






J. Beardmore.

Uplands, Wants.





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THE
NAVAL SURGEON.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

“CAVENDISH,” “THE FLYING DUTCHMAN,”

“PAUL PERIWINKLE,” &c. &c.

(G. J. Neale)

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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THE NAVAL SURGEON.

CHAPTER I.

“Thou darest as well be hanged.”

HENRY V.

HAVING now time to breathe and make a few inquiries touching such matters as interested me, I found that a court-martial had been ordered by the Admiral to try the unhappy seaman, charged with murdering my predecessor, on board the sloop.

This had been done the day after her arrival

in harbour, but the culprit had saved the members of the court their sad and disagreeable office, by having recourse to the simple remedy of jumping overboard. Whether he had gained the shore, or the sharks had gained him, was not known. The commander on this forthwith applied for a court-martial on the sentry, from whose charge he escaped. If rumour was to be credited, the Admiral's reply was, that the necessary officers could not for such a purpose be spared, and that the commander would do himself and his ship much more credit by fighting with, than trying his men. The commander thought otherwise, and took a third course—his old and favourite one—that of flogging them.

On returning on board he turned the hands up, and gave the sentry four dozen and a half. During the last six lashes, the poor wretch was in such a deplorable state as to touch even the pity of the boatswain, and the latter ventured to lay it a little more gently on the back of "the galled jade." The commander, however, not to be taken in, disrated the soft offender on the spot, cast off the marine, had the boatswain

seized up in his place, and applied to the back of the latter three dozen strokes of that very cat which he had lately wielded.

So great was the feeling produced against the commander in his own ship by these acts, that the men were heard calling out to one another on the lower deck after the hammocks had been piped down,

“ I say, Jack, do you know the neat trick of dropping a marlinspike ?”

“ No, bo, I don’t,” was the reply ; “ but I think I must soon learn.”

“ So do ; and take care, my hearty, and hit the right nail on the head.”

These and similar dialogues were satirically bandied about for a couple of hours, in a tone of voice that no one could fail hearing, till the commander sent the master-at-arms to command silence ; then one fellow set off snoring, then another—a third—a fourth—and so on, till the whole ship’s company were almost to a man snorting like so many pigs, and the noise grew beyond endurance. The commander now wanted to turn out the marines, but was dis-

suaded by the first lieutenant, who, seeing how ripe the men were at that moment for mutiny, persuaded the object of their detestation to wink at the want of order, and retire to his cabin ; this he did, locking the door, and sleeping with loaded pistols under his pillow.

On the next day the brig sent her quota of men to the shore, and two days afterwards the commander, being in front of his men during a fire of musketry, had his right ear nearly cut in two by a ball. Caustic, happening to be near at hand on the field, dressed his wound. Knowing his character from me, he determined not to spare him, but said, as he put in a suture,

“ This shot was very well meant, Captain ——. I think you were in front of your men when you got struck, sir ? ”

“ I was—why ? ”

“ Because I was thinking how fast your men are improving in their aim. An inch or so more to the left, and it would have been right in the bull’s eye. A bad business, sir, that death of your surgeon ! ”

“ What do you mean, sir ? ”

“What do I mean, sir?”

“Yes, sir; what do you mean?”

“Oh! nothing, sir!—nothing, of course!” replied Caustic; “but,” added he to me, as he told the story, “I paid him off for his insolence in asking the question.”

“How so, sir?” demanded I.

“Why, I remembered your dose of poisons, and so just snipped a wedge-like bit from the outer edge of the wound, and then, by bringing the parts together, insured the one ear being half the size of the other; but then, for such a black-guard, what does that signify? It’s the only mark of honour he’ll ever gain in battle. When this little operation was finished, I said, ‘There, sir, you will now be like Dionysius in more ways than one;’ but, on my soul, I might as well have mentioned the great Mogul’s chief dish-clout washer.

“‘Dionysius!’ said he, ‘Dionysius! doctor? you’ve a great many hard names, I know, in Scotland; but what part of the country does he come from?’

“‘O, sir,’ said I, ‘he was just one of our

town bailies in Aberdeen ; but one ear was so much longer than the other, that the world gave him credit for having been brought up on ass-milk diet.' ”

“ Did you, indeed, say that ? ”

“ Tut, sir, yes ; and what, by gosh, do you think was his return for such a compliment ? ”

“ What, sir ? ”

“ He had the impudence to say my manner was disrespectful. A fellow, perhaps, whose father was a slave-driver, and his mother a half-cast storekeeper, as ignorant as the brute that perishes, and as cruel as a cannibal ; and then he, and things such as he, complain that men of thought and education do not pay them respect. But, praise be to the god of physic that gives us the mastery over them, if we will only have pluck to use it ! It is the abounding of such slavish reptiles as Andrew Lindsay in our profession, that has lost for it part of that respect so much its due. But you and I, sir—we sustain the dignity of our art. Physic and bleed the rebellious rascals to death's door !

The grave hides all our faults. Doctors and kings can do no wrong. The language of the dead is not yet understood, though some very instructive tales may be learnt when the key of that pallid cipher is discovered. But, after all, what if some score or so do visit Hades a few years before their time? We're quite convinced it's a very comfortable place; and the proof of our sincerity is displayed in our great generosity—sending our friends there to enjoy it, rather than going ourselves. Let patriots think of that, sir, when they talk of self-sacrifice!”

While we were, however, thus chatting away, a message came from Captain Howard desiring me to return on shore, and I then casually said to Caustic,

“I suppose the captain's wound was well long ago?”

“Well! by gosh, I begin to doubt that he ever had any, or whether that affair really was not one of the many hallucinations of this world.”

“Why so?”

“ Because he’s taking as much pains as he can to get another.”

“ Nonsense ! is it possible ? What a fellow ! ”

“ A fellow ! not he, sir. He’s the king of fellows, ay, and good ones too ; so may he live long and die happy, and then, or I know nothing of the man, his hand^s will be on his sword, and his head on some fair shoulder. He was never meant for these degenerate days, clearly. The last time his soul was in commission, I know very well it commanded, not a trumpery frigate, but a body of gallant lances in the crusading army of lion-hearted Richard. Come, sir, his gig is waiting ; get on shore to him with my love and duty, and if you can, come back to dine with me.”

CHAPTER II.

“ I understand you not ; my griefs are double.”

LOVE'S LABOUR LOST.

WHEN I entered Captain Howard's room, he said, “ I've good and bad news for you, both in one breath.”

“ Indeed, sir.”

“ Yes ; in the first place the admiral has promoted you ; therefore your surgeoncy is now secure, and in the way of promotion your luck has been that of one in a thousand.” He then paid me some little compliment, which may as

well go down the wind. "This, then, is my good news," continued he.

"And what, sir, is the bad?"

"That you are once more appointed to the Infernal."

"Then, sir, I cannot accept the vacancy."

"But you must."

"No, sir; I certainly cannot, with all due respect."

"Nothing of the sort, you must accept the vacancy; and what's more, you will, I am sure, for I have to make it my own private personal request as a favour."—Captain Howard here paused and looked at me.

I felt grieved beyond measure; but what could I say? I loved the noble-hearted being who preferred this request, and, after all his kindness, I could not say "*no*;" a word which, I solemnly declare, I have all through life found it more difficult to utter, than a whole language of assents.

"Well, then," continued he, "you will accept the vacancy?"

“Why, sir, after the way in which you have put it, how could I refuse?”

“To be sure not,” said he, laughing; “such a bashful young man as yourself, how could you refuse promotion?”

“Why, sir, as it comes from no quarter whence the wind may blow, ’tis generally to a sailor a most acceptable matter. But you little know the life to which it condemns me.”

“O yes, I do, perfectly.”

“Then, sir, with your kind wishes towards me, how can you desire me to endure it?”

“Why, on these grounds: when we first anchored and found the admiral, I told him of the appointment I had given to you, from a conviction that I was conferring a benefit on two parties, who had the first claim on my consideration; *imprimis*, the king’s service.” Here I bowed, and blushed *selon les regles*. “Next yourself, whom from many motives I was anxious to serve. He then replied, that he would bear in mind my recommendation on the earliest moment, but that he could not confirm my written order then, as he had first to ad-

vance a follower. This was most kind as well as reasonable, and of course left me not a word to say. Scarcely had I quitted his presence, when, as he has since informed me, your commander came to report himself, and preferred a whole string of complaints against you, with a request for a court-martial. These at first he was afraid he should be obliged to grant, but having sent some one on whom he could rely among your messmates, he found that there was a gold side to the shield as well as a silver one, and that, in short, most of your brother officers were sorry to lose you, as you were the only one on board on whose firmness they could rely to keep their commander in check.

“ He now determined in his own mind to give you a ship on the first opportunity. On taking possession of this island, he resolved to establish a naval hospital; his old follower, hearing this from his secretary, came and stated how miserable he was in the brig; that he had moreover formed some attachment on shore, and that, in short, the appointment as

hospital surgeon would be the most acceptable thing in the world to him. On this the appointment was given, and the brig being once more vacant, he thought of you."

"Ill-omened hour, sir!" groaned I.

"Stuff! Listen to me, Mr. O'Donnel. On this head many reflections arose. The story of his follower has convinced him of Captain E——'s unfitness for command, and he has resolved to put you into the brig for these reasons. As a kindness to one who he wishes should rise in the service, he says it will do you good to learn subordination to a superior, even though a very faulty one. For the sake of the officers and men, he wishes to put into the brig a civilian of spirit and honour, that Captain E—— may feel some lett to his vagaries; while, on the other hand, knowing that the commander fears and hates you, he is in hopes that he will remonstrate on the appointment and promotion of one against whom he has made such complaints. If he does this, the admiral's answer is ready cut and dried, and will, he assured me, be to this effect, that he has promoted you

only after due and mature deliberation, and that if Captain E—— disapproves of such a step, he is at liberty to invalid home ; which, between you and me, is what I think the admiral is most anxious to bring about, one of his maxims being, that courts-martial are at best necessary evils. When, however, he sent for me to say that he had provided for my friend, I, knowing your great objection to the brig, felt myself in a most awkward position. He saw my embarrassment, and asked what was the matter ; I very candidly told him all I knew, and out came the history I have given you. I then very gently expressed my doubts of your accepting the promotion, on which he replied with great quickness, ‘But I shall not allow myself to be so put out of my calculations. You asked me to provide on the first moment for your friend. In defiance of all length of service I have done so, and I shall look to you that he accepts such provision.’ Here I was of course obliged to bow, and say you should. As I expected, you have done so, and I only hope that Captain E—— may, as

the admiral thinks likely, invalid. Some nice fellow will then be appointed, you, after all, get a very comfortable ship, and even if this be not the case, bear up with it for a little while, and he may either so commit himself as to be dismissed his ship or the service, or you may get an exchange by the admiral's favour; or, who knows, he may take some wrong medicine by mistake some bright morning."

I shook my head, and Captain Howard added, laughingly, "You're rather famous in that line I hear, though it would have been as well to have known it before Captain E—— told the admiral that you had *tried* to poison him."

"I dare say, sir, and so he told me; but if there had been any truth in that, it should have no *trial*."

"No, no, my good fellow, let it be out and out next time; and now I'm going on board to dress for the admiral's table, if you would like a seat in my gig?" This exactly suited me, so off we started.

On our way down to the boat, the captain entered the shop of a watchmaker whom he

had employed to make a locket ring. The article was not quite finished, and we waited in the back parlour. The watchmaker had been an armourer on board an English ship, a clever sort of Jack-of-all-trades, and having been taken prisoner in some cutting-out affair, while spiking the guns of a battery, his captors had sent him to Fort Royal, where he married and settled for life. While we were waiting, a Jack Tar came into the shop, and desired the watchmaker to repair a huge chronometrical turnip, which he pulled from his fob.

“I’ll attend to it, Jack,” said the watchmaker, “as soon as ever I’ve finished this for the gentleman who’s waiting.”

“D— your eyes, how long are you going to keep me?” was the reply; “for I can tell you I haven’t much time to spare.”

I looked up, and there, to my astonishment, stood Beckett. Surprised to see him on shore from a ship in which no liberty was ever given, I would not speak to him, for fear he had run away; but knowing I could trust Captain Howard, I pointed through the blind, whence he could

not see us, and told him there stood a man whom Captain E—— had flogged for having the misfortune to fall overboard.

“Is it possible?” said Howard; then calling out to the watchmaker, “Hey there, put away my ring for the moment, and attend to that sailor’s watch; his time is more precious than mine.” The man did so.

“Thank your honour,” cried Beckett in return, without having the least idea who the party was that obliged him. After looking at the huge watch inside and out for a few minutes, the horologer replied, “If you’ll take my advice, Jack, you won’t have this watch mended at all.”

“You be ——” said Beckett; “what do you know about it?”

“Why, just this; that to mend this watch properly will come to nearly as much as it cost you in the first place.”

“Well, you lubber, what of that? Is that any business of yours, I should like to know?”

“O no; no business of mine, certainly: only I thought you might not like to go as far as that.”

“ Ay, to be sure I will ; and if so be you’ll only set his rigging up in tiptop style, I don’t care if I even go so far as to give you *twice* as much as it cost me. I likes that old watch so wery much.”

“ O very well, if that’s the case, then I’ll do it.”

“ Agreed, my boy ! ’tis a bargain !” said Beckett, slapping the other on the shoulder, as he walked out of the shop ; “ there’s the ticker, and I shall call for it in a day or two. A week back I gave a Frenchman, up at the fort there, a — knock on the head for it, and if-so-be you mend it well, why, I’ll give you *two* !”

CHAPTER III.

“And she a fair divided.”

KING JOHN.

ON reaching the Epaminondas once more, I immediately told Caustic of the misfortune of my promotion, at which he laughed most heartily. After dinner we went up to the captain's cabin, and, lying down as usual on the sofas, began to read.

“Surely, man alive!” said he, putting down his book, “there's nothing so wonderful as the strange contradictions and varieties of the human breast. Here is Howard, who delights in making every one love him, man, woman, and

child, ay, and dogs to boot, and yon fellow in that brig of yours just the reverse! Strange that the same service should hold out such strong examples of each extreme.”

“Ay, sir, and still more strange that I should have, as old Shakspeare hath it, preferment thrust upon me, and so be made, whether I will or no, to undergo the full test of the contrast.”

“Yes, you have been very fortunate; Captain Howard has taken an extraordinary fancy to you.”

Here Caustic paused for a moment, as if musing on something, and then looking up, suddenly demanded, “Can you keep a secret?”

“I think so, sir.”

“Well, then, I’ll tell you the origin of this said fancy; and droll enough it is.”

I was all surprise and attention. “You’ll scarcely believe what I am going to tell you. By gosh, though, it’s a solemn truth!—our mercurial captain is, *credat Judæus*, over head and ears in—”

“Debt, sir!”

“D—— the debt; he is in love.”

“What! with the damsel at Barbadoes?”

“No.”

“What, then, is there some one here?”

“O yes, of course, with some one here too—
But there’s a third inamorata; a really, truly
chaste affection.”

“No! it’s not possible!”

“By gosh, sir, it’s a solemn truth! and that,
sir, is her petticoat;” pointing to the mystic
garment that hung in its usual place directly
opposite.

At this solemn affirmation, made with all the manner and dignity of a Roman dipping his finger in the warm entrails of the sacrifice, and swearing by his divinity, it was utterly impossible for me to restrain my laughter. But this Caustic was never known by any chance to have exhibited; a sarcastic curl of the lip, when angry, being the nearest approach he was ever seen to make to any risible display. His audience might be dying and convulsed around him with some of his nonsense, but the solemnity of his manner nothing could disturb.

“Ay, sir,” resumed he, “that’s the very petticoat she wore ; for which he gave to her soubrette just three times what it cost her mistress. Fancy a man giving forty guineas for a cast-off petticoat !”

“That’s nothing, sir ; I saw him give ten guineas out of those very windows one morning, one after another, like Norway pebbles, to feed the sharks, because he happened to be in a rage.”

“Ay !” said Caustic, and he looked surprised, but asked me no further question, for however intimate he might be with his friends, he never allowed his curiosity to pry into their secrets. The allusion had escaped me, and I was glad to turn back to the subject in hand.

“And pray, sir,” resumed I, “who is this other lady ?”

“O, sir, she’s the princess of them all ! The others are but lesser stars, and she the magic moon — lovely as Helen ; constant as Penelope ; ay, and by gosh she’s a peeress in her own right, too : and, oh ! *mirabile dictu*, she—she has been the cause of his bringing *us* to the *West Indies* !”

