

Literature, &c.

THE SPIRIT OF THE MAGAZINES.

From the London Examiner.

THE CHARGE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE AT BALAKLAVA.

BY ALFRED TENNYSON

Half a league, half a league,
Half a league onward,
All in the valley of Death,
Rode the six hundred.

Into the valley of death
Rode the six hundred,
For up came an order which
Some one had blundered,
'Forward, the Light Brigade!'
'Take the guns,' Nolan said:
Into the valley of Death
Rode the six hundred.

'Forward, the Light Brigade!'
No man was there dismayed,
Not though the soldier knew
Some one had blundered:
Theirs not to make reply,
Theirs not to reason why,
Theirs but to do and die,
Into the valley of Death,
Rode the six hundred.

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon in front of them
Volleyed and thundered;
Stormed at with shot and shell,
Boldly they rode and well,
Into the jaws of Death,
Into the mouth of Hell
Rode the six hundred.

Flashed all their sabres bare
Flashed all at once in air,
Sabring the gunners there,
Charging an army, while
All the world wondered:
Plunged in the battery smoke,
With many a desperate stroke,
The Russian line they broke;
Then they rode back, but not
Not the six hundred.

Cannon to right of them,
Cannon to left of them,
Cannon behind them
Volleyed and thundered:
Stormed at with shot and shell,
While horse and hero fell,
Those that had fought so well
Came from the jaws of Death,
Back from the mouth of Hell,
All that was left of them,
Left of six hundred.

When can their glory fade?
O the wild charge they made!
All the world wondered.
Honor the charge they made!
Honor the Light Brigade,
Noble six hundred.

Chambers's Edinburgh Journal.

OUR JACK.

OUR JACK is as well known as the parish school he went to with so much reluctance, and at which he stood distinguished as the greatest dunce and the best fighter of all the scholars.—He was always getting either into some scrape, or trying to get off from some penal task, which for the life of him he never could execute; so he would throw down his book, play the truant, and run up so awful a reckoning, that it had to be scored on his back. There used to be always somebody coming with complaints to his widowed mother, about what he had been doing to somebody's lad; and she used always to say, 'I'll give it him—that I will: he shall have such a talking to as he never had before in the whole course of his life, the instant he comes in—that he shall.' Then when Our Jack came in, his mother did give it him—that she did; and he calmly heard her to the end, hurrying charge upon charge, and running question into question until she was fairly out of breath through enumerating the number of punishments she had a good mind to inflict upon him; and then Our Jack began to get a word in 'edgeways,' as he said. 'Didn't that woman's boy fetch little Luce Bill a rap, and when I told him he was a coward to go and hit a littler boy nor himself, and one that was a poor cripple, didn't he say as how he would do it again if he liked; and when he went for to hit little Bill again, and he ran crying to me not to let him, then he caught it,' and Our Jack's dark hazel eyes would flash again, as he added: 'And I'll give him more next time he maddles with lame Bill, though he is bigger than I be;' and he may go home and tell his mother again—the coward! Though Our Jack understands nothing about protocols and ultimatum, yet when he sees oppression and wrong, he fires up at once; and the time he gives to answer his 'yes' or 'no,' is while he throws back his head and raises his clenched fists, and if they do not at once run

like scalded cats from the principalities he protects, he is down upon them with his one, two, three. Our Jack, indeed, makes short work of it. Still, he is naturally good-tempered, though as his dear old doting mother says: 'He takes after his poor father, who was a little hasty at times, but it was soon over.' His schoolmaster had a way of giving his head a kind of hopeless shake whenever he alluded to Our Jack, though he would sometimes add: 'He's a good heart—a noble-hearted lad, but a sad, sad dunce.'—He was the umpire in all boyish games, and in feats of skill and strength stood unrivalled; and we be to those who tried to cheat their lesser companions at marbles, buttons, or pitch-and-toss, in the presence of Our Jack, for his jacket sleeves were furled up in a moment whenever there was a wrong to redress!

