

LITERATURE, &c.

From the Boston Museum.

THE RESCUE.

It was in the month of February, 1831, a bright moonlight night, and intensely cold; and the little brig that I commanded lay quietly at her anchors inside of Sandy Hook.

We had a hard time of it, beating about for eleven days off this coast, with cutting north-easters blowing, and snow and sleet falling for the most of that time, forward the vessel was thickly coated with ice, and it was hard work to handle her, as the rigging and sails were stiff, and yielded only when the strength of the men were exerted to the utmost.—When at length we made the port, all hands worn down and exhausted, we could scarcely have held out two days longer without relief.

'A bitter cold night, Mr Larkin,' I said to my mate, as I tarried for a moment on deck to finish my cigar.

The worthy down easter buttoned his coat tightly round him, looked at the moon, and feeling his red nose, he replied:

'It's a whistler, captain, as we used to say on the Kennebec. Nothing lives comfortably out of blankets such a night as this.

'The tide is running out swift and strong; it will be well to keep a look out for floating ice, Mr Larkin.'

'Aye aye, sir,' responded the mate, and I went below.

Two hours afterwards I was aroused from a sound sleep by the vigilant officer.

'Excuse me for disturbing you,' said he as he detected an expression of vexation on my face, 'but I wish you would come on deck as soon as possible.'

'Why—what's the matter, Mr Larkin?' I asked.

'Why sir—I have been watching a cake of ice that swept by at a little distance, a moment ago; I saw something black upon it—something that I thought moved. The moon is under a cloud, and I could not see distinctly, but I do believe there's a child floating out to sea, in this freezing night on that cake of ice.'

We were on deck before either spoke another word. The mate pointed out, with no little difficulty, the cake of ice floating off to leeward, and its white glittering surface was broken by a black spot—more I could not make out.

'Get me the glass, Mr Larkin—the moon will be out of the cloud in a moment, and then we can see distinctly.'

I kept my eye on the receding mass of ice, while the moon was slowly working its way through a heavy bank of clouds. The mate stood by with a glass. When the full light fell at last upon the water with a brilliancy only known in our northern latitudes, I put the glass to my eye. One glance was enough.

'Forward there,' I shouted at the top of my voice, and with one bound I reached the main hatch, and began to clear away in the ship's yawl.

Mr Larkin had received the glass from my hand.

'My God,' he said in a whisper, as he set to work to bid me in getting out the boat—'My God, there are two children, on that cake of ice!'

Two men answered my hail, and walked lazily aft. In an incredibly short space of time launched the cutter, into which Mr Larkin and myself jumped, followed by the two men, who took the oars. I rigged the tiller, and the mate sat beside me in the stern of the boat.

'Do you see that cake of ice with something black upon it, lads, I cried; put me alongside of that, and I'll give you a bottle of rum each to night, and a month's extra wages when you are paid off.'

The men bent to their oars, but their strokes were uneven and feeble. They were used up by the hard duty of the preceding fortnight, and though they did their best, the boat made little more way than the tide.—This was a long chase—and Mr Larkin, who was suffering as he saw how little we gained—cried out—

'Pull lads—I'll double the captain's prize, two bottles of rum and two month's pay. Pull, lads, for the love of God pull.'

A convulsive effort of the oars told how willing the men were to obey, but the strength of the strong man was gone. One of the poor fellows washed us twice in recovering his oar, and then gave out; the other was nearly as far gone. Mr Larkin sprang forward and, seized the deserted oar.

'Lay down in the bottom of the boat,' said he to the man; 'and captain take the other oar, we must row for ourselves.'

I took the second man's place, Larkin had stripped to his Guernsey shirt; as he pulled the bow I waited for the signal stroke. It came gently but firm, and the next moment we were pulling a long steady stroke, gradually increasing in rapidity until the wood seemed to smoke in the oar locks. We kept time each, by a long, deep breathing of the other. Such a pull! We bent forward until our faces almost touched our knees, and then throwing all our strength into the backward movement, until every inch of the space covered by the sweep had been gained. At every stroke the boat shot ahead like an arrow discharged from a bow. Thus we worked at the oars for fifteen minutes—it seemed to me as many hours. The sweat rolled off me in great drops, and I was enveloped in steam generated from my own body.

'Are we almost to it, Mr Larkin?' I gasped out.

'Almost, captain—don't give up, for the

love of our little ones at home—don't give up, captain!'

The oars flashed as the blades turned up to the moonlight. The men who plied them were fathers, and had father's hearts; the strength which nerved them at that moment was more than human.