“She the cause, sir? why, how can that be?”

“Ay, you may well ask that! She would scarcely have imagined it, had she seen him at Barbadoes. Man *has* a heart; that even I must admit, because I’ve opened many bodies, and in each have found a heart! — but ’tis a strange thing! It seems this lady fair is in very delicate health, and threatened with consumption; so her father, who’s one of the wealthiest viscounts we have, has been persuaded to bring her out here till the warm climate enables her to bid defiance to the disease. Howard, it seems, saw her in London, and I fancy, between you and me, got hold of the girl’s affections. The father, it seems, is—as in such cases fathers often are—very sillily inclined to see his daughter make what he calls a proportionate marriage: that is, be forced upon some old duke or young and brainless libertine magnate, whose wealth and title, being equal to her own, will produce one of the richest and most unhappy families in the kingdom. Now Howard, for a captain in the navy, is very rich; he has five thousand a year; but for a son-

in-law to my lord viscount, — nothing: to pass by the fact of his being a younger son, with nephews and brothers innumerable, betwixt him and the title. The viscount, therefore, is enraged at any prospect of such an alliance, and holds our gallant commander at arm's length. But Howard, I think, has the best of it: the lady is on his side. And by gosh, sir, to a bold heart that's a host! If ever there was a bold heart, Howard has it; and take my word for it, he'll have her yet, if the girl has only the sense to hold out. However, here comes the droll, ridiculous part of it: Howard says he never sees you, without fancying that her brother's beside him, only that she has no brother; for her mother was like herself, a peeress in her own right, and had no other child, dying most unfortunately in childhood. And so, Sir Walking Portrait, you see on what strange chances men's preferments hang."

"Strange, indeed; and pray what, may I ask, is the title of this peerless peeress?"

"Viscountess Desmond."

“As I live, then, it’s my old playfellow ! Was she not born in Ireland ? and has not her father immense estates there—one of them in the county of —— ?”

“The same.”

“Ay, and right well I know it ; part of it marched with my father’s hills ; and there, many a happy day, have Ida and myself rambled in joyous freedom with one far more beautiful, but who is gone, never to return !”

The recollection of those hours affected me too deeply to say more. Caustic saw what was passing in my mind, and endeavoured to prevent my dwelling on it.

“Yes,” said he, “Ida is the damsel’s name ; I could not recollect it.”

“And where,” I inquired, “in the name of fortune, is she staying ?”

“In the island of St. Vincent, whither we go very shortly.”

“Pray may I ask, Mr. Caustic, from whom you chanced to learn all these particulars ?”

“A few very communicative gentlemen, to

wit--one bottle of champagne, three ditto of claret, and one Captain Howard. The last seems very greatly interested in your welfare, so I thought it would be better to give you these few hints before you went on board your brig, that you might bear and forbear as long as possible. Now then come down to coffee."

On the following morning Captain Howard came on board, and presented me with my warrant for the brig, and the admiral's order to join without delay. Once more the painful scene of leave-taking followed, and that evening I was, much to my sorrow, pacing the decks of the *Infernal* at sea.

Oh! how piously I wished that the gentleman in black had only taken his own property below, before ever I was doomed a second time to belong to her! Unfortunately the commander had not thought fit to invalid; and there he walked within a few yards of me, but I took especial care to have him on the opposite side of the deck, for marling-spikes, thought I, still possess the power of gravitation.

One of the first people I saw on board was Beckett.

“Well, my good fellow,” said I, “where’s your watch?”

“Lord love us, sir!” replied he, “if I’ve ever thought of it from that time to this; and if I did, ’twould have been much the same, I never should have got leave to go for it, though ’twas a boat-load of tickers, let alone one. But if I may make so bold, your honour, how may you have come to know anything about it?”

I explained, and inquired, in my turn, how he got leave.

“Never at all, sir; I bribed the coxswain of the boat I was in, with a bottle of rum, to let me step up into the town and have a cruise for an hour.”

“And whence came the money for the rum?”

“O, sir, the gentleman I bought that ere watch of, was so pleased with my taking it off his hands, that he gave me all the money he had in his pockets to boot.”

“Indeed! that must have been a very agreeable person to do business with. I wish I could find any one who would pay me equally well for a knock on the head.”

“Lor, your honour! so they would, if you only hit ’em hard enough.”

That fellow, thought I, walking away, will never die of want in the land of plenty.

CHAPTER IV.

“ A wild dedication of yourselves
To unpath'd waters, undream'd shores most certain,
To miseries enough—no help to hope you.”

WINTER'S TALE.

FOR the first week after we got to sea, the commander's conduct seemed greatly improved by the admiral's lectures ; but one Sunday morning he turned out of his cot on the wrong side, as the sailors said : five unlucky wights had, on various pretences, been “ wiped down ” with their various dozens. This execrable burst of temper continued to rage with a fury that

appeared to be but exacerbated by its suppression, or I might rather say its indulgence ; and were it not too kind a judgment to pass upon tyranny, I should consider it as much a disease of the mind as madness. But opposed to this doctrine comes the known fact, that the former is dependent on the will, and the latter subversive of it. However, Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, all had their gangway victims. I had little or no opportunity of interfering, and my mind was resigned to the fact of matters soon arriving at such a crisis that the men would rise and take the ship.

On Thursday morning, however, an hour after daylight, while we were lying becalmed, a sail was descried from the mast-head, coming down towards us with a light breeze. As she advanced, she was made out to be a schooner, and not answering the private signal, we cleared for action. When she approached us, various conjectures were of course formed as to her nation and occupation : some thought she was a slave-ship ; some a privateer ; some a pirate : one opinion was as good as another,

for certainly no one had any means of proving either.

With all the sail she could spread, meanwhile, down she steadily came towards us, until within two miles on our weather-bow, when she shortened sail, but still hung out no symbol of any kind, to say she was Turk, Jew, or Christian. There she lay; while we, without a breath of wind, had to endure the vexation of seeing the catspaws playing all around her, yet utterly unable to approach within their influence. While we thus both remained stationary, like two dogs who long for a snap at each other, without either feeling much inclined to begin, the commander ordered the ensign to be hoisted, and one of the chase-guns to be fired ahead of the stranger.

This was done; but even while the ensign was ascending, there was not breeze sufficient to expand its drooping folds; so there it hung like a blue, or, at the distance of the schooner, like a black rag, perfectly inadequate to express our nationality. This was at the peak, and, to prevent any awkward mistake, another

was hoisted two-thirds up on the halyards at the mainmast, and its fly fastened by the corners to those at the mizen, so as to spread it out ; but no corresponding display of colours was made on board the schooner.

“What,” said I, “this is not to be a second ship-burning affair, is it ?” At this moment the foretop-gallant halyards gave way, and down came the sail upon the fore-topmast cap ; as no shot had been fired, and from the calm sea there was no strain upon the sail, the fact struck me as singular ; but all and each of the foretopmen’s eyes having been duly devoted to perdition, the mischief was repaired, and the sail set again. The top-gallant sail, however, had scarcely fallen from its place, when a column of smoke arose from the midships of the schooner. Splash after splash followed as the ball bounded toward the brig, grazed one of the muzzles of the after guns, wounded several men, and passing through the body of the first lieutenant, went out at the other side.

The commander had at this very time been standing by the lieutenant. I, watching the

motions of the schooner, and not imagining hostilities were so near at hand, was just behind them; when, therefore, the poor fellow was killed, his blood was dashed all over us. On seeing him fall, I immediately attempted to raise the body, but it was idle: the shot had passed fairly through the abdomen, and death was the instantaneous result. One glance sufficed to convince me of the fact, and I looked up to the commander, saying,

“He’s dead, sir!”

My superior made no reply; he was wiping from his pallid checks the drops of his shipmate’s gore, while his dress was in some places saturated with it. He made no answer to my observation, but I saw his eyes turn from my face, and suddenly wander round the decks as if in the last degree of surprise.

Unable to conceive what might be the matter, I too looked round, and my consternation was beyond all expression, when I perceived the men deserting their guns. In less than five minutes a few marines, with one or two petty

officers, alone remained of all the crew upon deck.

“What does this mean, doctor? What does this mean, Mr. Claridge?” demanded the captain, turning first to me and then to the second lieutenant.

I could have said, had it been advisable to give utterance to the naked truth, “Your men, tired of your continued and infamous oppression, have now paid you in your own coin, by leaving you to the irreparable disgrace and infamy of being taken by a paltry and contemptible slave-ship, or perhaps even pirate, just as the case might be.”

When the commander saw that I attempted no sort of reply, he looked to Claridge, and as he did so, I never beheld a more abject specimen of a human being than Captain E—— appeared.

Born to tyrannize over his fellows while the sun of prosperity was shining upon him, he now discovered himself to be wholly unable to bear up against the first blast of un-

prosperous fate—a depth of baseness in character, which we can only justly estimate by remembering how beautiful and noble a disposition is made by its contrast! Claridge was a fine young fellow, who, under better auspices, would have done honour to the service; but he had allowed his wretched superior to grind his intellect down to that sad pitch of servitude, which permits neither freedom of thought nor clearness of judgment. In such a case, therefore, he was of as much use to his commander as a wet blanket to a drowning man.

He certainly told Captain E—— that he thought the men were running from their guns, but as to any expedient for bringing them back again, or saving the ship—of that he was as innocent as possible. For some moments they looked at each other, then at the schooner, which was now rapidly sweeping down on us. One or two of the marines, who had not at first gone below, speedily seeing what indecision exhibited itself in the councils of their betters,

quietly slipped down the hatchway, and were received with three cheers. The captain trembled—took a step—tried to speak—faltered—looked at the approaching schooner, then at the half dozen men who still surrounded him, and at last, summoning up a momentary energy, ordered the new boatswain to go below with a rope's end, and send the "rascally cowardly crew upon deck."

"Ay, ay, sir," said the boatswain, moving towards the hatchway.

"Don't come down here," cried the crew as he advanced, "or you're a dead man!"

The boatswain, hearing this, looked round at the commander.

"Go, sir," cried the latter, stamping with his foot on the deck.

The boatswain took a step down the ladder.

"Fire on him! Slap it into him! Shoot him in the head!" cried several voices below.

"Shame! shame! Don't hurt the old man!" cried others.

“Go below, sir!” roared the commander.

“It will be of no use, Claridge,” said I, unable longer to remain silent, “he’ll only fall to no purpose! A boatswain’s rank can have no power in awing them, and surely seventy men, or more, care nothing for an old boatswain’s arm and rope’s end! If anything is to be done, one of us should go.”

Claridge looked at the commander. The latter scowled at me, yet moved not a step towards the hatchway, but called still more vehemently to the boatswain to descend.

“Ay, ay, sir,” cried the boatswain.

“Stay, sir,” said I, stepping forward; “let me speak to them.”

But the sounds had scarcely left my lips ere four or five pistol bullets passed through the poor boatswain’s head and body, and came whistling aft, as they passed me on the quarter-deck.

On hearing this domestic music, the commander hastened to put the capstan between himself and his men, leaving Claridge and me

alone. For myself, I now felt placed in a most awkward position. My station and duty demanded that I should be in the gun-room, ready for any casualties that might occur. But to have gone to my post would have looked so like deserting the fallen, that, under all existing circumstances, I could not take any such step as to retire below.

Advancing then to the body of the boatswain, and pointing to his gray hairs dabbled over with gore, I asked the men "how any of his shipmates could have had the heart to stain him with his own blood?" I then implored them to return to their duty, but the only reply I received was,

"It's too late now, your honour, to think of that!"

The schooner, pushing her way with every minute, was now rapidly approaching. As the midshipmen were gathered in a knot abaft, the few men that still remained faithful were standing near them and around the mainmast, while the commander himself appeared, to all, to be

the most utterly bewildered, despicable thing that could be conceived. And whether he was going to sacrifice himself and vessel coolly, or what else he might intend, we were utterly at a loss to know, and so in truth was he.

In a few minutes the schooner would be alongside of us. At this juncture, the oldest of the midshipmen, coming forward, exclaimed to the men,

“Come, my lads! there’s no use in standing idle, while guns, shot, and powder are so plentiful. There are enough of us, at any rate, to man a couple of guns, and though that may be rather small for the brig’s broadside, ’twill be given with good will, whether or no.”

“Ay, ay, sir!” cried the remaining men, springing with the greatest alacrity to the two midship carronades, the youngsters joining them to get through their work more smartly. This piece of activity seemed in some degree to call the commander and Claridge to their senses.

“ Doctor,” said the former, “ you seem to have some influence with the seamen, and at any rate they will not fire upon you. Will you once more go quietly among them, and try if they will come back to their duty ?”

“ I will, sir,” replied I, “ with very great pleasure ; but, to do so with any effect, I must be at liberty to promise them a total oblivion of what’s happened, and a milder state of discipline for the future ;” for I saw no reason why I should mince matters with such a man, or hesitate to lay bare the truth.

“ You may promise it all, doctor,” was his reply—“ indeed you may. I swear,” looking towards his men, “ to abide by what you promise.”

I bowed, and, without another word or moment’s hesitation, went below. I found the men all armed, and coolly seated on their chests ; Beckett alone was standing amidst them, leaning on the armourer’s bench.

“ I am sent to you, my men, to promise you forgiveness for what’s past, and better days for

the future, provided you only return to your duty, and fight the ship properly."

"Who sent your honour?" bawled twenty voices.

"The commander, who swears——"

"He's a liar!" interrupted they all, as if with one voice, and many oaths; "he never swore to anything yet, that he meant to keep."

"Keep out of harm's way, Doctor!—Don't you interfere, my good fellow!" and many other similar cries, met any attention.

"All I ask of you, my boys," said I, advancing into the midst of them, "is a hearing. As you all know I have insisted on it before now with the captain for your sakes, I now ask it of you for his."

"Hear him out!—hear him out!" cried several, remembering my ineffectual attempts to serve them when at the gangway.

Something, I saw, might yet be done with them; but just at this moment "bang!" went the two quarter-deck carronades. This drew off the attention of my auditory. Every word

I could utter was drowned in the confusion of cries—calls—and guns; and to crown this scene of confusion, I felt a violent shock given to the brig fore and aft, while the cry of the mutineers—“There she is alongside!” and the noise of feet jumping on the deck, told me that the schooner had run us aboard to carry the ship by superior numbers.

Oaths—cries—the clashing of cutlasses, and the discharge of fire-arms, now bespoke the work that was going on above. Vile and worthless as I considered the commander to be, principle could only sanction one line of conduct. I had no wounded to demand my care, and that being the case, civilian as I might be, I was too much of an O'Donnell to choose any other post in such an hour than that beside the flag of my country.

To try and seize a cutlass, and rush up one of the waist ladders, was my first impulse; but these were already overcrowded by the crew. I flew aft, and there I found myself fastened down. I now turned forward again, and scrambling over the backs of some of the sailors, stood upon the

quarter-deck. A dead marine was the first thing on which I stumbled. His bayonet was yet undrawn, so, snatching it from its sheath, I advanced to the capstan. But the fight was over, even the futile assistance of a single arm came too late. The little band that I had left behind me—the faithful few—were all slaughtered, or so severely wounded as to know little of what was passing. They had gathered round the skylight-grating, on which their despicable commander had stood, and, fighting round his person, fell in a little tumulus of slain.

The captain alone seemed to have been spared. He stood apart, in the hands of five strong, muscular men, who were lashing his hands behind his back. On seeing me, he cried out, in a tone of the most abject pity, for me to interfere and save his life.

This appeal, so idle at such a moment, attracted the attention of his captors, and when the principal of these turned round—there, as I lived!—stood Donaghue!

“Infernal villain!” cried I, making towards him with my bayonet, “you shall not again escape me!”

But my weapon was, on the instant, beat up, and my further progress stopped by Beckett, who, with another seaman, hugging me in their powerful grasp with a strength that it was impossible to overcome, demanded if I was mad.

“No,” said I, struggling to get free; “but I see among the crew of that schooner”—something prompted me, as I uttered this word, to look up at her—and there, to my horror and dismay, floated the large black flag of *piracy* To be delivered up to the tender mercy of a West Indian pirate! “No, Beckett, you ungrateful hound!” I continued vehemently—“I am not mad, though I see among the crew of that pirate a scoundrel who——”

“Is there no friend of mine to cut that youngster’s throat?” cried Donaghue, hoarse with rage, and drawing forth a pistol, yet unable to get at me for Beckett’s person. A dozen arms were, however, instantly levelled towards my head with their drawn cutlasses, thirsting for more blood; but Beckett, backing me up against the bulwark, drew forth his

own weapon with the speed of lightning, crying—

“Hands off, my boys, and fair play! This is my share of the plunder, and those who want to cut my prisoner’s throat must take mine on the road. As to you, old Ropeyarn,” turning to Donaghue, “this is no time to pay off old grudges. I owe the doctor here—my life twice over, and I’ll be sent to old Nick out and out, before any harm shall come to him; so let anything that is between you stand over till next time.”

