's work—rest assured that this blood shall be required at your hands, though you have hitherto escaped punishment for what has stained them already.' This allusion to the murder of little Bill Burnett, seemed to stagger him considerably—he stopped short before me; and, while his face grew black with suppressed wrath and fury, whispered, 'I warn you again, young man, to busy yourself in matters—meddle not with what does not concern you, and belay your slack jaw or by—' Rink Mahone will find a way to make it fast for you.' He then turned round and walked forward to the fore-castle.

During his affray no attention had been paid to the wreck, though the crew had set up a yell of despair on seeing us leave them. Signals and shouts were still repeated; and a voice, louder in agony than the rest, implored us for the love of the blessed Virgin, and offered riches and absolution to the whole ship's company if they would come back. The captain was pacing fore and aft without appearing to notice them, when as if struck by some sudden thought, he lifted his glass to his eye—seemed to hesitate—walk on—and then, all at once changing his mind, he ordered the vessel again before the wind.

On speaking the wreck she proved to be a Spanish felucca from Cuba, bound for Curacoa, on the coast of the Caracacs. As they had lost their boats in the storm, and could not leave their vessel, our captain lowered and manned our jolly boat, and went off to them.

After an absence of some hours, he returned with the passengers, consisting of an elderly person in the garb of a catholic priest, a sick gentleman, a young lady, apparently the daughter of the latter, and a female black slave. With the utmost difficulty, and writhing under some excruciating pain, the invalid was got on board, and carried down to the cabin, where he was laid on a bed on the floor. To the tender of my professional services, the invalid returned his thanks, and would have declined, expressing his conviction of being past human aid; but the young lady, eagerly catching at even a remote hope of success, implored him with tears to accept my offer. On examination, I found his fears were but too well grounded. In his endeavours to assist the crew during the gale, he had been standing near the mast, part of which, or the rigging, having fallen on him, had dislocated several of his ribs, and injured his spine beyond remedy. All that could now be done, was to afford a little temporary aid, which I did; and, leaving him to the care of the young lady, and the priest I left the cabin. The ship was still lying to, and the boats were employed in bringing the goods out of the felucca. The body of the old man, Gemmel, had been removed somewhere out of sight; no trace of blood was visible, and Capt. Mahone seemed desirous to banish all recollections both of our quarrel and its origin.

As the invalid was lying in the cabin, and my state room occupied by a lady and her female attendant, I got a temporary berth in the steerage made up for myself for the night. I had not long thrown myself down on my cot, which was only divided from the main cabin by a bulk-head, when I was awakened by the deep groans of the Spaniard. The violence of his pain had again returned; and between his spasms, I heard the weeping and gentle voice of the lady soothing his agony, and trying to impart hopes, prospects to him, which her own hysterical sobs told plainly she did not herself feel. The priest also frequently joined, and urged him to confess. To this advice, he remained silent for a while, but at length he addressed the lady: 'The Padre says true, Isabella! Time wears apace, and I feel that I soon shall be beyond its limits, and above its concerns! But ere I go, I would say that which it would impart peace to my mind to disclose—I would seek to leave you at least one human being to befriend a protect you in your utter helplessness. Alas! that Diego di Montaldeo's daughter should ever be thus destitute! Go my love, I would be alone a little while with the father.' An agony of tears and sobs was the only return made by the poor girl, while the priest, with gentle violence, led her into the state room.

'Now,' continued the dying man, 'listen to me while I have strength. You have only known me as a merchant in Cuba; but such I have not been always. Mine is an ancient and noble family in Catalonia; though I unhappily disgraced it, and have been estranged from it long. I had the misfortune to have weak and indulgent parents, who idolized me as the heir of their house, and did not possess resolution enough to thwart me in any of my wishes or desires, however unreasonable. My boyhood being thus spoiled, it is no wonder that my youth should have proved wild and dissolute. My companions were as dissipated as myself, and much of our time was spent in gambling and other extravagances. One evening at play I quarrelled with a young nobleman of high rank and influence; we were both of us hot and passionate, so we drew on the spot and fought, and I had the misfortune to run him through the heart and leave him dead. Not daring to remain longer at home, I fled in disguise to Barcelona, where I procured a passage in a vessel for the Spanish Main. On our voyage, we were taken by buccanniers and the roving and venturesome mode of life of these bold and daring men suited both my inclinations and finances, I agreed to make one of their number. For many months we were successful in our enterprise; we ranged the whole of these seas, and made a number of prizes, some of which were rich ships of our own colonies. In course of time we amassed such a quantity of specie as to make us unwilling to venture it in one bottom; so we agreed to hide it ashore, and divide it on our return from our next expedition. But our good fortune forsook us at this time. During a calm, the boats of the Guarda-costa came on us, overpowered the ship, and made all the crew, except myself and two others prisoners. We escaped with our boat, and succeeded in gaining the island of Cuba, where both of my comrades died of their wounds. Subsequent events induced me to settle at St. Juan de Buenavista, where I married, and as a merchant prospered and became a rich man. But my happiness lasted not. My wife caught the yellow fever and died, leaving me only this one child. I now loathed the scene of my departed happiness, and felt all the longings of an exile to visit my native country. For this purpose, I converted all my effects into money; and am thus far on my way to the hidden treasure with which I intended to return to Spain. But the green hills of Catalonia will never more gladden mine eyes! My hopes and wishes were only for my poor girl. Holy father! you know not a parent's feelings—its anxieties and its fears! The thoughts of leaving my child to the mercy