Suddenly Mr Larkin stopped pulling, and my heart for a moment almost ceased its beating; for the terrible thought that he had given out crossed my mind. But I was quickly re-assured by his voice.

'Gently, captain, gently—a stroke or two more—there that will do, and the next moment the boat's side came in contact with something, and Larkin sprang from the boat with his heavy feet upon the ice. I started up, and calling upon the men to make fast the boat to the ice, followed.

We ran to the dark spot in the centre of the mass, and found two little boys—the head of the smaller nestling in the bosom of the larger. Both were fast asleep. The lethargy, which would have been fatal but for timely rescue, had overcome them. Mr Larkin grasped one of the lads, cut off his shoes, tore off his jacket; and then losing his own garments to the skin, placed the chilled child in contact with his own warm body, carefully wrapping over him his great coat, which he procured from the boat. I did the same with the other child; and we then returned to the boat, and the men, partially recovered, pulled slowly back.

The children, as we learned, when we subsequently had the delight of restoring them to their parents, were playing on the ice, and had ventured on the cake which had jumped into the bend of the river, ten miles above New York. A movement of the tide set the ice in motion, and the little fellows were borne away on that cold night, and would inevitably have perished but for Mr Larkin spying them as the ice was sweeping out to sea.

'How do you feel?' I said to the mate, the morning after this adventure.

'A little stiff in the arms, captain,' the noble fellow replied, while the big tears of grateful happiness gushed to his eyes—'A little stiff in the arms, captain, but very easy here,' and he laid his hand on his manly heart. My quaint, brave downeaster! He who lashes the seas into fury, and lets loose the tempest: will care for thee. The storm may rage without, but in thy bosom, peace and sunshine will always abide.

From the Indian Sporting Review.

JOTTINGS AND JOSTLINGS IN CEYLON.

I do not sit down in this my old age, O ye carping critics, to tell a tale that I want you to listen to. Far from me be such folly. I sit down to talk to the man whose delight is in the excitement of the chase, whose glory it is to secure the brush, whether of the fox or of the jackal, whose ambition it is to have men say, 'he is a true good hearted sportsman.' Tales of Ceylon sporting are looked upon by the uninitiated as fit companions for the Arabian Nights, or the adventures of the far-famed Baron Munchausen. But heaven be praised, it is only by the uninitiated such things are thought. When one sportsman in that splendid island succeeded in bringing down more than twelve hundred elephants in his few years of service, as the sporting world knows, or ought to know, that Major Rogers did, I trust I will be allowed to tell my little anecdotes of hunting there some twenty years ago without being sneered at. Therefore, ye critics, advance!

The last mail from England brought out the following intimation in an obscure corner of a newspaper:

'Died; at his residence, Gloucester Street, Regent's Park, on the 24th ultimo, G. Strat, Esq., formerly of the Ceylon Civil Service.'

Poor fellow, gone to the bourne whence no traveller returns! at last. I could weep for thee poor Strat if that would avail anything. He was the kindest, honestest, warm-heartedest, jolliest soul that ever lived—a man that almost every one might expect had 'given them medicines to make them love him.' But Gregory Strat is gone and peace to his ashes. He was a companion of mine, in an expedition that a party of us took into the Oavah country for elephant shooting, two years before Sir Edward Baines left—and never shall I forget the two day's travelling which I enjoyed in that party of five. The tales by which our road was enlivened would fill volumes, if recorded, for this time I had got amongst crack sportsmen, and each recorded the adventures he had experienced in the course of his Ceylon shooting. Our friends, Throughton, Mure and Swivel, I shall describe anon; in the meantime I shall merely observe that they drove as far as they could on the road to Kandy in a dog cart, which they dignified with the name of a chaise, while Strat and myself rode.

I was remarking the other day to a friend just come from Ceylon, that getting to Kandy now was a very different thing from what it was in my time, when there were no Royal Mail Coaches.

'Royal Mail Coaches!' he indignantly exclaimed, 'why, sir, did you ever see these royal mail coaches?'

'No,' I answered, 'but I suppose they are somewhat more comfortable than a saddle in the low lands.'

'Comfortable!' he cried (he is a rather irritable and excitable old gentleman) 'comfortable forsooth; I never had less comfort than when in them.'

'But my dear sir,' I soothingly observed,

'in my time the ride from Colombo to Kandy was no joke at all.'

