

POETRY.

A SERENE WINTER'S NIGHT.

How beautiful this night!—the balmy sigh
Which vernal zephyrs breathe in evening's ear
Were discord to the speaking quietude
That wraps this moveless scene. Heaven's ebon
vault,
Studded with stars unutterably bright,
Through which the Moon's unclouded grandeur rolls
Seems like a canopy which love had spread
To curtain her sleeping world. Yon gentle hills,
Robed in a garment of untrodden snow;
Yon darksome walls, whence icicles depend
So stainless, that their white and glittering spears
Tinge not the Moon's pure beam; yon castled
steep,
Whose banner hangeth o'er the time-worn tower
So idly, that wrapt fancy deemeth it
A metaphor of Peace—all form a scene
Where musing solitude might love to lift
Her soul above this sphere of earthliness:
Where silence, undisturbed, might watch alone,
So cold, so bright, so still!

PRESENT STATE OF THE SLAVE-TRADE
[Continued.]

In point of fact, the privileged pirates under the French flag openly declare that they have no fear of being disturbed by the king's ships. Mr. Canning may therefore well say, that "the slave-trade is now carrying on under the flag of France with scandalous publicity."—"So little," says Commodore Bullen, "do they appear to fear detection, that officers of *La Sabine* voluntarily conducted ours over their vessel, pointing out the different apartments for the males and females, and explaining every circumstance connected with it."

Some notion of the system of atrocities under which this traffic is carried on may be collected from the dispatches of Commodore Bullen; but we must observe, that the number of slave vessels seen and visited by our squadron, on a line of coast of more than a thousand miles, affords no criterion of the real extent of the trade. Neither can we form an idea of the sum of human misery from the cruelties which are witnessed on those few that are captured; as is justly observed in the Nineteenth Report of the Directors of the African Institution, "there is not more of cruelty, it may fairly be assumed in the one vessel which is captured, than in the hundred which escape." In their Twentieth Report they say,

"It is stated, under the date of 10th December, from Sierra Leone, that notwithstanding the activity of English cruisers, the coast still swarmed with slave dealers. The *Redwing*, boarded, during a single cruise, French vessels having on board upwards of three thousand slaves; besides which she saw many French vessels which avoided her. A brig, *la Jeune Caroline*, had four hundred and fifty slaves on board, every one of whom was closely battened below when she was boarded. A large French ship, having five hundred slaves on board, and carrying twelve guns and sixty men, bound for Martinique, was boarded a few days prior to the *Redwing's* return to Sierra Leone. She had all her guns clear for action, but offered no resistance to a visit from the boats of the *Redwing*.

"Three Spanish vessels were captured by the *Redwing's* boats between the 7th and 11th October, but only one arrived at Sierra Leone by the 10th December. The schooner *Teresa* was upset on the morning of the 19th October, in a tornado, when one hundred and eighty-six slaves, three men and one boy belonging to the *Redwing*, and the Spanish mate, were lost; the remainder, two officers and nine seamen belonging to the *Redwing*, and six slaves, were picked up on pieces of the wreck the next morning; fortunately, fifty slaves had been removed to another vessel the day before, and have since arrived at Sierra Leone. It is observed, that the captures of the last six months equal any other in a similar space of time which can be named, fourteen vessels having been

captured, making a total of 1,690 tons and carrying about 4,000 human beings. It is stated that the *Maidstone* boarded amongst many other French vessels, a corvette fully armed and manned which originally had 1,000 slaves on board.

"On the whole, it appears that the slave trade has increased during the last year; and that, notwithstanding the number of prizes taken, it continues to rage with unabated fury; and that the coast, with the exception of the British settlements and their immediate neighbourhoods, is in a worse condition than it has been for years past; that the Spaniards and Brazilians carry their profligacy as far as ever; whilst the French have become the slave carriers of the Antilles."

