

Literature, &c.

THE SPIRIT OF THE MAGAZINES.

From Eliza Cook's Journal.

AMERICAN HUMOR.

"The pious Editor's Creed" is a terrible satire on Yankee Politics—more severe than any thing that old country writers have yet said of them. Parson Wilbur is disposed to derive the name of *Editor* not so much from *edo.* to publish, as from *edo.* to eat, that being the peculiar profession to which the American Editor esteems himself called. "He blows up the flames of political discord for no other occasion than that he may thereby handily boil his own pot. Nine hundred and ninety-nine out of the thousand labor to impress upon the people the great principles of *Tweedledum*, and nine hundred and ninety-nine out of the thousand preach with equal earnestness the gospel according to *Tweedledee.*" Here are a few extracts from "The Pious Editor's Creed":—

I du believe in Freedom's cause,
Ez fur ez Paris is;
I love to see her stiek her claws
In them infarnal Pharisees,
It's wall enough agin a king,
To dror resolves and triggers,—
But libberty's a kind o' thing
That don't agree with niggers.

I du believe the people wunt
I tax on teas an' coffees,
That nothin' aint extravagunt,—
Pervidin I'm in office;
Fer I hev loved my country sence
My eye-teeth filled their sockets,
An Uncle Sam I reverence,
• Partic'larly his pockets.

I du believe it's wise an' good
To sen' out furrin missions,
Thet is, on sartin understood
An' orthodoxy conditions;—
I mean nine thousan' dolls. per ann.,
Nine thousan' more fer outfit,
An' me to recommend a man
The place 'ould jest about fit.

I du believe in special ways
O' prayin' an' convaritin';
The bread comes back in many days,
An' buttered too for sartin;
I mean in preyin' till one busts
On wut the party chooses,
An' in convaritin' public trusts
To very privit uses.

I du believe with all my soul
In the great Dress's freedom,
To pint the people to the gaol,
An' in the traces lead 'em;
Palsied the arm that forges yokes
At my fat contracts squintin',
An' withered be the nose that pokes
Into the gov'ment printin'!

I du believe in prayer an' praise
To him that has the grantin'
O' jobs—in every thin' that pays,
But most of all in CANTIN';
This doth my cup with marcies fill,
This lays all thoughts of sin to rest,
I don't believe in princerule,
But O, I DU in interest.

I du believe in bein' this
Or that, ez it may happen;
One way or t'other heneest is
To ketch the people rappin';
It aint by principles nor men
My president course is steadied,—
A scent which pays the best, an' them
Go into it bald-headed.

I du believe wutever trash
'll keep the people in blindness,—
Thet we the Mexicans can thrash
Right inter brotherly kindness;
Thet bombshells, grape, an' powder 'n ball
Air good-will's strongest magnets,
Thet peace, to make it stick at all.
MUST BE DRUV IN WITH BAGNETS.

In short, I firmly du believe
In Humbug generally,
Fer it's a thing that I perceive
To hev a solid vally;
This heth my faithful shepherd ben,
In pastures sweet hath led me,
An' this 'll keep the people green
To feed ez they hev fed me.

From Chambers's Edinburgh Journal.

REMARKABLE NAVAL DUELS

ALTHOUGH it is by no means infrequent, during a war between great naval powers, for action a *l'outrance* to be fought by well-matched single ships, it is very rare for a similar engagement to occur in consequence of a special mutual agreement to fight—in other words, for two ships of presumably equal force to strive for victory, expressly in consequence of a challenge having been sent by the captain of the one, and accepted by the captain of the other. Such an affair is something very different from ordinary

casual meetings of hostile vessels, and is literally a ship duel. Only two notable engagements of this description, to the best of our knowledge, have occurred within the last sixty years. In both cases, English captains were the challengers—their antagonists being respectively French and Americans. For our own part, we are so much interested by a spirited narrative of a well-fought single ship action, as by one of a regular battle on a grand scale between large fleets. Take up any popular account of the battle of St. Vincent, or the Nile, or Trafalgar, and—unless you happen to be a professional man, well read in John Clerk of Eldin's *Naval Tactics*, and able to appreciate and criticise every manœuvre—the probability is, that long ere the engagement is brought to a triumphant conclusion, you grow rather confused, and finally lay down the book with a hazy sort of conception that it was a very gallant and terrible battle, won by British skill and valour—and that is all you know and understand. But in reading about a single ship action you can concentrate your attention better; and although you may hardly know the jib-boom from the spanker-boom, you can form a tolerably correct idea of the progress of the fight, and of the effect of each change of position, and the material damage and loss on the part of the respective ships. Our limits will permit us to give only brief and condensed sketches of the remarkable actions we propose to cite, and which we will preface by a few general remarks.