“I don’t want to touch the fool, if he’ll only keep out of my way,” said Donaghue, putting his pistol into his belt, yet looking at me with a malice that gave the lie to every word.

“There, doctor,” said Beckett, “you hear that—now hold your tongue.”

“Never,” said I; “that unhung villain murdered the dearest friend I had on earth, and blood for blood!”

Here Beckett thrust his great horny hand over my mouth, crying out to some of his brother mutineers—

“I say, shipmates, we must gag this good

gallipot gentleman of ours, or he won't be long in this world, I guess."

On hearing these kind intentions I struggled to get hold of a pistol, but in vain. Beckett still kept his hand on me, and four or five fellows carried me below. My hands and legs were lashed, and though not painfully, yet so that I could not move them; while a handkerchief being tied over my mouth to quiet the torrent of abuse I bestowed on all hands, in this comfortable condition, and the most boiling rage, I was laid on what had so lately been our mess-table.

This cruel kindness having been thrust upon me, I was left to make the most of it, while my protectors and persecutors returned upon deck. They now assembled round the capstan to try their late captain; and a mock court-martial having been formed of nine of those seamen whom he had most cruelly punished, including Beckett, the last-named seaman was elected president, and adjourning to the captain's cabin, and wearing his own cocked-hat and sword, the maintopman ordered his steward to produce the

commander's wine upon the table. Around this sat the court.

With many jokes, but few dissentient voices, they found Captain E—— guilty of cruelty and cowardice—two vices which generally do, and ever ought, to go together. They then sentenced him to receive nine dozen at the gangway for the former crime, “just,” as they phrased it, “to see how he liked it;” and then, for the cowardice, they used the bitter mockery of saying that they would have pardoned him—*but for the articles of war*, which so plainly insisted on the culprit's death, that they must be obeyed,—so he was to be hanged.

As to defence, that never occurred to their jurisprudence; they did not ask for a word of that—nor, indeed, was any offered.

Their unhappy victim was like the ox under the knife of the butcher. The first heavy blow had so stunned him, that, to all appearance, he was luckily insensible to the sanguinary fate in store.

The only part of these proceedings which was debated was the sentence. Some said nine

dozen lashes were too many ; others contended that it ought to have been eighteen : for as the members of this mockery of justice were to divide among themselves, for their own gratification, the punishment they had awarded, the proposer of this mild retaliation thought there would be “ no fun in giving less than one dozen a piece to such a fellow.”

By this time the court were all somewhat inebriated, and one remarked, “ ’Twould be a pity to give him such a very severe flogging, for in that case he,” the intercessor, “ feared that the prisoner wouldn’t sufficiently feel the hanging.”

“ That,” added another, with a maudlin shake of the head, “ would be a —— pity !”

This argument at once fixed the punishment at four dozen and a half, or six lashes each. The ill-fated commander was then to be hung from the yardarm.

“ As to hanging,” said one, “ hanging’s by far too good a death for such a rascally thief. Is there nothing — no offisher of the court

can suggest to keep him on the hook a little longer?"

At this question, which so showed the terrible ferocity of a revengeful heart, I distinctly heard the prisoner groan, for nothing but a thin partition now divided us, and even that was broken. With all his deep, and almost unpardonable faults, my heart bled for him, delivered up as he was to the unbridled license of men whom he had so dreadfully provoked — who had sought so long and so eagerly for his blood — and over whose most refined cruelty not the slightest check could now be held by any living being.

A long pause followed this last horrid question, and then one named "walking the plank!"

"Too short."

"Blowing from the mouth of a gun" had the same objection.

At last the solution of this question was undertaken by a fellow who had been my loblolly boy. In this capacity I had allowed him to

read one or two general works of science, though, had I known to what purpose this knowledge was to be applied, he should never have met such indulgence from me. This fellow had been but lately and severely flogged for some comparative trifle, and the wounds on his back were not yet well, at the very moment when he sat judging his captain—a fact that should be taken into account when reading the proposal which he made; namely, that “the skipper there is quite good enough for hanging, gentlemen, if you will only do it the right way.”

“How’s that?” demanded the president.

“Why not by the neck in course,” replied the loblolly man, “that would be soon over; but if so be you’ll only take the trouble to tuck him up by the feet, you’ll have an opportunity of asking him how he likes it, or, for the matter of that, the flogging and the hanging might then go on together.”

This horrible ingenuity in torture was received with a shout of applause; but the union of the two was rejected, the ultimate decision

being, that the commander should first receive his punishment at the gangway, and then be suspended by the feet from the fore-yardarm, hung only, however, by his favourite instrument of torture—the cat-o'-nine tails—so that if this proved too weak to keep him up, his release by drowning would be instantaneous.

On hearing this most eruel sentenee, I strove very hard to utter some sort of intercession. A low moaning sound was all I could express, however, and this no one noticeed. No sooner, therefore, was the sentenee known, than it was received with three eheers, the members of the court drank suecess to the eommander's last voyage, and repaired to the quarter-deek to execute their revenge.

As I lay bound and helpless on the gun-room table, I reflected to how sad a state humanity could be brought by oppression, and how elevated by gratitude; when one and the self-same man—Beckett—could risk his life to save mine, for no very great benefit beyond mere humanity, yet be willing and happy in presiding at a condemnation so outrageous and cruel

as that pronounced on Captain E——! This ill-fated officer having been tied up at his own gangway, his judges drew lots who should first turn executioner. The lot fell upon the loblolly-boy—no boy at least in his person—and the remorseless strength with which he struck his old persecutor brought forth screams that seemed to pierce through my very heart. But to help the sufferer was entirely out of the question for one unable to help himself.

To the men themselves, the unceasing cries made for mercy were equally vain, though from a far different reason. Suddenly they died away. I expected this—he had fainted! With what dreadful anguish must he have recalled the day when his will bestowed the same fate upon Beckett for—falling overboard!

The loblolly-man here came running down for the hartshorn and water. I heard distinctly the pause caused by his revival—a word of command was given—the screeches and cries were renewed, but in a fainter voice. The punishment had commenced again. Nature might well be exhausted. Of an ailing habit

and weak frame, his strength was unequal to such a severe retribution.

Cries sank into groans—groans into silence—and, I concluded, a state of syncope, which would necessarily render him insensible to the lash, that I could still hear falling.

“Now,” thought I, “if a sail should suddenly heave in sight, and this man, being rescued, should get restored to the service, what will be his conduct in future to his men? Far different no doubt! Though in all probability he would never trust himself on board a ship again.” This question was, however, never fated to be tried.

The commander was taken from the grating—his feet lashed together. To this lashing were knotted the cats that had been used to flog him, and the whole to a gantline, which the men had already taken the precaution to run through a block at the fore-yardarm. He was then stretched at his length on the forecastle bulwark, where, as I was afterwards told, he lay as motionless as a log of wood.

The gantline being passed aft, and manned

by the crew, one of the fore-castle guns was fired as a signal; and to the tune of "Nancy Dawson," played by his own fifer, the commander was run up to the fore-yardarm of that brig, the command of which he had so long abused.

From the description given me by one of the men, the culprit, whose arms were at liberty, tossed them fearfully in the air, trying to catch hold of the lashing which bound his feet; but it was in vain: such an act would have been one of the greatest difficulty to a man in possession of full strength and spirits; never, however, being very nimble, and now reduced to the last verge of life, the thing to Captain E—— was impossible.

Every succeeding effort became each moment the more ineffectual, and only served to excite the rude and drunken mirth of the crew, who watched their impotency with a savage delight, till, motion almost entirely ceasing, nothing could be observed of life, but every now and then a convulsive trembling which passed over the whole frame, and the involuntary twitching of

the features which suffusion of the blood had purpled, but which was soon again to fade into the pallor of the dead.

These proceedings having terminated, the pirates next proceeded to distribute the plunder found in the brig, and to make other arrangements necessary to their plans. In pursuance of these, I was, towards evening, carried up on deck, lowered into a boat, and conveyed on board the schooner which had boarded us. As they rowed me along, my eyes fell on the body of the commander, hanging at its full length in the air, the arms drooping down with all the listless helplessness of death.

The brig was about to make sail, in order to separate from the schooner, and it was judged time to cut the body down. Instead, however, of doing this, they took a quantity of muskets, and every man who wished to exercise his power as a marksman, discharged his shot at the lashing of the commander's feet, or the various lanyards that upheld them. Bit by bit these were at last shot away—many of the balls of course perforating the legs and body

of the wretched officer, till at last the sole remaining lanyards having either been cut or become too weak to support the pendent weight, the body fell with a sullen plunge into the waves below.

Before it could possibly have sunk more than ten feet below the surface, a shoal of voracious sharks, who had already been banqueted on the victims of the first short struggle, now rushed eagerly at the descending body, and tore it limb from limb!—Such was the end of a true tyrant. Cruel, horrible, odious, disgusting as it was, I have often since reflected with wonder that it did not cause the rising of a single tear to my eyes, that cannot even witness the mimic griefs of the stage without being unmanned by them!

CHAPTER V.

“ Theirs was the lawless life of licensed ease,
Nature their lord, whose every smile could please.”

SNOOKS.

As soon as I had been fairly placed on the deck of the schooner, my hands and feet were set at liberty, and the handkerchief taken from over my mouth. Beckett stood by, and in a confused manner apologized for the rude means he had been obliged to adopt for the preservation of my life. They had been rude indeed. But under every circumstance *I* had, perhaps, no individual right to be angry with one who had rescued me from deliberate slaughter; yet

still the rage that possessed my heart at having Kathleen's murderer once more obscured in mystery, at the very moment when the opportunity seemed to have arrived for clearing that mystery up, left me not a word to reply to him.

With feelings, whose tumultuous nature I felt myself inadequate to subdue, I walked in silence to the taffrail of the schooner, and beheld the Infernal stand away under a crowd of sail—bearing from me one whom I seemed ever destined to meet amid scenes of the most aggravated horror, and yet never able to bring to his richly-deserved account.

While I was yet sorrowfully musing on the fate of which I was thus the sport, and watching the sails of the departing brig fade into the distance, some one touched my elbow. I turned round, and there stood my servant boy, who had been accustomed to attend me on board the brig.

“Dinner's ready for you in your cabin, sir,” said he; and showing me below to a most convenient berth, I there found everything arranged far more comfortably than would have

been the case in the gun-room of the *Infernal*, had I remained on board her.

This attention confounded me—a new train of fears arose in my mind. With all Beckett's gratitude, he did not, I hope, imagine that I was going to enlist as his surgeon. Mechanically I took a seat, but the melancholy thoughts of my late shipmates intruded too much upon my mind to allow of anything but sickness and disgust. Scarcely had the boy taken the things from the table, when down came Beckett himself, to hope I had received proper attention. I of course thanked him, as far as I was concerned, but expressed the deep horror I felt at the late scenes, and my earnest wish, that if his gratitude was anything more than mere profession, he would take the first opportunity of freeing me from a life so hateful. To this he replied, "That if I would give a solemn promise never to appear as evidence against him, or the crew of the *Infernal*, he would comply with my request."

"As to that, Beckett, I must do my duty as a gentleman and an officer, in however trying a

situation I may be placed," said I; "and all I can promise is, that I will shun such an inquiry to the last degree."

"Well, sir," replied Beckett, "I won't be hard upon you. What's passed has no doubt been trying enough to your feelings. If there's any man I can trust, it is you. I've no doubt we must swing for this pretty day's work at some time or another; and if so be that's to be the case, I'm not the lad to go fighting about the bush to get out of the way of it. Only your honour must know that hanging is a pleasant sort of skylarking compared to the life we led in that brig—so I thought I might as well sell her and the blackguard that commanded, and have one jolly cruise before I was tucked up as not. I couldn't have stood that skipper of ours much longer; and if I'd only raised a finger at him, you know 'twould have ended at the yardarm, and even now 'tis no worse."

This homely and undisguised argument, coming from one in whom religion had infixed no principle of right and wrong by which to direct

his conduct, when the delusive guides of passion and self-interest assailed him, spoke more, to my mind, of the bad system of the English naval discipline, than could a volume of the most subtle logic. The assertion of having made up his mind to "sell the brig" awakened my surprise; and, on questioning him, it appeared that Donaghue, having heard of the discontented state of the *Infernal's* crew, had found opportunities, during the siege at Martinique, to tamper with the most influential and violent of her men — Beckett among the rest—until, by pointing to them the joys of a life of unbridled license, and promising to glut their revenge upon their late tyrant, they had agreed to deliver her up on the first opportunity of her being at sea.

In pursuance of this plan, the foretop-gallantsail halyards had been cut as a signal on the part of the mutineers, and the gun instantly fired by the schooner was its acknowledgment. Both parties then knew each other, and the schooner, confident of her prey, bore down on the brig in the way which I have already de-

scribed, and which so surprised me at the time, though the manœuvre was rendered infinitely more easy than it might otherwise have been, by the accidental state of the weather.

The conduct to be pursued by these confederates was this—all plunder was to be shared, a system of telegraph established between them, and each vessel to have its separate rendezvous, head-quarters, and cruising ground. The schooner was to keep up the character of a French privateer, and the brig that of an English man-of-war, which would enable them to play off various stratagems—such, for instance, as in coming up with a convoy, the schooner was to make an attack—the brig feign coming to their relief, and both plunder them to the last degree.

Nothing, therefore, could have answered their purpose half so well as what had happened, and the destruction that might ensue to life and commerce, before the cheat was found out, was, I saw, very great. At present I was told the schooner had been out so long as to have exhausted nearly all her stores, and was

then on the way to head-quarters to refit. Beckett next informed me that we should be there a month, amid the most exquisite scenery it was possible to imagine; but that he could not venture to give me my liberty, unless I would take it on solemn parole of not asking the name of the island, or indeed any other question that might place in my power more information respecting their movements.

In doing this I saw no precise harm, and yet I felt unwilling to take such a step. Beckett saw my hesitation, and said that unless I would do so, he could not undertake to answer for my life among a set of men who were constantly given to spilling the blood of one another, and who valued that of a prisoner as much as that of a dog. This altered the case *in toto*, and perfectly justified me in giving the pledge required. Bringing my philosophy to bear whatever might be in store, I felt thankful that I had, in the strict discharge of my duty, so firmly attached to my welfare this humble, though, alas! most erring friend.

His attention to my personal wants had even gone so far as to get conveyed on board the schooner the whole contents of my cabin. The thankfulness which I felt, when I once more beheld my books, is not to be described. Taking refuge in these old friends, I made shift to beguile away the time, till Beckett, one morning, sent down word that we were entering harbour: this was at the hour of five; I dressed in haste, and, going on deck, beheld the loveliest sight I ever saw.

Nothing could be more perfectly beautiful than the weather of that morning; not the shadow of the slightest fleece was to be seen in the heavens to obscure the rays of the rising sun, as its early beams gilded the pale blue vault, or threaten a conclusion to the day less fair than its commencement. The schooner was advancing to its port under a light but steady breeze, that scarcely ruffled the liquid world of sapphire beneath us.

The eye seemed to pierce down its unfathomed depth with unobstructed ease; and as the sharp edge of the vessel cut through its

clear volume, and caused a number of light ripples to form before and welcome her advance; the edges of these crisped into foam like so much crystal, and conveyed to the mind a feeling of freshness and delight, that contrasted painfully with the scenes of blood and violence I had witnessed so brief a time before.

While this was the scene at sea, that on shore was not less attractive and imposing. The land which we were approaching was high, and covered with that delightful verdure which so distinctly marks the features of tropical landscapes. Some of the hills were feathered with palm trees to their very summits, while here and there the yellow and purple cliff gleamed forth to be again covered in wood, which, nestling in its shady nooks, caught the deep blues of the ocean and the sky.

In vain did I look for the harbour to which the schooner was steering. Gigantic precipices alone seemed to surround this heavenly shore, and to guard its entrance from all mortal intrusion. At last I descried just ahead, in the

steepest part of the cliff, something which looked like a long cleft, or vast fissure in the rock, but I could scarcely make up my mind to believe that any entrance could exist for a vessel there. I looked along the shore to see if there were any breakers; but no—the water swept proudly up to the very base of its beetling cliffs, and there fell with a swelling but gentle music, like the song of a contented mind.