The *Maidstone*, in one month, between 17th June, and 15th July, 1825, in the Bights of Benin and Biafra, boarded seven slave vessels, ten of them under French colours, and seven of which were about to take on board 3,000 human beings. In September following, there were eight vessels under French colours in the River Bonny. In September, 1825, Commodore Bullen boarded the *Orphie* of Nantes, 377 tons burthen, five days from the old Calabar river, bound to Martinique, with a cargo of 698 slaves, originally 700, two having died since leaving the river.

"The state (he says) in which my lieutenant found the miserable objects of their brutal traffic, is truly revolting to the feelings of human nature: the whole of the men (550 in number) were heavily chained in couples; some round the ankles and arms, and many by the necks; the whole of whom he set at liberty, and suffered them, during the search, to inhale the fresh air; the confined and putrid air assuaging from the slave deck, a height of scarcely three feet, was so strong as almost to deter my Lieutenant from exploring it; but considering it his duty, and my orders to search every part of her as minutely as possible, that I might be the better enabled to particularize to their Lordships every circumstance respecting her, he did so, and found her as before described. My instructions positively forbidding my interference with French vessels, other than as before mentioned, it was with reluctant regret, I allowed the master to triumph in his villainy, by suffering him to proceed on his execrable and inhuman voyage.—*Parliamentary Papers*, Class B. p. 133.

Our Commodore speaks of a whole horde of French slave ships in the Gallinas; he gives a list of thirteen that were boarded in the course of a month; nay, he states that in September, 1825, Lieutenant Griffin, whom he had dispatched in the two pinnares and cutler, in the short space of two days boarded no less than eighteen vessels, engaged in the traffic, thirteen of which were French.—"With respect," says the Commodore, "to what an alarming extent the slave trade is prosecuted, on this coast, under the flag of the French nation, there are, in that river alone, 2,007 tons of shipping, 293 persons, and 35 guns, under that flag, employed in the speculation of human flesh." Well might Mr. Canning affirm, that "the laws of France on this subject are neither efficient in themselves, even in the heart of her dominions, nor can it be believed that they are acted upon with integrity."

[To be Continued.]

BOW STREET,

MOLLY LOWE.

THE following very touching instance of the irresistible force of love was brought under the notice of the magistrate some time in the winter of the years 1823 and 1824. There lives in the strand—or there did live at the time above-mentioned—a very

respectable young tradesman, whose name as nothing at all to do with this affair; it suffices, that he occupied a large and lofty house; and, being a bachelor, he employed a housekeeper, whose name was Molly Lowe, and this Molly Lowe is the heroine of our story.

Molly Lowe, then, is a woman of staid and serious demeanour; plain in person, neat in her dress, past forty, and a spinster. For these reasons, all and sundry, her young master placed implicit confidence in her, and gave up the entire management of his house hold affairs to her direction. In his opinion Molly Lowe was an immaculate matron, and full proof against every thing, except superfluous souchong with the least drop of brandy in the world in it. But this opinion of his was a very fallacious one, neither man nor woman, be their age and uprightness what it may, can ever be proof against love; and so it turned out in this instance—

"For Love, the disturber of high and of low,
Who shoots at the peasant as well as the beau"
—let fly a sharp arrow at Molly Lowe; and her forty years' frowns melted before the youthful charms of James Wright—a drummer in the First or Grenadier Regiment of Foot Guards, commanded by His Royal Highness the Duke of York!

The first notice her master received of this change in Molly Lowe's temperance, he received in an anonymous letter, signed "Microscopicus;" which letter—after lamenting the multitude of sins that spring up every where like mushrooms—from the button to the broad black flap, informed him that Molly Lowe had fallen in love with the little drummer aforesaid, and earnestly recommended him to nip her iniquity in the bud; "and you need not take my *ipse dixit* in the matter at all," continued the letter of Mr. Microscopicus, "for if you will return home any evening unexpectedly, you will find Molly and her moppet junketing together on the contents of your larder."