Our Jack's greatest fault was a love of water: as his mother used to say: 'He ought to have been born a fish, for he's always a-dabbling in it making boats of everything he can lay his hands on the instant my back's turned. He has swum my boots, my bonnet, and my bread-pan; tried how much sugar my basin would carry, and sunk it; served my tea and coffee canisters the same. I've many and many a time found my cups, and saucers, and dishes, at the bottom of the water-but, and my mustard-pot and pepper-box sunk in the pale; while if there was a shower of rain he would send every morsel of firewood, every cork in the house, and indeed everything that would swim, into the gutter, and down the street, and shout and clap his hands like one demented, if his little ships, as he used to call them beat his big ones. As for his cap and shoes, bless you! they were seldom either on his head or on his feet: if he came to a ditch, a horse-trough, or a pond, off they would come, and in they would go; and the only wonder is, that he hasn't caught his death 'o' cold over and over again. He ought to have been born a fish, he's so fond of the water.' And, like Jack's schoolmaster, his fond old mother would finish with a mournful shake of the head.

A good-natured farmer took Our Jack, and employed him to fetch up the cattle to water, scare away the birds from the corn, and be a little Gibeonite on the farm; and for a time he went on admirably, until one day he was sent to the distant market-town—a small sea port—with the waggoner, and from that hour, as his dear old mother often said afterwards with the tears in her eyes, 'he was a changed lad.' All he had hitherto known of ships and sailors was through books and prints, but having once seen them, Our Jack's old occupation was gone.—From morning to night, he was making boats, and swimming them wherever water was to be found; he even cut off the skirts of his smock-frock, to make sails for his little ships, and to give what remained more the appearance of a sailor's jacket; while every piece of wood he could lay hold of he converted into a boat; and it was marvellous how he managed, with only his pocket-knife, to cut them into such beautiful forms. Our Jack had his boyish admirers, who were ever eager to accompany him to swim his boats, and wade into ponds to fetch them back when they were becalmed in the middle or did not blow to shore; and amongst these were one or two of rather bad character. If a stray hen had laid in the fields, they would take the eggs, and now and then go to the length of robbing an orchard. One ill-starred hour they persuaded Our Jack to join in the depredation; and he consented to keep watch within the orchard gate, while they made booty of the farmer's choicest golden pippins. If the proprietor came Jack was to whistle, and keep him on the run round the trees until his vagabond companions escaped through a gap in the hedge. The owner came, and Our Jack was captured: he was promised both pardon and reward if he would give up the names of his accomplices, but Jack would not; so, with a smart box of the ear and a threat that he should be transported, the culprit was dismissed. That threat decided the fate of Our Jack; on the following morning, he was missing. He had written down his crime on a slate, in his large ungainly school-boy hand and left it on the table, paying for his mother's and the farmer's forgiveness, and promising in future to be a good lad, and begging of her to pray for him while away. Round spots on the letters shewed where the tears had fallen while he wrote.

Another day came, and closing her cottage, shutter, and leaving the key under the door, the sad-hearted mother set out in her weather-stained scarlet cloak to search for Our Jack. She made her way towards the little seaport, inquiring at almost every cottage and toll-gate she passed, and of nearly every traveller she met; but no one had seen him. At length she met the village carrier returning. Jack had ridden part of the way with him: he had gone to sea. The carrier knew the captain who had taken him; the ship sailed that very morning; he had shaken hands with Our Jack as he went on board. The carrier made no mention of the half-crown he had given the boy, nor how well he had treated him on the road. So the dear old woman returned, and sat down by her solitary cottage-heap to bemoan the loss of Our Jack. The farmer whose orchard he had helped to rob was one of the first who called to comfort her, and he expressed his regret that he had used a threat which he never intended to execute, as he feared it had driven him away. But her constant comforter was the joiner's pretty little daughter

who lived opposite, and who was always quarrelling and fighting with Our Jack, running in squealing whenever he pursued her, and running after him again the instant his back was turned on her. She seemed as if she could not bear him, and yet was never happy unless when teasing him. She had been the cause of his fighting both her brothers, whom he always thrashed. He had tumbled her among her father's chips, rolled her in his sawdust, spoiled her frocks with paint, emptied the glue-pot on her hair, been beaten by her father, scolded by her mother, and yet there the little maiden was beside the widow, shedding tears of sympathy when she saw her weeping for the loss of Our Jack.