Altogether it appeared just such a fairy land as youth and love combine to paint to their own desiring vision, when, filled with images of beauty and affection, they dream of happiness never to be realised.

My first impulse was to send down my servant to my cabin to bring up my sketch-book, that I might put down some remembrance of so perfect a spot; but I remembered that my motives might be misconstrued; so I neither asked a question nor drew a line, but contented myself with looking on, half expecting that some rude and sudden movement would sweep the whole spot away, as we have frequently seen the fairy frost-work of our sleep

depart at the summons of the most commonplace noise in life.

This, however, was a reality, and, instead of fading away, it every moment grew more distinct and near; while presently I beheld the dorsal fin of the shark slowly cruising round, and bearing dark testimony, that if a paradise were before me, it was one of earth — that the voracious monsters of the deep forbad the delicious bath in its clear waters — that serpents, scorpions, and mosquitoes alloyed the beauty of its bowers; while, strongest proof of all, a nest of pirates, men of blood and violence, had chosen it as their home, and perhaps in no place on earth could I point out more of the vile and odious in human nature than was to be found before me.

We had now arrived within a few ships' length of the stupendous rocks; but that which had before seemed a mere cleft was become a deep clear opening of fifty yards across, the abrupt cliffs rising on each side like a wall, and far overtopping the lofty masts of our schooner. Just before we entered this narrow and certainly

most beautiful strait, I saw protruding from among the underwood and strong clambering cane-brake that covered either of these mountainous portals, sundry ominous muzzles of ships' guns, which the ingenuity of the pirates had hoisted up to their present inaccessible posts, and then pointing them down on the water in almost every conceivable angle, had hung there in chains and ropes, to be ready for the defence of their retreat in case of any emergency.

Not indeed that this was ever very likely to arise; for though I had seen the approach, I am confident I might have gone round the island for ever, if unassisted by anything but the eye, and yet not have been able to detect the spot again; while, determined, since I had given the letter, not to violate the spirit of my promise, I had resolutely abstained from taking any landmarks or bearings. Just as we were passing between the two threatening portals I have described, a seaman's voice was suddenly heard hailing us with—

“What luck, my hearties?”

“The best of luck, and plenty of it,” replied one of Beckett’s mates. I tried to detect the hailer, and looked first on one side and then on the other, in vain; till, watching the direction of the second speaker’s eye, I at length descried an old man seated on a pinnacle of rock some distance above the masts of the schooner, and so far beyond me that he appeared a mere pigmy, though in reality a tall gaunt fellow of more than six feet high.

After we had proceeded about a hundred and fifty yards, the narrow inlet opened upon a spacious bay, more like the creation of a painter’s pencil than anything else. At the end of this large harbour perched a high rock, with the same view to security and self-defence which the entrance had exhibited. I perceived an assemblage of rude huts, from which came pouring down to the beach a number of women, most of them bearing children in their arms. These all crowded into a large old barge, and while the schooner dropped her anchor, they pushed off and rowed on board.

The generality of these women, the sailors’

wives, were dark, but many, on the other hand, were fair, and some might even have been termed lady-like. They had been captured in various prize-ships, some in slave, other in merchantmen and ships of passage, and some even carried off the coasts where their varied charms happened to attract the fancies of the lawless men, who, Sabine-like, had made them their own. One or two I afterwards discovered to possess the rank of the middling classes in England, and many of the accomplishments with which girls of this degree are educated previous to being sent out to the West Indies to their fathers, relations, or, as they might have thought, future husbands. Captured on the voyage, and carried off to this beautiful but lonely and savage spot, their lives had, no doubt, been at first as deeply miserable as any that, by the inscrutable permission of Heaven, can visit the human race.

Forced, however, to a submission that had no choice, each became allotted to some conqueror, as in the iron days of Homer, and

the first feelings that tended to restore them to the sufferance of life were those of a mother. For the sake of their children, they learnt that hard philosophy, whose lessons had been too difficult for themselves alone — the resignation of our hearts to the evils that are neither to be avoided nor overcome, and the humble but unceasing endeavour to distil whatever good is mixed up with the ills constantly imposed upon us.

Of females placed in this singular position I found no less than five, two French and three English; and strangely did many of the luxuries and refinements of Europe appear to my eye in that secluded corner of the world. Two of the ships in which these had been captured, had on board pianos. These had been preserved for them, and brought up to this little wilderness, while the constant leisure afforded by the fact of their husbands having to cruise at sea, induced them to cultivate what talents they possessed for music to the utmost.

The schooner had no sooner dropped her anchor and furled her sails, than this bevy and

boat-load of wives came on board ; and I could scarcely believe that men, whom but a few days since I had seen revelling in murder and in blood, could nurse in their hearts' cores those tender emotions of love and affection which I saw them display. For myself, so unexpected, indeed so inconceivable, did the existence of such a place and people seem, that I was lost in a perfect trance of bewilderment and surprise.

All hands immediately repaired on shore to breakfast ; and Beckett, with as much respect as if I had been still under the king's pendant, asked me to accompany them : this I did. Before going, however, one little scene occurred on board, relative to the lately made widow of the former mate of the schooner : he had been killed in the late action with the brig, and on his wife repairing on board to see him, Beckett had to break to her the intelligence of his death. She was an English girl, and certainly very pretty ; but, having only been a year on the island, could not be supposed to be very violently attached to a man whose

introduction had taken place to her under scenes of the greatest horror.

As she stood listening with a grave countenance to the certainly very artless attempts of Mr. Beckett to console her, I thought I heard the latter mention my name; he certainly looked towards me, and I, ignorant of what had happened, supposed that she might be in ill health, and that Beckett was recommending me as her "medical attendant." Nothing, however, being said to me on the subject, I of course took no notice of it, but descended to the boat waiting alongside, and was conveyed to the shore.

The newly-made widow was placed next me as we rowed along. I thought I observed her face to be wanting in the expression of gladness that irradiated most of the others; as soon as we landed, therefore, I inquired of Beckett the reason

This he immediately explained, and added, that as her late husband had made her house one of the best in this place, and as I should want the accommodation of some rooms, he had

spoken to her on my behalf, in regard to that part of her cabin which she did not herself require.

Thanking him for what appeared at the moment no more than ordinary civility, he and I walked with the fair disconsolate to her house, and I was installed in two small, but, all things considered, two most comfortable rooms. This over, we repaired to a large rude building termed the mess-house, where, on any extra occasions, the members of this little state were accustomed to celebrate their festivals of return and departure, the capture of any rich prize, and also to hold their war councils when on shore.

Here then we breakfasted, on what would in London have been esteemed the most refined delicacies. Fish, meat, fruits of the greatest variety, with tea, coffee, bread, and preserves, all made their appearance. No wonder such a life, to uncultivated minds and enslaved bodies, held forth charms that could both tempt and retain them from all the better paths of duty and integrity!

The men who had been brought from the

brig with Beckett seemed ready to run mad with delight. One prevalent mark of virtue was, however, the sparing hand with which they served out spirits; for they had both sense and resolution to know and remember that inebriety would destroy every comfort they possessed, by annihilating all species of subordination.

This last was, however, kept up on all the essential points with a most severe hand; and though the infliction of personal punishment was regulated with greater justice, and never ventured on but after a regular trial by the seniors, it was in such cases administered with a stern savageness, that left far behind it even the practice of Captain E——.

After breakfast the whole assembly broke up, dispersing themselves in such various parties, and on such amusements, as most suited their tastes: some went to catch fish for dinner, others to work at the repairs of the schooner, some were appointed to mend sails; and so every one seemed to have an occupation but myself. I wandered by the side of the water round the harbour, and then attempted to climb a steep

hill and look out to sea ; but being in a valley, and the heat very powerful, this soon became too laborious an amusement ; so I sat me down in the shade, and surveying the scene around, and musing on the strange changes of my fortune, and calculating the possibilities of my next falling in with "the world," I passed away my time.

As it was impossible that greater pains could have been taken for my amusement than was daily shown by Beckett and his men, I soon, from mere inability to help myself, sunk into a very bearable state of passive endurance. All my traps had been sent on shore from the schooner to my lodgings : and what with making water-colour drawings and sketches of little scenes in the neighbourhood, which could never be turned to any use in betraying them, which I generally gave to the men's wives, together with music in the evenings, and fishing and shooting, I often thought I was in great danger of becoming a pirate myself.

My profession, however, saved me from being held utterly useless by the men, because I did

not do so, while the fact of my being ever ready to turn out at night and attend their children made me a most popular person with the potent genocracy of the pirate's wives. With the knowledge that these people were only pursuing an upright path of life, and the presence of one whose death I could never cease to mourn, how perfectly happy I could have been !

I do not mean by this to lay claim to the superior wisdom of turning my back on ambition, or other allurements, for which men in society so often sacrifice the luxury of a quiet and contented heart. With the path open before me, I could have wept, with Alexander, for new worlds to conquer ; or fallen with Cæsar for his soaring crime, " even at the base of Pompey's statue." But I had been schooled in deep adversity, and made to read each thought and impulse of my own mind by that sad searching light which the actions of others throw on the impressive page of life.

'The wish to shine, pursued beyond the humble bounds of moderation, appeared to me to

have ruined millions, while the sense to enjoy what we really do possess, like alchemists' elixir, was, I thought, capable of turning all it touched to gold. But though thus disposed to be as happy as possible, the sacred remembrances of the heart were neither to be overthrown nor neglected.

Again and again I tried to draw from Beckett if he knew what had been the matter in dispute between Donaghue and myself; but he assured me that the latter had never mentioned my name to him, or one word that in any way related to it, with the exception of those which had passed in my presence.

When I heard this, I felt very much inclined to give Beckett a few outlines of the story, in hopes that he might be able to assist me in my endeavours to ascertain the truth, and bring the murderers to justice. But I could not bring myself to discuss such a subject with him in the first place, and then I reflected on the slender chance that I should ever again see him after we had parted, and the great reluctance with which he would be brought to

criminate him with whom he was acting, even though it should be to oblige one to whom he professed and showed such deep gratitude.

These reflections induced me to observe a strict silence on the matter which was weighing at my heart, and with hope once more, however faintly, awakened, I heard mention made of the schooner being nearly ready for another cruise, and the time of her departure at hand. Beckett was himself the first person from whom I received this intelligence, and he came one morning into the room where I was sitting, to ask whether I would prefer to remain on shore till the schooner came back, or to go with her to sea.

“Go with her to sea,” I immediately replied, with a promptitude that could leave no doubt of my intentions. This question I had expected, and was prepared for it accordingly. Open as my friend Beckett had been, I saw that he too had in him a little of that intrigue which seems so necessary a part in the composition of a chief, of whatever kin, country, or degree whatsoever.

In procuring me apartments with the hand-

some relict of the late pirate, I saw that he had looked forward to my forming a tie too strong for breaking. With many men this might have been the case; I, however, was self-armed, and though I perceived his vexation at my fixed resolve to depart, and certainly did entertain every gallant tenderness for my pretty and kind hostess, I would not allow my resolutions to be broken. But the chief obstacle opposed to their execution was the clamour of the swarm of mothers, whose claims on my further residence and therapeutic art they demonstrated in the most urgent and unequivocal manner. When, however, I would not be shaken, they asserted I should soon come back to them with joy; and so I could only wish them joy of their pleasing delusion. Finally, however, they made up a boat's crew of petticoats, and towed me on board, as the most especial mark of honour they could confer.

As they pulled merrily along, laughing and joking with their doctor, I could not help thinking that such a distinction should have fallen on the gallant Howard, whose capacious

heart would doubtless have enabled him to make love at once to every woman on the island. At the last moment, however, accompanied with many injunctions to capture another doctor for them, that they might always have one to spare the ladies, they returned to their barge, and with much weeping and wiping of eyes and waving of handkerchiefs, we sailed through the narrow inlet, gained the sea, and bore away.

Despite all the vices and odious crimes with which, no doubt, the greater part, if not all of these men, were stained, I must admit that greater respect or more true kindness no man ever received, either on board the quarter-deck of a man-of-war, or indeed anywhere else; and I confessed to myself, as the land faded from my sight, that few things would ever prove half so distressing to me, as being called upon to give one tittle of evidence against any of them.

The worst part of my captivity was, I imagined, still to come. With the exception of the unaccountable carrying off the brig, and the revolting execution of its commander, I had

hitherto only beheld the sleek skin and beautiful pace of the cat ; the heart of the fury and the claws of the tiger were yet to be displayed, and I thought with horror of our capturing some unhappy merchantman, or other prey, and seeing every living soul, but the women and a few perhaps of her too willing men, compelled to walk the plank, or yield up their throats to the knife like oxen at the shambles !

For a few minutes I regretted that I had left our late quiet retreat ; but the course I had taken, though not free from evils, was far the wisest. Had I remained on shore, and the schooner been captured, in all probability I should have had to pass my life on the island. Now, at any rate, I had a chance of escape, and of resuming those views which had led me to embrace the navy as a profession. On the morning after our departure, not a trace of the island was to be seen ; and Beckett, who was assisted in command by a man that had once been a teacher of navigation on board a British man-of-war, declared he was in expectation of being soon joined by the brig, which

was to meet the schooner in a certain latitude.

The brig, he told me, had been to another rendezvous among the West Indian islands, possessed of greater facilities for repairing their ships. There she was to have been fitted on the swivel principle, with a long thirty-two pounder, they being both destined, on their union, to cruise in search of a heavy convoy daily expected from Ireland.

My heart sank within me at this intelligence, and the name of dear old Ireland came on my soul like a knell! But I had no help for it but in philosophy, which, after all, is now and then, even with the best riders, found to be but a sorry nag, and terribly overridden.

To the great surprise of Beckett, but the still greater joy of myself, when we arrived on the cruising ground, or rather that of the appointment, no brig appeared. A week passed; there we lay stretching first after one strange sail, and then another; but none appeared to be that which we sought, and many a goodly fat trader was missed, because Beckett was un-

willing to lose sight of the appointed place on which he promised to be found.

Three days more stole away, and yet no brig. Again and again, Beckett considered whether he had mistaken the instructions of his accomplice, but there was no reason for believing this to have happened.

At last, just at daybreak on the eleventh day, a sail was descried from the masthead. It stood towards us, and we towards it. The approach on our part, however, was very slow, owing to light baffling winds, if indeed there was enough of them to deserve the name. We had soon so far neared the stranger, as to make out that she had square topsails, and top-gallant-sails, and Beckett had not a doubt in his own mind that this was *the* brig.

It was true that she looked rather large, but the day had scarcely risen, and Donaghue had agreed to make some alterations in her trim, with a view to her future sailing. By six o'clock she began to come up very rapidly, and another hour or two would, according to the pirates' calculations, effect the union.

As they were at this time, however, considerably to leeward of their cruising ground, Beckett, in order to save time, put his helm down, and stood to windward across the stranger's bows, when the latter, suddenly putting his helm aport, stood for the same point.

At this very moment of time, Beckett was examining the stranger with a glass, and I with my naked eye, and both involuntarily exclaimed,

“ She's a frigate ! ”

“ Ay, and by the lord Harry, sir,” added Beckett, “ he's trying to cut us off.”

Such was, indeed, the fact ; the stranger was a frigate of large dimensions too, and evidently sailed fast ; so much so, that I thought many of the schooner's crew might begin to rub their throats with an anticipatory notion of what usage was in store for them. At this time she was coming up with us, hand over hand, taking the schooner at the very disadvantage under which the schooner took the brig ; that, namely, of bringing the wind down with her, the breeze which filled the huge sails of the

frigate being five or six times as powerful as the light air that little more than urged the schooner through the water.

But though my late friends must undoubtedly have felt far less pleased at the man-of-war's approach than I did, still they would not for a moment allow the disagreeable position in which they found themselves placed, to cow their courage, or weaken their resources.

Beckett's first act was to put his vessel before the wind, and crowd on her every stitch of canvass which she could carry. This tended to increase the distance of the pirate from her pursuer slightly, but it was soon evident that the superiority of the latter's sailing would ere long bring her within reach of a battery against which her single gun had no chance whatever. I now gave them up for lost, and began already to torture myself with the cruel scene that was before me, when I should be forced by my evidence to become the means of death to those who had been so uniformly kind to me.

Of this, however, they had not at all so

vivid a conception ; on the contrary, Beckett came aft to me, fluttering, as I was, between these apprehensions and my hopes of speedy liberty, and telling me to get all my traps into the boat hanging astern, stated his intention of lowering me down in that poor cockle-shell, in order that the frigate might be obliged to heave to, and pick me up. Thus the stronger breeze which now filled the sails of the latter would then have time to reach him, and with his swift heels he should no longer have a fear.