The master had little faith in this epistle; for, as he said, the thing was so improbable; and he was half inclined to think that Mr. Microscopicus was either some meddling methodistical miscreant, or some discarded lover of Molly's youthful days; but, well knowing that nothing is impossible, and that more unlikely matrons than Molly have been intangled in the toils of love, he put the epistle in his pocket and determined to keep a sharp lookout on Molly's movements in future.

Several days passed without his discovering any thing, and he was just beginning to feel satisfied that Mr. Microscopicus was what he supposed him to be, when one evening his curiosity was strangely excited by Molly's absence from her ordinary occupations. What could be the meaning of it? Every time she was called, she came down from her bed-room, instead of up from the kitchen; and every time she seemed more and more cross at being "called about so." "What can you be doing up stairs so much, Molly?" said her master. "Nothing," replied Molly. "Then what makes you go there so often?—What have you got in your head, Molly?" "Lord bless me, nothing!" was Molly's invariable reply; and at every succeeding question she grew more waspish than before. But her master was not satisfied with this simple nothing—he felt quite sure there must be something wrong. So, calling his hoppers together, he ascended with them to Molly Lowe's bed room; and there, to Molly Lowe's confusion, he found the identical drummer stowed away, like Fal-

staff, in a buck basket! There he lay—sword, cap, and belt complete, coiled up hilt to point, head to heel, in the bottom of the buck-basket, and covered over with a mountain of foul clothes! "It was a miracle he escaped suffocation!" The buck

basket stood in a little closet, and Molly drew him forth from his— but "comparisons are odorous,"—it is enough, that they pulled him out, set him up on end, and shook him well; and the master, turning to Molly Lowe, said, "Molly! Nickety! I never could have expected this!" "Bless me!" replied Molly Lowe—flushed with deep matogony blushes, and trembling about like an angry turkey-cock—"Bless me! what a fuss there is about a bit of a boy!—He's my sister-in-law's own cousin, and I sent him up stairs because there were some ladies coming to look at the first floor; and where was the mighty harm of that?—and I'd have you to know, Sir, that you use me very ill, Sir!—and I won't bear it any longer, Sir!—and" And here she took out her handkerchief, held it to her eyes, and rushed out of the room in hysterics.

The enamoured drummer seemed quite dumb-founded by the catastrophe; he attempted no defence; and, as Molly's master was by no means satisfied with her matronly account of the matter, the poor youth—all reeking from his hot bed wash—ed over to a constable, who shut him up for the night in the cold and comfortless watch-house. Oh! what a miserable Molly must Molly Lowe have been that night!

In the morning the drummer was brought before the magistrate, to whom all these matters were related; and the constable added, that the drummer had confessed to him that he had often been to drink tea and sup with Molly Lowe; that she was overhead and ears in love with him; that she had bought him a watch, with gold chain and seals, and given him more than three pounds in money; and that she had assured him she was indeed his own cousin, by her sister-in-law's side, only seven times removed; but of that he knew nothing, having never heard of her till she met him one Sunday evening and asked him to come to tea.

His Lordship observed, that this was a very ungallant confession—to say the least of it; and he then asked if Molly was in attendance.

Her master replied that she was not—as he meant to content himself with discharging her from his service. He was not aware that he had been actually robbed, either by her or her young admirer; but he had brought the youth before his worship, because he thought he deserved some punishment for his imprudent intrusion.

The magistrate said, he thought Molly was most deserving of punishment; but he asked the poor lad what he had to say to it.

He replied, that Mrs. Lowe asked him to come to see her, and he went; that she was very kind to him, and gave him tea and things up stairs; and that he was very glad when they came and pulled him out of the dirty clothes, for he had been under them more than two hours.

His worship ordered that notice of his situation should be sent to his regiment; and in the evening he was delivered into the custody of the drum corporal, who attended to receive him. And thus ended the amour of Molly Lowe.

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