of strangers; or, it may be, to their barbarities in this lawless country, is far more dreadful than the anguish of my personal sufferings. With you rests my only hope.—Promise me your protection towards her, and the half of my wealth is yours.

'Earthly treasures,' replied the priest, 'avail not with one whose desires are fixed beyond the little handful of dust which perisheth—my life is devoted to the service of my Creator; and the conversion of ignorant men, who have never heard of his salvation. On an errand of mercy came I to this land, and if the heathen receive it, how much more a daughter of our most holy church? I therefore in behalf of our community, accept of your offer, and swear on this blessed emblem to fulfill all your wishes to the best of my poor abilities.'

'Enough, enough?' said Montaldeo, 'I am satisfied: Among that archipelago of desert islands, known by the name of Reccas, situated on the coast of the province of Venezuela there is one called the Wolf-rock, it is the longest and most northern of the group, and lies the most to seaward. At the eastern point, which runs a little way into the sea, here stands an old vanilla, blasted and withered, and retaining but a single solitary branch. On the eve of the festival of St. Jago, the moon will be at her full in the west. At twenty minutes past midnight she will attain to her highest altitude in the heavens, and then the shadow of the tree will be thrown due east. Watch till the branch and stem unite and form only one line of shadow—mark its extremity—for there, ten feet below the surface, the cask containing the gold is buried. That gold, father, was sinfully got; but fasts and penances have been done, masses without number have been said, and I trust that the blessed Virgin has interceded for the forgiveness of that great wickedness! I have now confessed all, and confide in your promise; and as you perform your oath, so will the blessing or curse of a dying man abide with you. I feel faint, dying—Oh! let me clasp my child once more to my heart before I—'

Here the rest of the sentence became indistinct from the death rattle in his throat. I off with my coat, and sprang up the hatch way, and had my foot on the top of the companion ladder, when a piercing shriek from below making me quicken my steps; but as he emerged into the faint light which still lingered in the horizon, I fancied that I could distinguish him to be the Captain. On my entering I found the Spaniard dead, and his daughter lying in a state of insensibility by his side; while the female slave was howling and tearing her hair like one in a frenzy. The priest was entirely absorbed in his devotions; so without disturbing him, I lifted the lady and bore her into the state room. The greater part of the night was spent in restoring her to sensation. Fit after fit followed each other in such quick succession that I began to apprehend the result; but at length the hysterical paroxysm subsided, and tears coming to her relief, she became somewhat composed, when I left her in charge of her attendant.

The next day was spent in taking out the remainder of the felucca's cargo. There seemed now no anxiety on the Captain's part to proceed on his voyage—he appeared to have forgot the necessity, expressed on a former occasion, of being in port within a limited time. He was often in a state of inebriety; for the wine and spirits of the Spaniards were lavishly served out to the whole ship's company, with whom he also mixed more, and banished that haughtiness of bearing which had marked his conduct hitherto.

[To be continued.]

## THE BEAUTIFUL MYSTERY OF INFANCY.

There is no sentiment more natural to thoughtful minds than that of reverence for childhood. Many sources both of mystery and love meet in the infant life. A being so fresh from non existence seems to promise us some tidings for the origin of souls; a being so visibly pressing forward into the future, makes us think of their tendency. While we look on the child as the father of the man, yet cannot tell what kind of man, all the possible varieties of character and fate appear for the moment to be collected into that diminutive consciousness, that which may be germ of any is felt as though it were the germ of all, the thread of life, which from our hand that holds it, runs forward into constant darkness, entwines itself there into a thousand filaments, and leads over every track and scene of human things, here through passages where poverty crawls: there to the field where glory has its race, here to the midnight lake where meditations floats between two heavens: there to the arid sands where passion pants and dies. Infancy is so naturally suggestive, it is the representative of such various possibilities, that it would be strange did we not regard it with a feeling of wonder.—*Martineau.*

## LEGAL WIT.

Henry Erskine, the famous Scotch Barrister, a great wag, was once pleading before a funny Scotch Judge with whom he was on the most intimate terms, and happening to have a client, a female, defendant in action, of the name of Tickle, he commenced his speech in the following strain:

'Tickle, my client, my defendant, my Lord.'

The auditors were almost driven into hysterics of laughter by the judge replying—'Tickle her yourself, Henry—you're as well able to do it as I am.'