'What, sir,' said he, in a peroration I found it impossible to stop, 'is it a joke to have every bone in one's body jostled out of its proper position by the joltings of an execrable machine without springs; or rather without the reality of springs, for it has the thing in name. (Here there was a thump with his clenched fist on the table.) 'Is it a joke,' he continued, 'to sit for twelve hours on a seat no softer than granite, and to be lifted every two minutes exactly a foot (that's the limit with me; I can't go higher); exactly a foot, sir, above the aforesaid adamant and most confoundedly rough seat, to be tossed back into it with a crash and a clatter that threaten to render you incapable of sitting easily for ever after in your lifetime (thump). Is it a joke to have this repeated thirty times every mile of the seventy two, whilst with every jolt your head comes in contact with the roof above, crossed as that roof is by horribly sharp bars of iron.'

'Well,' said I, seeing he had stopped for want of breath—'well pass the claret, hem, perhaps—'

'In fine, sir, is it a joke to have your bowels and stomach playing hide and go-seek with each other, in consequence of this execrable tormenting, or is it a joke to be kept in perpetual fear of a wheel coming off, or of being hurled down a bottomless precipice, from five in the morning till five in the evening? No, sir, it is no joke (energetic thump)—the bodily accidents and the mental wear and tear of a trip to Kandy in these royal mail coaches can only be estimated by a man who has experienced them.'

'Very dreadful, very dreadful indeed,' said I softly, for I was really afraid he would break all the glasses on the table with his thumping, if he got more energetic—'very dreadful indeed!' and here the conversation ended.

Now, if I am to judge by what my choleric friend said, the mail coaches are certainly not desirable modes of conveyance, and I may consider my ride with Strat as being not much less endurable. There were few situations in the island where my companion had not been, either on duty or pleasure, so that he had a fund of anecdotes and reminiscence as various as it was agreeable. I had never met two of our intended party, Mure and Swivel, before, and I naturally asked some questions about them, which Strat readily answered, giving me by a few well-judged observations, a clear insight into their respective characters.

'Swivel,' said I 'seems somewhat corpulent for a hunter.'

'He is unwieldy, certainly,' was the answer, 'but one of the coolest and surest shots in the island—that is, in the world, for I suppose there are not finer sportsmen to be met with anywhere than in Ceylon.'

Swivel somewhat reminded me of Silter, my companion to the summit of Adam's Peak, on a former occasion, and I naturally spoke of him, and was thus led into a detail of the scene in which poor Silter had lost his unmentionables through a monkey, when he was obliged to go to the rest house without them—an adventure duly recorded some time ago in the 'Review.' Strat laughed heartily at the recital, and said—

'Really these monkeys seem to take a fancy to the clothes of fat fellows; Swivel has had an adventure still more ludicrous with them.'

'Indeed,' said I, 'pray let us hear it.'

'With all my heart,' was his reply, smiling, and he forthwith commenced what I may entitle—

SWIVEL'S PERSECUTION.

Now, if I were in England, Loftus, I should never think of telling the little adventure I referred to, for what with one traveller's exaggerations and another's mystifications, people begin to vote all foreign adventures lies in that enlightened country, but the fact is, that no man can live in the jungle, surrounded by wild animals, and natives almost as wild, without meeting with some extraordinary occurrences—the evil is, that unless a man has been there, he cannot tell what is likely to be true in what he hears and what is not. But a truce to this—you want the story, and you shall have it.

Swivel, as I said is one of the finest sportsmen in the country; in fact, there is only one other propensity in his nature as keen as that of hunting—I mean his love of a good dinner; he is not more delicate in striking his elephant than in carving his haunch of venison, and an over dressed leg of mutton and an attack from a snake strike him with about equal abhorrence. I need not tell you that he has come to the wrong place to gratify his gastronomical propensities—he frequently observes that during the days of the years of his pilgrimage in Ceylon, he has exercised an amount of patience and forbearance in the matter of eating and drinking, to which that of Job, was a trifle in comparison, and that the tough beef and scraggy mutton of Ceylon will bring down his grey hairs with sorrow to the grave.

I like a good joint myself, and as we keep our own sheep, and Mrs Strat is somewhat particular about vegetables, Swivel pays a compliment to our kitchen by joining us occasionally. When I was district Judge at Ratanapora, he came up by the Kalany river now and then, to have a few days' sport among the elephants at the foot of the Peak, and made our bungalow his head quarters. My official duties frequently prevented my accompanying him, but he knew he was always sure of a welcome, and what he esteemed as nearly equal at least, a plate and glass of claret.