In all naval battles, and especially in actions between single ships, it has ever been held a considerable advantage to obtain the weather-gage at the commencement, and if possible, to retain it throughout the engagement. Of course this is by no means so important where steamships of war are engaged, as they can change their positions at pleasure; but no ranged battle has, up to this period occurred between steamers, although it is highly probable that we shall hear of several during the present war.—The advantages of securing the weather-gage—that is, being to windward of the antagonist—are various. It enables a ship of good sailing qualities to defer engaging, or to bear plump down on the enemy at once, at option. Moreover, if the enemy discharge their broadsides at a medium range, the weather-ship's side is less exposed, while the leeward-ship's is more exposed to shot than would be the case were they respectively in any other position; and should they go about on a fresh tack, the shot holes of the former will be clear of the water, while those of the latter will possibly prove dangerous leaks. Again, the windward-ship can bear up and rake—that is, stand athwart the bow or stern of her adversary, and discharge in succession all the broadside guns, so as to sweep the upper deck from end to end, or desperately damage the stern, the weakest portion of a ship. As soon as hostile vessels come in sight of each other, the drum beats to quarters, and the crew prepare for action. The tackles of the guns are overhauled; the tompons withdrawn; shot of all descriptions placed ready for use; and the magazines opened by the gunner and his crew, who makes ready to serve out cartridges. The carpenter prepares his plugs for shot holes and his fishes for wounded spars, rigs the pumps to prepare for a leak, &c.; the bulk-heads are knocked down, or riced up to the beams, as the case may be; the great cabins are unceremoniously cleared of the officers' furniture, &c.; and every deck, fore and aft, is put in fighting order. The surgeon disposes the midshipmen of the cockpit, and the first convivial table is spread with tourniquets, forceps, plasters, and amputating instruments, all in sickening array. The boarders have put on their great iron-bound caps, and have stuck pistols in their belts, and hold a keen cutlass or a glittering tomahawk in hand; the marines are drawn up on the quarter-deck and poop, with ball-cartridges in their boxes; the clews of the sails have been stoppered; and, lest the ties should be shot away, the yards are hung in chains. Many other preparations are made; and in a properly disciplined ship, everything is done without confusion, and in a space of time amazingly short.

Every man and boy capable of duty is at his post; and when an action is imminent, British tars on the Doctor's list have frequently been known to drag their languid limbs from the sick-bay, to give what help they are able to fight Old England's Battle, the spectacle of a ship cleared for action, with the crew at quarters, silent and motionless as their grim guns, is one of the most impressive in the world.—It is at once terrible and strangely exciting—something never to be forgotten by whoever has witnessed it. Your blood thrills in every vein, and your heart throbs heroically as you glance along the tiers of black cannon, each with its silent crew of stalwart men burning for the fray. You know that at a single word from the commander of this warlike world, those silent groups will start into life and activity, and those black guns will thunder forth their iron message of death and destruction; and knowing and feeling this, you can hardly keep in the wild hurra of your country. Rely upon it, that every one of the hairy chested fellows you see at quarters will the moment the word to fire is given, join in a cheer shaking the very decks.

Have you heard the British cheer,
Fore and aft, fore and aft?
Have you heard the British cheer
Fore and aft?

There is nothing like it—nothing to compare to it. What are all the *hurra* or *vivas l'empereurs* to the British hurra ringing through the port-holes of a three-decker?