I cannot describe how my heart bounded with delight at this proposal, which embraced within its scope both those objects—which, however weak in me, I must confess I had at heart—his escape and my preservation. I did not employ much time or precision in seeing my goods and chattels conveyed from my cabin ; they were literally heaped into the boat without order, or indeed anything but haste. Several of the crew crowded round and wished me a safe voyage, and Beckett, seizing my hand, shook it with emotion for himself and ship-mates

The boat was then carefully lowered, and with contending feelings I felt myself gradually descend upon the sea. The stern-falls were cast loose on board; my little cockle-shell came round head to the schooner; with some difficulty I unhooked the foremast and remaining fall, and dropped astern.

The schooner now swiftly shot away from me, whilst Beckett and one or two others remained standing near the taffrail; but their faces rapidly became indistinct, and I turned to regard the frigate. In less than half an hour the last was so near that I could distinguish the heads of her crew at quarters on the fore-castle, training the bow-guns, which they fired continuously, but without doing the schooner any harm.

No sooner had the figure-head of the pursuer come within sight, than I at once recognised my old ship—the Epaminondas. My joy was so great that I could scarcely believe my eyesight to have been correct;—but yet it was so. She steered directly for me, passing within five yards; and when Captain Howard looked

over his bows, and saw whom he was to pick up, his surprise at this odd meeting was even greater than mine.

Sail was shortened—the frigate hove to—lowered a boat—and my little dingy was towed alongside.

“What is she, doctor—a slave-ship?” demanded the captain with great eagerness, as soon as I gained the entering port.

“No, sir,” I replied, “she is no slave-ship; but if you will allow me a few minutes’ private conversation, I will explain.”

“Why, what’s in the wind now, doctor? Where’s your brig? You haven’t left her in the clouds by accident, have you, for you seem to have dropped from them?”

“Not so either, Captain Howard. That schooner”—and as I looked round for her, I saw to my inexpressible delight that she had at length got the strong breeze, and was vanishing down to leeward with the strength and flight of a young eagle.

“Well—well; what is she, doctor? Make

haste, man! Every minute takes from her chance of capture.”

“ I know it, sir; and there is nothing I should so deeply regret as our taking her. That schooner is commanded by Beckett, whom you must remember seeing in the watchmaker’s shop at Martinique. Nothing can be more trying than my position. He has saved my life fifty times over, and I know not how either to speak or to be silent of the past with honour.”

“ Right, my good fellow, right!” and Captain Howard grasped my hand and shook it warmly; “ I have but held my peace to try you! We know all about the brig—her capture—mutiny—and murder of her commander. Though, truth to say, such a fellow as that was only born to be hung; I always thought so—though, as Kali would observe, ‘ I never told anybody;’ and all that’s about it—is this—the admiral’s got a death vacancy. But is that the redoubted Long Tom schooner there to leeward?”

“ Yes, sir.”

“ Then I suppose, *pro forma*, we must resume our course after him, though now that you clipper has the wind, there’s little chance of our coming up with him—and so much the better.”

“ True, sir ; but had you not better seem to make the attempt, or those who are fit for no better occupation may seek to fasten some sort of blame on you ?”

“ Let those quarrel with the Howard’s lion who have faced his claws ! I’ll be sheriff’s officer for no man ; I don’t approve of seamen being first hunted into mutiny, and then hung for it. They can’t escape long, poor wretches, unless they give up this trade, and my conscience is quite easy as to ceasing the pursuit after their conduct shown to you — *aquila non captat muscas*—my eagle’s beak and talons were never made for catching flies. Beckett’s villany has been thrust upon him, but there is in the fellow the rough jewel of true virtue, though, coming under such a commander, it was indeed a pearl before swine.”

“ Well, sir, I’m glad these are your feelings ; of course I could ask from the regard of no man such a sacrifice as that of his conscience, but in this you act upon your own impressions entirely.”

“ Of course I do ; there is not, I firmly believe, a man in my ship, who, instead of taking my life, would not willingly give his to save mine—this has been the result, as you know, of no compromise of my duty ; and if that, and one or two other matters, which stand on the logs of my former ships, are not sufficient for the gentlemen at the Admiralty, they may take my commission, and welcome. If my sovereign were in my place, and I in his, I would love him all the better for acting as I do. If that’s not the way to try motives and conduct, I know nothing of the matter. There’s that foretopman, Green, who had been flogged six times when I exchanged him out of the Infernal brig at Martinique, as you may remember, for an experiment—there isn’t now a better man in my ship at this very day. But come, the schooner goes gallantly down to leeward, two

miles for our one; I'll have the watch called, and then you can tell me at your leisure the whole story. I have some friends below—old acquaintances of yours—who long for the renewal of past friendship.”

With this, Captain Howard left me to order the calling of the watch. So confused was I at this new whirl in the wheel of my fates, that I had quite forgotten to inquire how Captain Howard gained the intelligence. How could it have reached him? Fifty different modes suggested themselves, and none of them even so probable as that of the “bird of the air carrying the matter.”

Meantime the watch was called, the wind shifted round upon our quarter, and this I knew would be the schooner's favourite point of sailing. Nothing on the station ever had been able to come up with her, and I no longer had a fear that any such disagreeable success was in store for the Epaminondas. The officer of the watch, however, trimmed his sails, and stood away for her; but the lost moments were,

like most others of their kind, never to be regained.

At this juncture the captain's steward came on deck to request my attendance in the cabin. With a feeling of excitement, for which I could assign no reason, I went below, and found an elderly gentleman, and a lady of scarcely twenty years, by whose side stood Captain Howard. The father—for such he was—eyed me with a look of sternness and surprise, for which I could not account—his eyes wandering from his daughter's face to mine with an evident degree of doubt and perplexity, which immediately diffused itself to me. His child's countenance was unlike his, and yet both, strange to say, appeared familiar to me as the sun at noon-day, and yet neither could I distinctly remember.

Not so the lady. After observing me with great earnestness for a few moments, she exclaimed—

“ Yes, it is the same !” and taking my hand, with a mixture of warmth and dignity which

needed no language to proclaim her my countrywoman, she archly demanded if I did not remember my old playfellow?

That tone of voice went to my very heart, and doubled all the magic of the words.

“Can it be so, indeed?” said I, returning her friendly grasp; “or,” looking once more in her face, “I should rather say, can it be any other than my dear Lady Desmond?”

“Why—yes,” interrupted Captain Howard, “by-and-bye I hope it can be Lady Somebody else;” and smiling at his betrothed, for such I concluded she now was, he hurried out of the cabin.

So many years had elapsed since last we met, that I really felt quite thankful at having imparted to Captain Howard so much of my history, as, being communicated to my old friend, now saved us both from the deep pain of inquiry for those who were beyond every tribute of our love—save that which memory could offer.

Yet, although we spoke not of one with the thoughts of whose excellence both our hearts

were filled, the feeling was not less deep on her side, nor less agonizing on mine. Who are they who cannot remember how they have trembled when some one, connected by friendship or accident with the absent possessor of their love, has suddenly appeared before them? Who cannot remember how even the meanest object or the most indifferent person is then encircled with a charm and an importance that in any other position would have been ridiculous and impossible? If a stranger to ourselves, how we long for his acquaintance!—If an acquaintance, how rapidly we invest him with the privileges and dignity of a friend! and if a friend, then how doubly dear!

It was not until Lady Desmond, or as, with a faithful affection for olden days, she desired me to call her—Ida—had put to me several common-place questions, that I could regain my self-possession. Fancying that the presence of her parent was a restraint—for, from his reserved and haughty disposition, I had never seen much of him in boyhood, she proposed that we should take a walk under the awning

of the quarter-deck. Here followed one of those delightful and unreserved discussions which have the power to atone to us for half the sorrows of our lives.

While discoursing of all the varied events that influenced our fortunes since childhood, the grave seemed almost to relinquish its dear dead, and those pleasures which now existed only in the dreams of our memory once again delighted the soul. When the evening arrived, the schooner had long been out of sight, and the Epaminondas had resumed that course for Jamaica which she was steering when a strange sail led her from it.

I would not trust myself to speak of Kathleen till the evening, and then, by the brilliant light of a West Indian moon, I repeated to her old companion the sad story of her mysterious disappearance, which the reader already knows.

She had previously heard it from Captain Howard, but wept bitterly as she learned every minute particular, which were too deeply and too sadly graven on my memory to fade. She

endeavoured as much as possible to infuse into my feelings a spirit of hope ; but, alas ! to what end was it to be indulged ? It is true her murderer yet walked the earth unpunished, and to make *certain* of his identity, and to achieve his just condemnation, was the only object of my life.

But could her mild spirit be gladdened at the death even of so odious a wretch ? or could it, after all, fill up in my own bosom the void which her assassination had made ?

“ No,” replied Ida to these observations, “ there is unfortunately too much truth in these remarks ; but it will be at least some consolation for you to have the mystery of her death—dark and dreadful as it is—set at rest ; and if the approaching execution of this wretch does no more, it may at least exculpate your father.”

“ The approaching execution ! ” I repeated. “ What do you mean ? ”

“ What ! has not Captain Howard told you ? ”

“ Told me ! No.”

“What is it I have not told you?” demanded Howard himself, coming up at the mention of his name.

“The apprehension of Donaghue!”

“True, Ida, neither have I. Yet how, doctor, we should both have forgotten—you to inquire, and I to tell you how I heard of your capture in the brig—is more than I can imagine. But Ida is to blame for all, no doubt! One can never think of anything else when she is in the way. It appears that this thrice-dyed villain—this accursed quintessence of a rogue—who has so often slipped through our fingers, had no sooner taken possession of the brig and disbanded her crew — part being put into the schooner, and the rest retained with himself—than he set off to some favourite rendezvous, where it was his intention to increase the brig’s force of metal, and I believe alter her rig. But though the halters of these fellows are generally long enough, they always manage somehow or other to get to the end of their rope; and this scoundrel, fancying that he still had under his feet the swift Long Tom schooner, edged down

too near to a corvette, in the hopes that she might turn out a rich West Indian trader. The corvette was the Falcon, lately out from England, and in light breezes very fast; she soon overhauled the Infernal, and Donaghue found too late that his best tooth had been drawn when he parted with the swivel thirty-two. I am told, however, that he fought his brig incomparably well, and after two hours' hard action was only taken by boarding, and so dangerously wounded as not to be expected to live. As for the brig herself, they just had time to take her wounded out of her, when down she went!"

"When and where, sir," I asked, with breathless interest, "did you hear this?"

"About a month ago, when lying at St. Vincents—was it not, Ida?"

"Yes, it was."

"So I thought. A man-of-war brig that had left Port Royal the day after the Falcon arrived there, gave me these particulars. One or two men taken in the brig had turned king's evidence, and the trial was ordered to come on

as soon as Donaghue should either have recovered from his wounds, or settled the question of his own fate by dying from them."

"Then by this time, Captain Howard, I may have lost the last and best chance of ever wringing from him the truth of Kathleen's story?"

"Indeed, that is much to be feared. On the other hand, to look at a brighter side of the picture, we may arrive just in the very nick of time to get everything from him; while the prospect of his approaching trial will induce him to make friends, and his wounds are so far healed as to allow of our getting at him. If not, I shall be doubly disappointed, first, on your account, and next on my own. For since you are sure he is the man that you saw on the seventy-four, he is the only one who can confirm our opinions on that subject. But let the case be as it may, we cannot accelerate our pace to Port Royal by grieving on the matter; and I think it high time the lady on your arm should leave the moonlight dews for the shelter

of the cabin ; and, Mr. Doctor, you must understand, moreover, that your *tête-à-tête* with the princess of another gallant has lasted quite long enough already for any rule of chivalry.”

CHAPTER VI.

“ In hopes to bask a little yet,
Just reach'd it when the sun was set.”

DESPITE of the injunction with which my kind-hearted captain closed the speech at the end of the last chapter, I found it no easy matter to adhere to that which reason so plainly recommended. The firm impression which I now entertained, that the crisis of my fate was approaching, and that every bound of the lively frigate brought me nearer to it, set at utter defiance all my efforts to be calm.

My mind would torment itself with that ceaseless question and reply which is always the

result of over-excitement. As some relief, I entered into the details of my friend Lady Desmond's history since we parted, which, with the exceptions of those little crosses arising from her own delicate health, and the opposition made by her parent to her attachment for Captain Howard, was as tame and unvaried as the lives of the wealthy often are.

The sequel of her story did, however, give me unfeigned pleasure, for it related to the tardy consent which her father had given to her approaching marriage. Having now resided during the winter in the West Indies, with evident benefit to her health, the learned brethren of my profession had given her permission to return to Europe for the summer.

Her father and suite, including herself and her physician, had therefore embarked on board the *Epaminondas* for Jamaica, whence the frigate was to be despatched to England with a convoy for Cork. On arriving there, Lady Desmond and her father were to be landed, and to make preparations for the immediate wedding, which was to take place at Desmond Castle,

whose well-appointed and haughty towers were visible from the more ancient, as well as poorer, turrets of my own deserted home. When she came to these details, she naturally touched lightly on them for many reasons, but the invitation she gave me to the scene of festivity was warm and decided in the extreme.

I could not give her a denial, but I looked it. The associations with such a neighbourhood, and such a scene, were too painful to be lightly encountered; and when she told me that I had been assigned a chief post in the celebration of the day, I understood that the part of bridesman was to be allotted to me.

But, in my own mind, I felt convinced that my present visit to Port Royal would be productive of some disclosure or event that must powerfully affect my future life, though utterly unable to explain in what precise manner. I, therefore, thanked her for the generous interest she took in my unpromising fortunes, and pledged myself to do all in my power.

Indeed, no words can express the blessing which her reappearance on the scene of my

existence proved to me. It was a link that restored me to my kind—that convinced me I was no longer that lonely thing, a being severed from all early ties—that I had still some one near me who felt, in common, an interest with those things that had interested me from my birth; and unconnected as we might be by blood, my heart opened to my early friend as to a dear relation, and in the youthful companionship of Kathleen I found and loved a sister.

“ In sight of Jamaica, sir !” said my servant, as he brought my shaving water under the screened berth that had been allotted to me beneath the half-deck. It did not require a second summons to induce me to leave my cot and hurry upon deck. A gallant breeze bore us right onward for our mark, under a press of canvass and studding sails, set below and aloft.

“ Doctor, we shall soon be there,” said the captain, who had already risen.

The frigate was going at the rate of ten miles an hour, and by nine o'clock we had dropped anchor in the harbour of Port Royal. Long

before this I was ready, at the first summons, to depart for the shore. The captain had asked me to breakfast with him in the cabin, and the sails had not long been furled when his gig was hauled up alongside: we descended into it, and pulled for the shore.

As we rowed along, I looked round at the scenes, and saw the dreaded palisades which had engulfed so many hundred thousand of my fellow Europeans; but there was nothing in the landscape to mark this out as one of the numerous approaches to the Valley of the Shadow of Death. On the contrary, it appeared to be one of those quiet spots in which, the turbulence of men's passions subsiding, they may grow into a warm old age.

“Now,” said Captain Howard, as our boat struck the shore, “criminals such as we are seeking, are generally confined in a prison, towards which I will show you the way.”

“That will be the wisest plan, sir, for fear of delays; but the scoundrel in question is of so obstinate and determined a nature, that it would surprise me but little were he resolutely

to refuse saying one word on either of the points on which we desire his elucidation."

"Well, we can but try. But here comes an old messmate of mine, as I'm alive!"

The gentleman approaching was a lieutenant. Captain Howard went up to him, and asked some questions, the answers to which seemed to give great surprise. They then both pulled out their watches. Howard, having looked at his, shook his head, then turning round, and beckoning me to follow him, set off running at full speed.

"Make haste, sir!" cried the lieutenant, as I followed.

What could this mean? I tried to overtake Captain Howard, and know the cause of this extraordinary haste; but the more I strove to overtake him, the more swiftly he darted forward. On he went—first through one street, then through another—the warm morning sun coming down full upon us at every heated step we took. Still I could not come up with Captain Howard. On he went, beyond all overtaking. At last I saw him turn the corner of

a street, and suddenly halt in his rapid flight—as though subject to one of those enchanting wands mentioned in the Arabian Nights—as if turned to stone.

In a few seconds I was by his side.

“What has happened, sir? What is the matter?”

The violence of his running had deprived him of the power of answering me, and he could only point upwards.