On the occasion when his persecution took place, I remember perfectly my peon putting a letter greasy and soiled into my hands when on the bench, of which I could only make out the following—

'Dear Strat—Half dead from fatigue and famine, I am crawling to your bungalow—have eaten nothing for two days but plantains and coffee!!—mortify the flesh good—coffee damned bad—ditch water! brandy bottle smashed!—five o'clock—God bless you—last batch of claret not finished, I hope.'

Yours,
Tom Swivel.

I sent over this characteristic epistle to Mrs Strat: once, and looked anxiously forward to Swivel's arrival, for a visitor with a white face in the jungle is a relief. About four, Swivel's groom came with his horse, looking soiled and wayworn enough, saying that his master had stopped at the Kalany to have a bath, and would be up in half an hour. Our bungalow was situated on a rising ground about a quarter of a mile from the bank of the river, which was here perfectly free from alligators, and a delightful place to bathe in at this season. We were not therefore surprised to hear of Swivel's intention, and after waiting half an hour, convinced that his bath must long ere this have been over, my wife and I walked down the path to the river to meet him, as we expected, coming up. We were surprised not to find him—gradually we came nearer the water, when, to our astonishment, we thought we heard a dash into it. My wife was on the point of returning, thinking he was still bathing, but on advancing a little, I saw Swivel to my surprise, standing with his hat on in the middle of the river. I fancied he was dressed, and called my wife, wondering what could possibly have induced him to go back dressed into the river. She came, and we stood together within hail of our fat friend.

'In the name of all that's wonderful, Swivel, what are you doing dressed in the middle of the river?'

'I am not exactly dressed, my dear fellow,' he said, taking off his hat with a bare wet arm.

This was quite enough for my wife, and she scampered off at once, leaving me to advance.

'I have met with another misfortune,' said Swivel again, at the same time advancing towards me, and disclosing to my astonishment a bare shoulder and breast. This, with the hat on his head, looked extremely ludicrous; and I laughed.

'This is no laughing matter,' said Swivel, 'and, as district judge, I trust you will have it examined into. My clothes have been all stolen.'

'With the exception of your hat,' I remarked, 'and that is certainly not in the best shape.'

The fact was, it was all battered and beaten in unmercifully. After a little more badinage, Swivel came out of the river, I hardly need say in *puris naturalibus*, with the exception of the hat, and sat down on a stone, saying he was tired standing, to tell me what had occurred to him.

'I was enjoying a delightful swim,' said he, 'anticipating the dinner and wine at the bungalow, and wondering if my charcoal scrawl had reached you, when all of a sudden it struck me that I might be delaying too long, and the mutton would be overdone, so I jumped out to get my clothes—but no clothes were to be found. I left them on this stone. I walked up and down, looking everywhere, and at last, after at least quarter of an hour's search, I found my hat in this condition' (taking it off and looking sorrowfully at it) 'in that pathway in the jungle, and a little further on one stocking. Well, there was no more to be got, and venture to your house in this state I could not.'

'Certainly not,' said I.

'I then set down there, and thought what was best to be done, so I hallooed till I was tired. Was ever man in such an infernal predicament before? At length I heard you and Mrs Strat coming along, so seizing my hat I rushed into the river, where you found me.'

'I have it,' said I, choking with laughter, 'the monkeys have caught them.'

'D—n the monkeys,' groaned Swivel; 'but am I to remain in this condition all evening?'

I had scarcely time to answer, when servant made his appearance, saying that dinner was ready.

'Oh Lord, Oh Lord,' cried Swivel, 'was ever a man so persecuted? Dinner ready in the bungalow, and I sitting here naked! half starved and famished as I am.'

I knew how much my friend liked his dinner, and laughed still more at his ejaculations. At length, however, I summoned up gravity enough to tell the servant to bring a suit of my clothes.

'Your clothes,' cried Swivel, 'what a thing shall I look in your clothes? Heaven I was ever man so persecuted? Do you really think my legs will go into your pantaloons? I fear there is no chance of my rascally coolies being up these two hours; and I had put on the best suit I had, in order to be able to sit down to dinner at once after my bath, and one look in the looking glass. Oh heavens! I really do think I never shall be able to button on your pantaloons. In the name of misery what shall I do? May I never—if I don't put a bullet into every sneaking monkey I see from this day forth—here and now I vow eternal war with them.'

In this manner Swivel went on ejaculating. I listened with all the gravity I could command, alternately looking at the sturdy, corpulent limbs which supported him, and my own wretched