But we must now to our special theme. Towards the end of July 1793, the British 32-gun frigate *Boston*, Captain Courtenay, cruised off New York on the look-out for the French 36-gun frigate *Embuscade*, Captain Bompard, a frigate which had inflicted immense loss on our commerce by capturing scores of merchant vessels. It happened that the French Captain mistook the British frigate for a consort of his own and sent his first officer in a boat with twelve men to communicate some orders, under this erroneous impression. The officer seems to have been more mistrustful, or more prudent, than his superior, for he paused on his way to question an American pilot-boat. The pilot assured him that the stranger was veritably a French ship—having really been deceived himself by a stratagem of Captain Courtenay, who caused some of his officers to talk together in French when the pilot boat was within hearing. So the *Embuscade's* boat rowed confidently alongside the *Boston*, and of course were made prisoners. Captain Courtenay told the captured lieutenant, that he particularly wished to fight the *Embuscade*, and would challenge her captain to exchange broadsides. The lieutenant replied that the *Embuscade* would accept the challenge if he was allowed to write to Captain Bompard by the pilot-boat. To this proposal, the British Captain assented, and sent his challenge by a verbal message, to be delivered by the pilot. The latter, however, scrupled to deliver it, but had a written copy forthwith posted in a coffee-house of the city; and thus it soon reached Capt. Bompard, who promptly accepted the cartel and put to sea. Early on the morning of the 31st, the antagonists met, and the battle commenced soon after 5 A. M. The British Captain and his lieutenant of marines were killed with the same cannon-ball, about 6 A. M.; and the two lieutenants of the frigate were sent below severely wounded. One of them came up again when a little recovered, and gallantly continued to fight the ship, which, by 7 A. M., was so disabled, as to be glad to stand away before the wind, while the *Embuscade*, nearly as crippled, stood after her for a few miles, and then put about to the eastward. The result was a drawn battle, gallantly fought on both sides. The *Boston* had only about 200 men and boys on board at the time, and of these she lost 16 killed and 24 wounded. The *Embuscade* had a crew of fully 300, and is said to have lost 50 killed and wounded. The king granted a pension of £500 to Captain Courtenay's widow, and £500 pension to each of his children.

The other frigate-action, resulting from a challenge, is one of the most deservedly celebrated affairs in the annals of the navy. Soon after the commencement of the war with the United States in 1812, the Americans successively captured the British frigates *Guerriere*, *Macedonian*, and *Java*. Each of these vessels was taken in single action by American frigates—so named and classed, but in reality almost line-of-battle ships, as regards scantling and compliment; or, as seamen said at the time, sixty-fours in disguise. All the British ships fought most gallantly, and surrendered only after a frightful loss of men, and when their shattered hulls were totally helpless and unmanageable. We need not hesitate to say, indeed, that the defence of the three British frigates against greatly superior antagonists, was at least as honorable to them as the victory to the Americans. But their capture caused unparalleled excitement both in Great Britain and in America. The public did not then know how deadly the odds had been: all they understood was, that three British frigates had, in rapid succession, been taken by American frigates; and they were ready to exclaim, that the prestige of British invincibility at sea was gone forever; and that the vigorous young navy of the United States was more than a match for the veteran navy of Old England. It was obvious that something must be done to turn the scale in our favour, and that something was promptly done in a brilliant style. Among the many brave and able frigate commanders who burned to retrieve the British name, was Captain P. B. V. Broke, of the *Shannon*, 38-gun frigate—a ship well disciplined, and in good fighting-trim. In April, he cruised off Boston in company with his consort, the *Tenedos* frigate, Captain Parker, watching the American frigates laying in that port. Two of them, the *Congress* and *President*, managed to put to sea unintercepted; but the *Constitution* and the *Chesapeake* yet remained. The former was under repairs, but the latter was nearly ready for sea. Captain Broke sent away the *Tenedos* to cruise elsewhere for a season, in order that the American should have fair play in the contest he meditated; and then he sent in repeated verbal challenges to Captain Lawrence of the *Chesapeake* to meet him. Finally, he despatched a letter of challenge, a full copy of which we have in one of the two accounts of the affair lying before us but it is much too long to quote entire. Suffice it, that after requesting Captain Lawrence to meet him to fight for the honor of their respective flags, he gives a faithful account of the armament and complement of his own ship, and names a rendezvous for the fight; or offers to sail in company with the *Chesapeake*, under a flag of truce, to any place Captain Lawrence