Time wore away; the joiner's daughter grew taller and prettier; the widow became resigned, but excepting a few trifling presents, and a short letter or two which had been left at the inn where the village carrier 'put up,' his mother received no further tidings of Our Jack, nor had he been more than once to the little seaport from which he first embarked.

Three years elapsed, and there came a long letter, with an order to draw a sum of money every six months at the bankers in the market-town. He had got a berth on board H. M. S. something or other—the schoolmaster said Vulcan; the clergyman, Vulture; the little tailor read Valiant; but Our Jack wrote such a strange 'scrawning hand,' as his dear mother called it, 'that it might mean any manner of things.' On turning to the purser's order for the money, it was found to be the Valiant, bound for the African coast to intercept slavers. Two more years, and with an increase in the money she drew, there came a rich shawl, which would have become his dear old mother about as well as the dress of a bloomer; and a pair of beautiful stuffed birds for the joiner's pretty daughter, who had sent 'her respects' in his mother's letters. The birds were in the attitude of fighting, which caused the pretty maiden to laugh, for she said 'that was what she was always a-doing with Our Jack;' but her mother said, 'she had a good cry over them' when she placed them on her chest of drawers in her bedroom. The farmer whose orchard Jack helped to rob, had sent out his best wishes, and had received in return a basket of curious shells, which, as he said, 'made his parlour look as fine as fivepence.' More letters and presents from time to time, with orders for more money than his dear old mother knew how to spend, and so seven years passed away since he first left home. Meantime, the joiner's pretty daughter had rejected many offers, and grown into the sweetest flower of the village. Another June came on in her chariot of roses, and a smell of new hay hung round the picturesque hamlet, which the carrier's cart was entering two or three hours before sunset, with a beautiful parrot in an immense cage, fastened on the tilt of his vehicle, and a long stuffed sword-fish that hung partly over the shaft horse, which, with the leader, was decorated with bows of blue ribbons. All the village was out to look at the parrot, the sword-fish, and the horse; and from the hurrahs of the carrier, and the waving of his hat, they knew that 'he had had his lounce,' meaning that he was pretty tipsy. And while he shouted, a voice from inside the tilted cart kept calling on the horses to move 'larboard and starboard,' which they, like very wise horses, paid no regard to. With half the villagers behind and around, the cart at last halted before the cottage door where Our Jack's mother resided, and then both the carrier and his passenger called out lustily: 'Ship ahoy!' Then the dear old woman came out in her spectacles, thinking he had brought her another letter; and the pretty maiden came tripping from over the way, ready to read it to her, as she had always done; when a tall, handsome sailor, as brown as a horse-chestnut, sprang with a bound from the cart-shafts and knocked off her spectacles as he threw his brawny arms round her, exclaimed: 'Dear mother;' while, in a tremulous voice, as she raised her eyes to heaven, she uttered the words: 'my son my dear son!' and all the villagers said: 'why, it's Our Jack!' and the pretty maiden recrossed the road, scarlet with blushes, and with a new and strange sensation, beating about her heart. She had never dreamed he could grow so handsome, so bold and manly looking. As for Our Jack, he had not even noticed her—he had no eyes, no ears, no words for any one saving his dear old mother. The first interview over, there was the carrier's cart to unload; and many a long month had elapsed since the old man had brought such a load, for it was half filled with the presents brought by Our Jack, who had something for everybody whose name he could remember—coral, shells, curious sea-weed, stuffed birds and fishes, skins, Indian ornaments, besides more costly articles; for his ship had taken several prizes, and his own share of money amounted to a goodly sum, as he had already risen to the rank of mate.—Meantime, the old carrier had shown to the wondering rustics the new silver watch which Jack had given him; and told them how Jack had vowed he would hire a chaise and pair to carry him home, and not ride with him, if he wouldn't take it as a keepsake.