The motion was unnecessary. An immense crowd of people, of all nations and all colours, stood collected before us, and my eyes had involuntarily sought the direction to which Captain Howard's hand would have directed them. There—dreadful annihilation of all our hopes!—were hanging seven bodies, and in the centre of these, a tall and muscular corpse, of fearful power while yet life was in it, marked out the murderer and pirate—Donaghue. He had resolutely refused to have any cap drawn over his hideous countenance, and even in death it could not for a second be mistaken.

As I looked at the sickening sight before me

I felt, for a brief space, as if his death was also to be the signal of my own, and that the powers of life were suspended within me; nor was it till the tightened grasp of Captain Howard on my arm, and the low but reiterated question of, "Is *he* there?" recalled my attention, that I recovered myself.

As soon as we were convinced how ineffectual had been our haste to get speech of one who, many minutes since, had entered on the last account of Time, we turned to depart, making, first, such inquiries as informed us that the trial had taken place a few days before, and that fifteen of the pirates, including Donaghue, had been sentenced to be hung; that seven were to be executed on that day, and eight were to follow on the next. That the "first batch," as our informant termed them, had been turned off just twenty minutes before our arrival.

The intelligence that such was likely to be the case was communicated by the captain's friend in the street, which had urged him to such speed as he had hoped would enable him to get the ringleader respited for a brief time;

but with what want of success the reader knows.

Never since the day on which Kathleen was first carried from her home, had I felt any distress equal to that which I now endured. Hitherto I had buoyed myself up with the hope of having at least the mystery of her assassination made clear. That had been the aim, end, scope, and consolation of life; and now at one fell swoop, with the unrevealing death of this traitor, all had vanished. The grave had once more closed upon me, and all for which I lived. Now, then, I cared not how soon its dreary portals might receive and shelter so sad and worn a pilgrim as myself.

Captain Howard, under these circumstances, did all he could to cheer me. Perhaps, after all, Donaghue had made a confession. The clergyman who had attended him might be able to say something which would throw light on the dreadful secret which destroyed all my peace. We went to him. No!—the criminal had died a Catholic—if anything—and we repaired to his priest. The priest only told us

what we knew before ; namely, that he was a good-for-nothing fellow — certain, he said, of going to the worst of places, since he was both unwilling to confess and unable to pay. Not a mass, he said, had he ordered for himself on his dreary journey ; and where he was now, or what sort of secrets he had taken off with him, Father Anselmo was quite at a loss to know.

Alas, humanity ! how completely was this the every-day mockery of life ! With every feeling harrowed by disappointment to the last degree, to hear the fate of a fellow mortal's soul discussed like the imprudence of some inexperienced traveller who has gone on to the next stage without ordering post-horses beforehand ! — or as if the infamous atrocities of a whole life could at the eleventh hour be expiated, by the giving to one set of men, rather better than another, a few paltry pence, which were no longer of the least value to the dying !

Not that I thought, or ever will think, anything intolerant of this or any other form of religion. There is no creed professed under heaven but, to fallible beings like ourselves, must have

some inconsistencies ; yet I could not but wonder, and ever shall, how, to the most ordinary sense, the simple tenets of the Great Master could bear so strange a translation.

“ At least,” thought I, “ the mysteries of the future will to myself be soon unravelled.”

I felt, as I returned on board, that “ the pestilence which walketh at noon-day” had struck me down ; nor could I feel grieved that life—that boon to many, but that heavy load to me—was soon to be laid down ; that the spirit, released from its constantly recurring trials, would be allowed to possess the knowledge and the happiness for which it thirsted—to enter into the fulness and ethereal ecstasy of love unclogged by the drawback of low desires—to meet with the emancipated souls of those for ever dear—unsated by the lapse of time, unchecked by the fear of dissolution—Death, so dreaded by mankind, could only force me through his horrors once — and “ there an end !”

Captain Howard had remained on shore, and sent me on board in his gig. I no sooner reached

the deck of the Epaminondas, than I ordered my cot to be hung on the main-deck, and, turning into it, sent for Caustic. Having given him the few instructions which I wished to be observed on my death, I held out my hand, saying—

“Let me wish you good-bye before my mind fails—I feel it is going. Everything swims around me, and I am sick and faint to the last degree.”

“Tut, sir!” replied he, without altering a muscle, for with a strong effort I fixed my eyes on his face till everything grew dark and confused, “I shall do nothing of the sort whatever. You’ve come to your present resolution in a hurry, so of course it is a bad one, as all hurried matters are. I’d recommend you to think of it again before you go. There’s always a seat to be had in that coach, by giving a trifle or so to the guard. For my part, I’ve made my mind up not to start yet for forty years! By gosh, sir, it’s the truth! At eighty, or eighty-five, I *may* be thinking of a move!”

“ O, Caustic ! don't jest with a dying man ! ”

“ Tut, sir !—stuff !—trash ! I never jested yet with dying or living. What I tell you is the solemn truth, sir—I only wish you to alter your mind ; you may as well stay where you are, as be off on a long journey, because some trifle or other has gone wrong with you. Travelling in moderation is good ; but when a man insists on setting out to some far place, from which it is impossible to say when he'll come back—such a man, I say, is over-hasty, I say, sir, he's not considered the matter, and that's just the matter for your consideration. Give me your pulse.”

I made an effort to lift my arm, but it fell powerless by my side. I felt some one touch me—I heard voices by my bedside—but a current of lava seemed flowing through my brain, and every disjointed image presented itself to my mind, but the perception of what had become of me.

At a single glance, Caustic's experienced eye saw what had befallen. Over-excitement and

exposure to the sun had brought on an attack of yellow fever. Having ordered the few things that were necessary for me, he got a boat from the first lieutenant, and after much trouble found out Captain Howard.

On reporting what had happened, his superior very kindly expressed much concern; for, independent of any consideration of myself individually, Lady Desmond and her father were at this very time on board the frigate; and though no one but the first lieutenant, himself, and assistant, had any idea of what was the matter, still the painful fact must ultimately reach their ears, that yellow fever had broken out on board, and who should say where it would stop? He might lose her—he might lose the best part of his crew before he knew where he was.

“Well, sir,” said Caustic, “there’s only one good remedy for all this.”

“And what is that?”

“Get the admiral’s leave, sir, not to wait for the convoy, but put to sea again at once. This,

in all human probability, will not only save O'Donnel's life, but prevent the fever spreading to another case."

"I wish to heaven I could," replied Howard; "but the admiral here is, as you know, that unmanageable old dog, Sir Ginger Pop. Living up in that pen of his, in pure air, he doesn't seem to care one fig who goes by Yellow Jack, so long as he goes free. He happens to be in town to-day, and I've just seen him. He was, or pretended to be, in a great rage that I did not take that schooner. In answer to which, I very plainly expressed my fears, that I had not as much Jack Ketch in me as he seemed to require. The convoy won't be ready for a week; and, as it is, I've asked to be off on my own account; for, independent of every other consideration, I wish Lady Desmond to enjoy as much of the summer in Europe as possible. Well, just fancy, Caustic—the old hound said he could grant my request, but he did not think it probable he should.

"I asked, 'Why not?'"

"'Because he wanted officers to hold a

court of inquiry on the loss of the *Infernal*, and examine her late surgeon on every point connected with it.'

"Now this was the very point of all others I wished to avoid. But Sir Ginger seems to have a natural talent for hitting his horses on a chafed spot. If there is one thing more than another you hate, he's certain to brush you up on it! As sure as fate, he won't let me sail—though half the lives of the crew were at stake, much less that of O'Donnel, against whom—as I spoke warmly in favour of him I suppose—he seems to have taken the greatest antipathy."

"Well, sir," said Caustic, "this is very unfortunate; but you really must try him. Surely your representations will have some effect?"

"Not they."

"How so, sir?"

"Because his interests go against them."

"I can't possibly see that, Captain Howard."

"O, that, Caustic, I can very soon show you. Do you remember not long ago hearing some officers, who had been on this part of the

station, talking about Captain K——, and the astonishing luck he had in getting freights, and any other good thing that was going; so that nobody else could put in his claim for a share?"

"I do, sir."

"Well, the murder has now come out, and I learnt it this morning. Sir Ginger's son, you know, has just been posted, and he came out here a supernumerary, in hopes his father might be able to give him a good ship. Now on what sort of plan do you think that deep old boy has hit to effect his object?"

"Oh, Lord knows, sir!"

"Why, he fixed on Captain K——'s frigate, and sending for her commander, said to him,

"'K——, I want your ship for my son.' K——, who, as you know, is a wide-awake Scotchman, was rather startled from his propriety at this, and said something about having misunderstood his admiral.

"'That so good an officer as Captain K—— rarely does,' quoth Sir Ginger, buttering him up, and then adding a little jelly to his butter,

‘ particularly when the matter is made worth his while.’ It was now K——’s turn to quicken up his senses ; ‘ He didna exactly comprehend.’

“ ‘ Then listen,’ quoth Sir Ginger. ‘ Your chief object in keeping command of your ship is to make money. Now I’ll undertake to fling everything in your way that I can, in freights and so on ; provided, that when you have made a certain sum, you shall resign your command for my son.’ On hearing this, Mac pretended to be still very doubtful.

“ ‘ Come,’ said the admiral, ‘ we won’t stint you in amount ; say, as soon as you’ve made thirty thousand pounds?’

“ ‘ Agreed, sir, agreed !’ said Mac, and that very day Sir Ginger set his machinery in motion. Well might we wonder at the Scotchman’s luck. There was no end to it ! Thirty thousand pounds were soon made, but still Mac had an admirable degree of absence of mind about him. It quite escaped his memory to resign his command ! Sir Ginger gave him a hint—Mac didn’t think hints genteel—he never took

them. Sir Ginger remonstrated—Mac could not see the force of his objections. Still he kept command of his ship, and still added to his fortune every penny he could lay his hands on. Sir Ginger was now getting very hot—past boiling heat; but your Scotch, you know, Caustic, are cool fellows. Mac was no way moved at Sir Ginger's heat; but Pop's not the fellow to be done by any one; few indeed may wrong him with impunity, and his object he was determined to carry."

"Egad! if he did, it does him credit."

"Well, you shall hear. Finding that Mac would not quit his ship by fair means, Sir Ginger came to the resolution, the other day, when Mac anchored, of sending his own flag-ship to sea, and hoisting his flag on board Mac's frigate, thus keeping him in Port Royal harbour. At first Mac laughed at this in his sleeve, but Sir Ginger had, I think, the laughing side of it. By-and-bye the yellow fever broke out on board. The ship's crew and officers died off pretty briskly. Mac took lodgings on shore, and began to look out for the

return of the old flag-ship. She never came, but instead thereof a written order from the admiral, stating that, "In consequence of the dreadful ravages of the yellow fever requiring the greatest vigilance and strictest discipline on board the frigate, the flag-captain is ordered on no account to sleep out of the flag-ship till further orders." Mac was now fairly put to it: he thought it was better to march off with thirty or five-and-thirty thousand in a whole skin, than wait till Yellow Jack had put him beyond the power of enjoying any of it. The day after this order, therefore, he resigned. This was yesterday; Sir Ginger's son was appointed last night; and I hear the frigate is to sail to-morrow for a long cruise, to blow the remains of Yellow Jack from on board. Now my only fear is that we shall be kept here, to receive Sir Ginger's most diabolical flag; in which case I suppose the land-crabs will get the better part of us. Indeed, as he wishes to send his son to sea to-morrow, there can scarcely be a doubt that this was the reason why he so positively refused my re-

quest to go to sea myself to-day. Now I'll be off to him once more, and try what your report will effect."

"Not much, sir, I fear, under all the circumstances you mention; but if not, depend upon it the mischief won't end here."

"Very well," said the captain, "get you on board, and I'll come and report what success I have."

With this they parted; Caustic for the Epaminondas, Captain Howard for the admiral. In an hour and a half the latter was on board again; Lady Desmond and her father had been inquiring for him, and in expectation of his return had delayed their landing.

Caustic was walking the quarter-deck when the captain arrived; and he saw at once, by the countenance of the latter, that affairs had not gone smoothly, for Howard seemed in a greater rage than any one on board ever remembered to have seen him before. Caustic, of course, waited till he should be sent for. The captain, however, at once espied him at the other end of the quarter-deck, and, without speaking a word,

strode up to his side. With an oath, not of the most respectful kind towards Sir Ginger, he said, "I've seen the admiral, Doctor, and it's just as I feared! Here we are to stick, and no doubt to-morrow will bring us orders to hoist Sir Ginger's flag. Now, what, in the name of fortune, are we to do? I don't know that we have any way of helping ourselves."

"O, by gosh, though, yes we have; trust me, sir, for that!—Only what I would do, and what you may choose to do, are, perhaps, two different things!"

"Not they, doctor; I feel so savage with that iron-hearted old dog, I could do anything."

"Very good, sir, you have but to risk your commission, and the thing's done. Towards midnight, when the breeze freshens off the land, if your cable only *should* happen to snap, you can't help drifting out to sea, you know, sir."

"No; and by all that's good, I'll do it!—if only to enjoy turning the tables on old Sir Ginger"

In pursuance of these intentions, some excuse was made for detaining Lady Desmond and her father on board; all the necessaries and luxuries required to supply us on the passage to Barbadoes were hastily and quietly got on board, and at half-past two o'clock in the morning, when the land breeze was at its height, the cable of the Epaminondas was cut, the foretop-sail silently sheeted home, and a final adieu bidden to Port Royal and Sir Ginger Pop.

“Will he not be in a rage when he finds himself outwitted?” said Captain Howard to Caustic, as they stood leaning at the capstan.

“I hope so, sir,” replied the surgeon, very gravely; “or half the good of your departure is lost on him!”

“D’ye think he’ll try me by a court-martial?”

“Not he, sir; admirals never try honourables by courts-martial. They know very well it’s no use if they do; in a well-regulated navy you *might* stand a chance of it, sir.”

“Thank’ye, doctor, for the compliment; as Ollapod says in the Poor Gentleman, ‘I owe ye half a one;’ but what d’ye say to Lord Torrington’s brother—Byng?”

“ Quite a different thing ! Honourables in the navy may not be amenable to *justice* ; still you know, sir, they may be murdered as well as other men.

By eight o'clock of the morning on which the Epaminondas left Port Royal, four more cases of fever broke out on board, one of these in the person of Captain Howard ; and the other three among the men. Two of these last soon terminated fatally. Captain Howard, myself, and the third seaman recovered.

Lady Desmond's father, having unluckily learnt what the disease really was, did everything in his power to fall a victim to it—namely, by working himself up to such a pitch of fear and frenzy, that he seemed almost inclined to walk overboard, in order “ to avoid the contagion ” of a disease that was not contagious. Taking the most extreme measures he possibly could, he barricaded himself within the after-cabin, allowing no one to come near him but his own physician, whom he had, therefore, prohibited, under pain of his heaviest displeasure, from attending either Captain Howard or myself.”

“So,” as Caustic added, “though he took the least wise precautions for his own life, he took the very best for yours!”

To this plague-like seclusion he wished also to subject *Ida*, but she, spurning the idea, would allow no entreaties to dissuade her from watching over Captain Howard’s couch; and as we were both placed under one large skreen on the main-deck, I also shared her care. This was at last repaid: untouched by a single fear for herself, she saw us both come round once more to strength and health under her tender nursing.

In a pliant hour I afterwards drew from Caustic—stoic as he pretended to be—the admission that some of the happiest hours of his life were passed by our cots during that illness, talking and reading to the young peeress, and inspiring her with hope to bear up under the horror of that calamity which threatened her. No human lips could speak more strongly in praise of any created being than did he of her, while every afternoon she rewarded his assiduity by walking with him for an hour in the cool of sun-down, on the quarter-deck, while his patient slept.

Nor was this a period of unmixed suffering even to her ; no one was ever blessed with the society and conversation of that gifted being, without being sensible that they had beside them a most unrivalled companion. The immense fund of knowledge acquired by Caustie's constant reading, poured forth by an unfailing memory, and enriched by the play of a most fertile imagination, the drollery of his manner, his assumed dogmatism, and the original light in which every subject was sure to sparkle under his handling, can never be forgotten by those who were so happy as to break through the reserve with which his genius was shrouded—a modesty only too sincere for the advancement of himself and the delight of others.

As I returned to life, I became sensible how all my obligations to this noble fellow were redoubled ; for, not content with having restored my physical frame, he was unceasing in his efforts to console that mental anguish, for which a fresh, and, if possible, a deeper cause, had arisen in the death of Donaghue.