thinks safest from interruption from British cruisers! he concludes his chivalrous challenge with the following magnanimous passage: "You must, sir, be aware that my proposals are highly advantageous to you, as you cannot proceed to sea singly in the Chesapeake without imminent risk of being crushed by the superior force of the numerous British squadrons which are now abroad, where all your efforts, in a case of rencontre, would, however, gallant, be perfectly hopeless. I entreat you, sir, not to imagine that I am urged by mere personal vanity to the wish of meeting the Chesapeake, or that depend only upon your personal ambition for your acceding to this invitation; we have both nobler motives. You will feel it as a compliment if I say, that the result of our meeting may be the most grateful service I can render to my country; and I doubt not that you equally confident of success, will feel convinced that it is only by repeated triumphs in even combat that your little navy can now hope to console your country for the loss of trade that it cannot protect. Favour me with a speedy reply. We are short of provisions and water, and cannot stay long here." A more extraordinary and manly letter never was written. It does honour alike to the head and the heart of the writer. On the 1st of June it was given to Captain Slocum, a released prisoner, to deliver; and the *Shannon* then stood in close to Boston, to wait the result. About noon that day, the *Chesapeake* fired a gun, and set her sails. She was coming out to fight at last! not, however, in consequence of the letter, for Slocum was slow in coming, and had not yet delivered it, but undoubtedly in consequence of the verbal challenges. She was accompanied by numerous pleasure-boats, filled with people eager to see the affair at a safe distance, and flushed with anticipations of success. This indeed, was thought to be so sure, that a grand dinner is said to have been prepared at Boston, to welcome the officers of the *Chesapeake* on their expected return with the British frigate as a prize.

A word as to the comparative powers of the antagonists. The *Chesapeake* rated as a 36 gun frigate, but, mounted 25 on a broadside, discharging 590 pounds Metal. Her tonnage was 1135; and her crew—all very fine men—was 381 men and 5 boys, as sworn to by her surviving commanding officer. The *Shannon's* broadside-guns were also 25, and the weight of metal discharged by them, 533 pounds; the crew, as stated by Captain Broke himself, consisted of, 300 men and seamen, boys, and passengers, who were taken out of recaptured vessels lately.—Her tonnage was 1066. Thus we see that in tonnage, weight of metal, and number of crew the *Chesapeake* had the advantage. Nevertheless we may term it a very fair match, all things considered—and now for the result. After some preliminary manœuvring, the two frigates closed at about six leagues distance from Boston—the *Chesapeake* having a large white flag flying at the fore, inscribed with the words "Sailors Rights and Free Trade." The crew of the *Shannon* greeted this extraordinary symbol with three hearty cheers. We shall not detail the fight itself, beyond saying that the *Shannon* opened a tremendous fire from her double-shot guns; and the ships having come in contact, Captain Broke boarded the *Chesapeake* with only a score of his men, and in four minutes, completely carried the ship. From the time the first gun was fired to the hauling down of the American colours and the hoisting of the British in their place, only fifteen minutes elapsed! Just in the moment of victory, Captain Broke was treacherously assailed and severely wounded by three Americans who had previously submitted, and then resumed their arms. Poor Captain Lawrence of the *Chesapeake* was mortally wounded: He was a gallant officer, and his death was sincerely lamented by his generous minded conqueror. Many acts of individual heroism occurred; and brief as was the battle, we may form some idea of the desperate valour displayed on both sides, from the heavy loss of life mutually sustained. The *Shannon* had 24 killed, including her first lieutenant, and 59 wounded. The *Chesapeake*, according to the American official account, 47 killed and 99 wounded—14 mortally; but her own surgeon estimated the total killed and wounded at 160 to 170. We believe that such a frightful loss—in the two frigates, 71 killed and nearly 200 wounded—hardly ever before occurred in so brief an engagement. Some of the English seamen serving on board the *Chesapeake* leaped overboard when Captain Broke boarded her. Poor conscience-stricken traitors! they could not bear to fight hand-to-hand against their own countrymen. One of them, John Waters, was a fine young fellow, who had deserted from the *Shannon* only a few months before. Thirty-two English seamen were serving in the American frigate. What must their feelings have been during the engagement? One circumstance deserves notice: no less than 360 pair of handcuffs were found stowed in a cask in the *Chesapeake*. They were intended for the crew of the *Shannon*—how the men of the latter ship must have grinned when they put them—for such is the custom—on the wrists of the *Chesapeake's* own crew! The *Shannon* and her prize—neither of the vessels materially injured—safely reached Halifax, where poor Captain Lawrence died of his wound, and was buried with full military honours, all the Captains in the port following