Partly to ease his fine overflowing heart, and hide the tears which would keep falling, Our Jack went out into the little garden to look at it once more. What numbers of times he had recalled that old lilac tree, with the bees mur-

muring amid its bloom in spring; that rose tree covered, as he then saw it, with summer roses; the vine he had trained on the cottage wall, and often wondered if it were hung with purple grapes in autumn; the holly, from which he gathered crimson berries in winter—and which were all there, though thrice the size since he left home! Ah, how often had they appeared to his 'inward eye' while keeping watch at sea! The sun setting on the cottage window; the daisy covered field beyond the cottage hedge; the old thorn, with its moonlight coloured May-blossoms, with the singing of the birds in those golden mornings, had come back upon his waking thoughts, and mingled with his dreams when he lay baking under hatches on the African coast, or riding through the swell of stormier seas. And while these thoughts again passed through his mind, bright eyes were watching him from over the way, peeping out of a corner of the blind, half shy, half shy—her heart as ready to romp as ever it was, but its wild fluttering reined back by maiden modesty; her merry laughter as ready to leap out of her lips as when, in his rough play, he tore the frock from her shoulders, but withheld by a womanly seriousness, which seemed to have deepened since his return. And now Jack's mother joins him in the garden, and tells him all about her—how she attended her in a long illness, and was like a daughter to her, sitting up by night, and watching over her by day; and her eyes filled as she clasped his tar-stained hand, adding: 'But for her, Jack, I should have been laid beside your father in the green church yard. She has been like a dear daughter to me, as well as a loving nurse. I have sent for her to come and take tea with you; but she's turned so shy all at once, that I can't get her to come over.'

Passing his hand across his eyes, while a smile chases away the momentary sadness, Our Jack says he'll try what he can do to persuade her; and over the way he goes, carrying with him the rich shawl he has brought for her mother, and the curious pipe and real foreign tobacco for her father. He stays a long time, and his dear mother begins to grow sidgety in watching for them from the window. At last they come; he brings home his prize: arm-in-arm they come! Happy Jack! happy maiden! joyous old mother! There was some difficulty in getting her to come down stairs; the mother tried, and the father tried in vain, and it was only through Jack coming to the stair-foot at last and saying: 'Come Mary, I can't go to sea again without bidding you good by,' that she came. As she put her little, honest, hard-working hand in his, and said: 'I'm glad to see you back again,' and just raised for a moment her timid eyes, he caught something of the old expression of their squealing, romping days, when they fought and made it up again—a little of the old arch harmless wickedness which was even then endearing, as shewing her bold and fearless spirit. Then they were left together for a few minutes. There were traces of tears in her eyes after the interview; but never were they followed by so soft, so sweet, so sunny a smile, as when she came out of the parlour hanging on his arm, and he, in his blunt, honest, sailor-like way, said to her parents: 'She's consented to be my partner in the cruise through life, if you'll allow it.' They understood enough of his nautical imagery to give their consent, and he led her home to his mother triumphant.

Then he enquired for his old school-fellows and playmates, and sighed over the memory of those that were dead; and the next morning he stood all alone in the village church-yard, having cleared the low wall with a stride and a skip, and given his trousers a hitch, and paced about with folded arms and rocking gait, as when he walked the deck at sea. And as he thought of those who lay there, and the messmates he had seen lowered into the deep—and above all, of the tarry topman who was his sworn brother, and whose eyes he had closed—tears stood in his eyes, as if at a loss which way to flow along those hardy, sun-tanned cheeks, which neither fear nor danger could frown. He promised to visit the mother of his dead shipmate; and will, no matter how remote the distance, or great the cost, bear to her his dying wishes; for the promise made to his messmate is sacred in the eyes of Our Jack.

NOTHING BUT AN INSECT.

A French naturalist spent seven years in examining the structure of a single insect, and left the work unfinished. In the body of an insect about an inch in length, another naturalist enumerated 306 plates composing the structure of the outer envelope; 494 muscles for putting them in motion; 24 pairs of nerves, and 48 pairs of breathing organs. The number of lenses in the eye of a common fly is six or seven thousand; of the butterfly, seventeen thousand. On a single wing of a butterfly have been found 100,000 scales. The house-fly's wing has a power of 600 strokes in a second, which can propel it 35 feet, while the speed of a racehorse is but 80 feet a second. So thin are the wings of many insects, that 50,000 placed over each other would only be a quarter of an inch thick, and yet, thin as they are, each is double.

Manners is a medal whose reverse is inscience.