CHAPTER VII.

See ! on the horizon's verge—a sail ! a sail !

Danger is near—let not your spirits fail !

For some weeks we had proceeded on our voyage with every favourable circumstance. More than a fortnight had elapsed since our quitting Barbadoes: Howard, whose attack of fever had proved so slight as almost to raise a doubt if it came under the “yellow” denomination, had already persisted in returning to his duty, while consciousness and mental power had once more begun to rally in my own brain, when, on the morning of a brilliant day, sunrise found us becalmed. The sea

was one glassy surface of shining silver, dotted, at long and distant intervals, with the hulls of several vessels, whose canvass, hanging in dark melancholy folds, proclaimed them fellow sufferers under the same want of breeze. The heat was of course excessive; and although awnings were spread over the ship's decks to every possible extent, and water was thrown upon them every two hours, the heat nevertheless caused the pitch so to work out of the calking seams, that the promenade became more like a walk upon cobbler's wax than aught beside.

The day passed in the perpetual use of the long telescope, to descry, if possible, when the breeze was coming. But though sharp eyes gazed long and most intently for every dark patch in the horizon that could announce its advent, nothing was to be seen but the unbroken surface of the polished water, like a magic ring of silver, gigantic in its dimensions, and distressing in its power, but still presenting a sight whose sublime beauty all were forced to acknowledge. The second day of calm arose, and all hands hav-

ing retired to rest with the perfect belief that a fresh breeze would start up at daybreak, were not a little mortified at finding themselves exactly in the same position, the day equally fine, and the air equally unmoved. Objurgations, wishes, hopes, and fears might now all have been procured at the cheapest ratio upon the decks of the *Epaminondas*, as the vexatious delay tended to consume those fresh provisions which the officers had brought on board as a sea-stock, but which were rapidly diminishing before they could get to another port. Even the gentle Desmond gazed with astonishment upon the scene around, and having asked how long this calm was likely to endure, and being told that a calm sometimes lasted for weeks, replied with all the horror she could express—

“Why, the summer, then, will be over before we get back to Europe; if these are calms, I should prefer a storm, so that it came the right way.”

“Ah,” replied Howard, whose wishes quite kept pace with her expectancy, “that’s a new way of wishing for a more favourable breeze;

but for my part I shall think we are extremely lucky if we get back to Europe by the spring."

Young, however, as the Viscountess might be in nautical matters, she had sense enough to scout any such apprehension as this, and boldly prophesied that a breeze would come for her especial delight on the following morning at daybreak.

Day had scarcely dawned when a stir was heard among the officers on deck, and the lieutenant of the watch came running down to inform Captain Howard that a ripple on the horizon was just discovered in the southwest, indicating the approach of a strong breeze.

"Make all sail as soon as ever it comes up with us!" was Howard's ready reply; and in a few minutes afterwards I heard him jump out of his cot, and knock against the cabin bulk head, outside which his own convalescent berth had been temporarily built, crying as he did so,

"I say, little Desmond, there's your breeze come to order at last."

Whether "little Desmond" heard this touch-

ing appeal, I know not—no answer was returned ; but in a few minutes I heard, from my side the ship, a deep sepulchral rumbling noise which I judged to come from “little Desmond’s” father, whose noble throat most directly proceeded to exclaim,

“Very improper of Captain Howard, this sort of noise so early in the morning.”

In a few minutes down came the lieutenant of the watch again.

“Captain Howard !”

“Well.”

“Breeze to windward coming down very fast sir.”

“Glad to hear it.”

“Yes, sir, but there are five strange sail coming down with it.”

“What are they ?”

“Can’t make them out, sir.”

“What size do they appear to be ?”

“Why, as yet, sir, they don’t rise higher, from our masthead, than the second reef of their topsails ; but they’re coming down under all sail, and they’re either line-of-battle ships or enormous frigates—I can’t say which.”

“Do they show any bunting?”

“None, sir.”

“Neither will we; I’ll be on deck in a few minutes.”

The lieutenant retired; and the captain, who, it would seem, had still been proceeding with his toilet, rapped again at his mistress’ cabin, summoning her thus—

“I say, little Desmond! did you order down five sail of the line together with the breeze this morning?” No answer was returned; “because, if you did, I’ll thank you to let me know whether they are British boys or Frenchmen?”

“Frenchmen!” growled the peer on my side of the house; “they can’t be Frenchmen!”—as if it were utterly impossible that five sail of the French line should dare to come within an observable distance of so illustrious a personage as himself.

“The devil they can’t be!” returned Howard, popping out ready dressed for the deck; “but I can tell you, Mr. Viscount, that you’ll stumble on a very different story when the long thirty-

twos come rattling down upon you. I hope you are ready to turn out at a minute's notice, and clear for quarters?"

"Turn out, Captain Howard!" said the peer, with that grave deliberation between every word that marked his lordship's sense of the extreme atrocity of such a proposition; "It is utterly impossible, Captain Howard, that I can rise at such an hour!—you know very well that my physician——"

"Oh! your physician be ——," muttered Howard, *sotto voce*—then aloud, "Well, well, my lord, there's no occasion to be disturbed; only I must send in eight of the seamen to work that gun in your berth."

"Really, Captain Howard, I can't possibly allow them to come in here."

"O, very well! just tell them so, will you, my boy? you'll find them the softest creatures in the world;" and chuckling to himself at the strong affinity that would be found between his silken, selfish lordship and half a dozen tarry-breeched long-tailed tars,

away went the gallant but thoughtless Howard to the quarter-deck.

I often used to think what could be the captain's motive for teasing the tetchy fool who was to be his father-in-law ; since one would naturally have imagined that it was his interest to be on the most unbroken terms with him. But whether our friend felt confident of having fixed the lady immovably to his side of the question, and so delighted in a quiet revenge on the man who had done all he could to thwart the match, I could not very readily discover ; perhaps, after all, his *badi-nage*, annoying as it must often have proved to its victim, was the mere effervescence of those high spirits which felt the necessity of gambling with something, though, like a kitten, it should be but a mere ball of cotton.

Captain Howard had scarcely gained the deck five minutes, when a sudden concussion above shook the frigate as if beam, plank, and carline were all coming in together. This was one of the quarter-deck guns, which the mischievous

commander had caused to be fired directly over the head of his future father-in-law.

“ O this will drive me mad !” I heard the ill-used peer exclaim, as soon as the rumble of the gun allowed anything to be distinguished ; while, however improper, I confess that I lay enjoying the fun of the peer’s distress, in the most acute and agreeable manner. I had always heard him from my childhood described as one of those vain, punctilious simpletons who, possessed of every possible opportunity of enjoyment, and the means of creating and extending the enjoyments of others, contrive nevertheless, by their own excessive folly and ill-regulated minds,—if, indeed, their directing power can be dignified by such a title—not only to insure the misery of themselves, but to inflict an equal degree of wretchedness on every other being round them. Such people, therefore, as they make themselves objects of dislike to all around them, may be, and are, the most legitimate causes of laughter and ridicule for the world at large.

While I was pondering on these several mat-

ters, and questioning in my own mind how far fate would carry the annoyance of the noble lord, the distant roll of heavy guns to windward came peeling down upon us with a low and ominous thunder; and before any observation could be made upon its occurrence, or speculation ventured as to its cause, the short quick tap upon the drum, that calls the crew of a man-of-war to an issue of life or death, to conquer or die, realized the issue foretold by Captain Howard in the beat to quarters.

Although, at the time the drum sounded, at least one half of the ship's company were soundly locked in sleep, the echo of that short brief note had scarcely died away when the main-deck was absolutely swarming with the eager seamen, all striving who should be the first to second the efforts of their gallant captain in achieving fresh conquests. In a few seconds two or three of the carpenter's crew had already gathered at the captain's door, waiting to get in and take down the bulk-heads, so as to render efficient the service of the guns. Knowing, however, that the captain's friends

slept there, they waited the appearance of the steward to summon the sleepers, before they entered on their unceremonious duties. In a few minutes that functionary arrived; and after exhibiting great distress on the occasion, and imploring the carpenter, if possible, to spare the repose of the honoured inmates till the last moment, Chips, as the carpenter is generally called, in consideration of the Viscountess Desmond being betrothed to the skipper, consented to give the parties within, a few minutes extra preparation; and meanwhile repaired to some other post till this grace had expired.

Lady Desmond's maid now made her appearance, in a due state of fainting and trepidation. In reply to the steward's inquiries of whether she had yet awoken her ladyship, the damsel replied—

“Lady Desmond is not only awake, but already dressed;” an assurance scarcely uttered before the beautiful object of it glided from the cabin, all smiles and confidence; and taking the arm of her servant, repaired in person to the quarter-deck, to examine into the cause of

confusion:—a show of readiness and courage that immediately gained for her the very highest opinion among the men, who were already prejudiced in her favour; as Captain Howard, either fabulously or not, had expressed to hiscoxswain his hopes that his men would be on their best behaviour during the voyage home, as Lady Desmond had refused to take a passage in his ship, unless he would promise that no punishment should take place while she remained on board. The gentleness of feeling exhibited in this furtherance of humanity, combined with her readiness to face danger and annoyance when her lover's duties called him into action,—a crisis at which many women would have sought to show, and still more, perhaps, have been unable to conceal their affection, by endeavouring to keep the object of it out of an engagement;—all together told in so decided a manner among the seamen, that her extreme beauty was hardly needed to make them regard her as a kind of angel, expressly intended to reward so gallant a fellow as their captain. It must be confessed that

when Howard, who was busily engaged in reconnoitering the approaching squadron of the enemy, turned round, beheld the lovely being whom solicitude for himself had been the chief, and her own curiosity the alleged cause of her venturing upon deck, a sparkle of something more than ordinary pleasure lit up his animated countenance; he seemed to gaze with a delight, calculated at once to excite the envy and the melancholy of all that witnessed it, at the glorious bloom of health and delight that crimsoned those fair cheeks in the congenial rays of the rising sun, and gave to those blue eyes a brilliancy and intelligence almost more than human.

“ See, wicked prophet, what your unlawful arts have brought us!” said Howard, seizing the hand of his lady love, and pressing it to his lips with all the devotion of a paladin, or some modern revival of that glorious English hero, Sir Philip Sidney; — would that the breed had not become so very nearly extinct!

“What then do you mean to say those ships are?” demanded Lady Desmond.

“Why, fair sorceress, I suppose I owe it to your wish to have a laugh at me, for the truth is, they form a very large and formidable squadron of the enemy; and instead of having the pleasure of showing you how well my crew can do their duty, by taking a prize in honour of our fair passenger, the force of the foe is so excessive, I fear no alternative is left me but that of ingloriously running away.”

“And living to fight another day.”

“Precisely.”

“Well, then, most noble captain, I am extremely glad to hear it, for that is just what I should have desired; and as to your taking a prize, that is looked upon with great disdain by me, having myself captured an English post-captain of some ability in the art of defence; a feat which you, strive as you might, can never hope to pass.”

This little piece of flattery, it is needless to add, was received by the object of its applica-

tion with all the delight a compliment by a beautiful woman never yet failed to convey. On the opposite side of the deck one of the midshipmen, trusting to the captain's example, and the fact of the first lieutenant being wholly engrossed by the duties of the ship, was very busy reassuring the trembling lady's maid, who had consented for a while to waive all her apprehensions of French cannon-balls, for a few minutes' *tête-à-tête* with the Adonis of the midshipmans' berth.

Unfortunately, however, both the lady and her swain had calculated without their host; for while Mr. Midshipman Smith's arm wandered round the waist of Mrs. Abigail Jones, who should come upon deck but the Lord Desmond! The carpenter's crew had finally succeeded in dislodging his lordship from his cot, despite of all his noble protests; and he came upon deck faint and dying for an opportunity of finding fault with somebody, he cared not whom, for doing something he cared not what. The fact, therefore, of seeing a mid-

shipman with his arm round the waist of his daughter's lady's maid was almost as great a delight to him as a sudden promotion to the English peerage. The midshipman was beyond his spleen, at least in a direct way; but the unfortunate damsel was fully in his power, and of this circumstance he appeared determined to make her perfectly aware. Starting back several paces, he exclaimed, with a show of the utmost horror,

“ Jones, can it be possible? I am really surprised at your indecency.”

Now this was said in a tone purposely intended for Captain Howard's ears; and the ingenious Smith, thoroughly aware of the intention, and but too much alive to the probability of its taking effect, certainly made a bold stroke to rescue from the consequences of her little *penchant* the object of his regards. Mr. Midshipman Smith was blessed, as most midshipmen very fortunately are, with a large share of that valuable commodity which timid fools have conspired to call impudence. Smith

had proved the true nature of his upon many a dilemma ; he knew the exact value of every grain, and now resolved, with equal boldness and science, on administering a large dose to that nervous invalid Lord Desmond. Raising his voice so as to drown the querulous peer's, Smith quickly relinquished the waist of the too tender waiting-maid, and advancing before her with a low bow, and speaking as if he were addressing some one in the main-top, he proffered the telescope which he held in the other hand, saying,

“ Did your lordship ask for a glass to look at the enemy ? You can see them very plainly now ; even from the quarter-deck their lower yards are visible.” But Lord Desmond was too knowing in the art of tormenting his inferiors to be so easily driven from his prey. Waving off the glass with one hand, and pointing to the delinquent *soubrette* with the other, he replied, in a tone that Captain Howard could not fail to catch,

“ All that I require of gentlemen in your

rank is, that you'll be kind enough to keep your arms from my servants' waists."

"My lord!" exclaimed the conscious Smith, with as complete a scenic start of surprise as if, within the whole limits of his nautical experience, he had never yet heard of such a thing being done, or even attempted.

"Hallo, what's the matter?" cried Howard, quickly turning round, and in reality enjoying his noble father-in-law's disgust.

"The matter, Captain Howard!" said the peer, with as solemn an aspect as might have served the managers of an impeachment to copy, for overwhelming dignity and importance;—"the matter, Captain Howard, is this—your midshipmen are far too familiar with my servants."

"Which of them, my lord? You really shock and surprise me," answered the noble captain, in the same mock heroic style.

"That is the young gentleman," said his lordship, pointing out the culprit; "I found his arm round my servant's waist."

"How dare you put your arm round his

lordship's servant's waist? I'm quite shocked at you, sir! Don't you know the impropriety of such proceedings?" Here Howard had a very severe struggle to keep from laughing, and having successfully gained the point of gravity, he continued in a low tone, "Go to the main-topmast head."

"Ay, ay, sir," said the unabashed midshipman; and then watching his opportunity, when his superior's looks were turned another way, he drew towards him the astounded and terrified *soubrette*, and snatching a couple of kisses, bounded off into the rigging like a monkey. Before he had proceeded a dozen steps, Howard turned to Lady Desmond, and whispered in her ear, "Call him down, call him down." Her ladyship was not slow in taking the hint, and waving her little hand and raising her treble voice, she cried, "Come down, Mr. Smith."

Mr. Midshipman Smith, who had too fine an ear for music not to have heard entirely every word she spoke, quickly replied, "Ay, ay, my lady;" and in a few minutes he was

once more standing on the quarter-deck, and touching his hat to the somewhat astonished and by no manner of means highly-pleased viscount.

“There’s a pretty piece of mutiny on board !” cried Howard, pretending great astonishment at the culprit’s reappearance on deck ; and then turning to his lordship—“ You see, my lord, when women get into a ship, more especially if they reach the penetralia of the captain’s cabin, how little anything like discipline can be cared for.”

“ I see, sir,” said his lordship, very stiffly ; adding, as he walked away, “ and I heard, sir, also.”

At this instant a random shot, fired at great elevation, struck the heel of the mizen-topmast, and though utterly beyond the power of doing injury to any one, it nevertheless scattered over the quarter-deck such a host of chips, that Lord Desmond, seizing his daughter’s arm, insisted on her retiring below. As Howard himself seconded this request in the warmest manner, the noble pair, arm-in-arm, descended to the gun-room ; where seeing the table laid out

with all Caustic's amusing apparatus, his lordship, whose nerves were not of the most robust nature, was very glad to avail himself of the accommodation which had been prepared in the bread-room, where Howard had ordered several mattresses to be laid out, to supply the want of sofas ; and stretched on these, amid some tons of weevily biscuit, his lordship listened to the war that raged overhead.

Fortunately for him, however, this was not destined to be very extensive ; for when Howard found that he was chased by a small squadron of the enemy's line-of-battle ships, he, albeit most unwillingly, spread as large a show of canvass as his swift frigate would bear, and rapidly began to leave the squadron of the enemy behind. One seventy-four alone seemed to possess the art of going through the water at railroad speed, got ahead of her own squadron, and kept up the chase with so much vigour, that Howard had nearly made up his mind to some little skirmish with the "individual," as Mr. Historian James calls a single line-of-battle ship. From this mad piece of

daring he was, however, in some degree, dissuaded by the reasoning of his officers, who, reminding him of the difference of the weather between the present period and that at which he had so successfully attacked and maimed the seventy-four, induced him, very unwillingly, at least to postpone his contemplated amusement until the night might furnish him with some additional advantage, from the size of the enemy's hull as compared with his own.

Scarcely had this point been gained by the first lieutenant, when a strange sail was descried on the horizon standing towards the Epaminondas. This soon proved to be the English sixty-four gun ship Diadem. On seeing this vessel hoist English colours, the Frenchman very prudently crowded all sail and stood away.

It was now Howard's turn for pursuit, which he immediately commenced, making divers and stimulating signals to the Diadem, indicative of his wish for a fight. But, in the first place, the French seventy-four had got far too great a start of them, for any but the sanguine Howard to anticipate coming up with

her; and, secondly, the commander of the *Diadem* had on his shoulders the weight of some five-and-thirty winters more than the youthful chief of the *Epaminondas*. Much to the disgust of the latter, the *Diadem* made signal to discontinue chase, and speak the senior officer. As there was no evading this command, Captain Howard reluctantly shortened sail, and bore down towards the sixty-four. Passing under her stern, the commander of the *Diadem* appeared on the poop of his own ship, with the speaking trumpet in his hand, and a face that looked like the iced contents of a bottle of port wine. With a voice that might have rivalled any one of the bulls of Bashan, he bellowed out,

“Captain Howard, come on board.”

“Ay, ay, sir,” replied Howard, very sulkily; for not only did he feel very angry at not being allowed to have what he called a slap at the enemy, but he most especially dreaded receiving orders that might interfere with his proceeding direct to England. However, he had no alternative, and scarcely

any consolation, except swearing most heartily at the Diadem's captain, and slowly proceeding on board. As his gig left the frigate for the sixty-four, another left the latter for the former, and while the boats crossed, the captain of the Diadem hailed to know whether the Epaminondas still had on board an assistant surgeon named O'Donnel. The first lieutenant replied that I had been promoted, but did happen to be on board, taking a passage home. The captain of the Diadem then said he had sent on board some letters and a passenger.

“A passenger!” muttered the first lieutenant, “who the devil can he be? How much more lumber are we to stow away?”

The passenger, however, came; and to me proved to be a most melancholy and important one; his name was Macguire, and he was an official messenger sent out to require my return to Ireland, to give evidence in a case of murder.

“Against whom?” asked the first lieutenant, utterly ignorant of my history, and perfectly taken by surprise.

“Against his father, Sir Maurice O'Donnel of county ——” replied the official.

“ O,” said the first lieutenant, “ this must be a mistake ; there’s no son of a Sir Maurice O’Donnel on board here, that I ever heard of : the gentleman that bears the same name in this ship, is delirious with yellow fever : you’ll be able to get nothing out of him. But I fancy beyond the name there’s no connexion between them.”

“ Sir, I hope you don’t mean to oppose or mislead me in the execution of my duty ;” returned the official, getting very angry.

“ No, sir ; why the devil should I ?”

“ That I can’t say ; I only know that I have made no mistake.”

Here, luckily, Caustic made his appearance on deck, and the first lieutenant, asking him if he knew anything of his late assistant’s private history, he was enabled at once to put an end to all further debate, by stating that Mr. Macguire was right in supposing that his mission related to me ; that the accused gentleman was my father, and that a desire to trace out the truth of the dark transaction in question, formed

the leading, and indeed only object of my life. He then requested to know how the fact had been more fully traced to Sir Maurice, he, Caustic, having understood that the baronet, on a former occasion, had been discharged, from an insufficiency of evidence.

“Only one link was wanting before, sir,” said the messenger, “though I admit a most material one : that link, accident has now supplied.”

“What is it?” eagerly demanded Caustic and the first lieutenant.

“The discovery of Miss Kathleen O’Donnel’s skeleton!” was the conclusive reply.

The messenger, now sure that he had accomplished the most tedious part of his duty—the discovery of myself—and greatly rejoicing that he was spared his visit to a spot which he conceived to be the fountain-head of yellow fever—Port Royal; lost no time in changing from the *Diadem* to the *Epaminondas*. A berth and hammock were allotted to his use, and himself placed in the midshipmen’s mess.

When I recovered sufficiently to be informed of what the future had in store, it was here that I found this bird of ill omen, and from his lips received a confirmation of my worst fears. After all I had suffered, I hardly thought such an aggravation of the past was possible. Every wound seemed to have opened afresh, and one, if not deeper, yet full as deadly, was added to the number.

To what a scene was I now hastening! A father's trial! a lover's grave! the bleached and desecrated bones of a murdered mistress, and the discovery and execution of the assassin in the person of my only surviving relative—a relation who, in all probability, was to die the death of a felon by my evidence—the evidence of his son!

After an unusually prosperous voyage, we arrived at Cork. Here Lady Desmond, who kindly seemed to share in all my griefs, set off with her father for their estate in our neighbourhood. Captain Howard, now made a baronet for his gallant destruction of the French

seventy-four, resigned his command, and Caustic generously invalided on half-pay, that he might be at hand to render any service to me that my unfortunate position might require.

Officers being appointed to the frigate, to fill up the vacancies thus occasioned, the Epaminondas sailed for Plymouth. With the addition of Macguire, the number of our party now amounted to four, and in a couple of post-chaises we started for the country town of ——. Having all taken lodgings together on our arrival, the first step was to acquaint the authorities with my return to Ireland, and of the death of Donaghue.

The assizes were to be held on the week following; and, on receiving these intimations, the Secretary of State caused the name of Sir Maurice O'Donnell to be placed in the calendar of trials, for the murder of Kathleen O'Donnell, his niece.

In looking back from succeeding years at this truly horrible epoch of my life, I have ever marvelled, not with less thankfulness than

surprise, at the trials which human reason is capable of enduring. From the moment of earliest dawn to midnight—from midnight throughout the long tedious hours of darkness, till day returned once more—every thought and feeling remained upon the rack—questioning whether it was possible that humanity could, in a man of education and refinement, sink to so low a pitch as to allow of his becoming the murderer of his own fair kinswoman—a gentle, lovely creature, whose look alone had won all hearts, and even to speak rudely to whom, would have marked a man as possessing but little of the character of a gentleman. Again and again I resolved that it must be utterly out of the question—impossible! the mere delusion of some wild, excited dream of fancy and apprehensive fondness!

Then again before me rose the damning proofs!—Could anything be stronger, unless, indeed, the dead bones should speak!—was any one link wanting? Even let me try to make the case as clear against Sir Maurice as possible—where could I add one tittle to the evidence,

to give it greater weight than it already possessed?

No, the thing was beyond my power! and however strong the abstract argument might be of gentlemanlike feeling and refined education, one single fact was more unanswerable than all the theories in the world. Then what should be my conduct towards him? Before trial it was the wish of both of us not to meet. But suppose that awful, that terrible scene endured!—passed—gone through—suppose that the father, on his own child's evidence, was condemned!—should I then meet him? And how? He, the adjudged murderer of my mistress—Kathleen, the gentle, the bright, the excellent!—She who was dearer to my soul than any father could ever be!—Could I approach—could I give my hand to the man who coolly and remorselessly struck down that beautiful flower?—The man of blood and violence!—The human butcher! who inbrued his hands in the gore of a helpless, an innocent, perhaps a confiding relation, because the uncontrollable impulse of destiny impelled her to regard his son? O impossible!

Again, how could he look on me? He who had so lately stood in the dock, his whole soul hanging on my lips! his eyes unalterably fixed on mine—I, who would neither give him word nor look—I, by whose testimony he was doomed—proud, haughty, and high-born—to the gallows? I who, with all this impendent on a father's head, would not swerve to save the author of my own existence!—nor model the smallest word to soften the horrors of disgraceful death to him who, humanly speaking, was the giver of life to me—who once, in his own stern way, had loved—perhaps even now *still* loved me?

These thoughts were madness!—and this madness had influenced me unceasingly for days, and nights, and weeks, and months together! But the torture was drawing to its climax—the horrors that surrounded me were slowly encircling the victim in their vortex! They must soon cease either to affect me—or I—or he—or they—must cease to be!

CHAPTER VIII.

“ To be, or not to be—that is the question.”

HAMLET.

THE day of trial at length arrived. Since the hour of five o'clock the various entrances to the court had been crowded with people of all classes. Bribes to an almost incredible extent were offered for seats, to hear the trial in the body of the court ; and the utmost influence was used with the various officers, sheriffs, &c., for the same purpose. At nine o'clock the court was opened. The judge soon entered, and the prisoner was placed at the bar.

It was nearly five years since I had last seen

Sir Maurice. Had I taken the lapse of time, from the execution it had done upon his pale forehead and wasted figure, I should have called it nearer five-and-twenty. But though considerably fallen off in that manly beauty which had ever distinguished him, still he stood calm and unruffled under the dreadful scrutiny his appearance called forth—a noble ruin of past grandeur—supported by a lofty pride, which not all the ignominy of that hour could bear down.

His face was pallid in the extreme. Confinement had caused his features to grow more angular and prominent, but had failed to bend his stately carriage; and he stood in the murderer's dock as firmly and composedly as when charging his country's enemies at the head of his regiment. Slowly his large blue eyes wandered round the intensely crowded court, not as if in search of any one, but rather trying to read the thoughts of those who were gazing at him. Alas! he saw no kindly looks of sympathy to call forth his gratitude in return; and

the gaze of curiosity and abhorrence he answered with defiance and disdain.

For a moment his eye caught mine; I felt the recreant blood forsake my cheek; but he appeared not to recognise me by look or sign, and rapidly passing on in his glance to the judge, made a profound bow, and applied for and took his seat on the chair placed for him.

The jury were next sworn, and the clerk of the court proceeded to read the indictment. The prisoner was now called upon to plead; and in the most emphatic manner he replied to the summons, "NOT GUILTY."

A dead silence ensued, broken only by the ominous rustling of the brief leaves of the counsel for the prosecution, as, with the assistance of his glasses, he referred to some particular passage. After a slight pause the learned gentleman rose, and turning first to the bench, and then to the jury, proceeded to open the case.

"May it please your Lordship; Gentlemen of the Jury;—there are many of you, doubtless, now present in the box before me, who

have so often discharged the onerous duty again imposed upon you, that the assurance of the present case being the most sad of our mournful experience, may for a moment seem hackneyed and stale. Session after session—assize succeeding to assize — has heard the same melancholy story and, with each individual case of felonious bloodshed, you have been called upon afresh to consider the trial impending as the most important and singular of your lives.

“For once, gentlemen, this assertion becomes unnecessary. A single glance, a moment’s reflection, will tell you that you are now to bear part in an investigation such as scarcely ever has been, and I firmly but humbly trust in God never again may be witnessed, in a British court of judicature. Upon that bench, sacred to justice, you have often seen seated, in administration of the laws, the distinguished but unfortunate individual who now,—alas! *temporibus mutatis!* — stands in the criminals’ dock before you, charged with the revolting crime of murder!

“As counsel for the prosecution, you are aware that it is my duty to refrain from any language likely to inflame your minds, by painting in terms of abhorrence a guilt not yet proved. On the contrary, you must imperatively discard every prepossession, either for or against the prisoner, prior to your entering on this trial. The mind of a juror should be as a blank sheet of paper; on that is to be set the simple facts judicially disclosed to him, and nothing more. From these the balance must be struck, regardless to which side it may incline. Not a single iota beyond the pale of this court must enter into the calculation, and Mercy only is privileged to claim the benefit of a doubt. It is a beautiful part of our laws, gentlemen, and, with such an instance before us, well may we temper judgment with discretion, and make every possible allowance for the frailty of the human heart. When men of the prisoner's condition are placed in such a situation, who may not have cause for humility in the future! That any doubt should arise in the present case, is, I fear, not very probable;

for I cannot conceive anything more strong—unless, indeed, it should be ocular evidence,—I cannot conceive anything more strongly presumptive of the deed into which we are to inquire—more perfectly corroborated one part by another—than the consecutive series of facts and testimonies that it will now be my heavy task to lay before you.

“It is just barely possible that, in despite of the overwhelming presumptive evidence that militates against the prisoner at the bar, our fallible senses may be mistaken and misled. Should such be the case, there lives not upon earth one man who will more deeply than myself rejoice in his approved innocence. For the sake of justice and of humanity, for the sake of our country and its annals, I would esteem it as the greatest blessing that at this minute could befall us ; for the sake of himself and his family, as well as for the sake of yourselves, gentlemen, and all who now hear me, I would say that a greater cause for rejoicing than the withdrawal of the bloody veil of mystery overhanging the fate of this

poor deceased girl, never yet was granted to the anxious inquirers after truth.

“I have been led into these remarks, by feeling how just it is, gentlemen, that you should be shown the opposite side of that dark picture, which I must gradually unfold to you; even though this light and sunny aspect may prove, as I fear it must, to have been drawn by fancy only, and be found in reality utterly destitute of any firmer or more solid existence. What the prisoner at the bar may have to urge in his defence, when the trial arrives at that stage which will place it in his power to address you, I know not. His reputation for varied knowledge and abilities is upon record; at the sternest juncture—the most awful crisis of his life, doubtless, these will not fail him. To the impassioned eloquence and specious reasoning of the orator—the fine-drawn argument of the logician — the finished thesis of the scholar—you may be prepared to listen; but the clear simple tale of innocence, bursting like a noble torrent over all opposing bounds, and sweeping down every obstacle, as it rolls

resistlessly onward to the sea—the mighty sea of truth; this, however earnestly we may pray for it, I strongly apprehend we must not expect to hear.

“ But, whatever may be his defence, artful or artless, I will at once proceed briefly to capitulate those facts, which, by their weight upon your minds must either save or take the life of the prisoner before you.

“ Sir Maurice O’Donnel is, as you have been already told, a baronet; and was a magistrate in this county, holding a commission as a colonel in His Majesty’s service, although having for some years past retired on half pay. The prisoner was the only child of the late Sir Clandyne O’Donnel. Having chosen the army for his profession, the prisoner entered that honourable service, and in one of many actions in which he had the good fortune to distinguish himself, became indebted for his life, under peculiar circumstances of devotion, to another officer of the same name, to whom he had previously been much attached, and whom he gratefully adopted as a brother, and rewarded by the gift of a small

estate. After many years passed in honour in various climates, the prisoner at the bar obtained the rank of colonel by purchase, his adopted brother that of major by purchase also. They were still young men, having barely attained the age of five-and-thirty; and possessing a taste for retirement, and cultivated minds which enabled them to sustain as well as to enjoy it, they mutually agreed to go upon the half-pay list, and retire to Castle Maurice in this beautiful county. Here, resolved to content themselves with limited revenues, living only for themselves and their dependents, each selected at leisure such a union for the future, as might most conduce to tranquillity and domestic happiness.

“ I certainly may err in my estimate, but, for my own part, I do not know that I ever met a more perfect instance of true philosophy than this step. It had within its scope the attainment of no foolish — no false ambition. It evinced a deep knowledge of human life, and the better part of it was wise and virtuous in all its bearings. It was beneficial in all its

tendencies, and while we cannot but entertain sincere regret at the non-attainment of the end proposed, neither can we, for the sake of our country forbear to wish that such views were more frequent among our higher ranks.

“For some time everything promised to realise those anticipations which the brothers had formed. The amusements and pursuits of country gentlemen filled up their time, and that affectionate sympathy which had marked all their preceding lives, seemed in no way diminished at this period of them. Two years after their having thus taken possession of Castle Maurice, the prisoner at the bar married, and brought home his bride; within another twelvemonth he had a son and heir.

“Now, gentlemen, one would have thought that if anything could have disturbed their harmony, it would have been this event, which thus suddenly cut off from the adopted brother all prospect of any further worldly advantage from his friend. So far, however, from this being the case, the attachment of the former seemed to be redoubled. No one could

be more partial to the child or to its mother ; while he became even more inseparable from the father than before. A second son was born, gentlemen, whose most disastrous fortune it will be to give evidence before you this day. Still the friendship between these brothers in arms knew no abatement. Indeed, so far from it, the contemplation of, and sympathy with, his benefactor's happiness determined the younger of the two also to seek the quiet delight of married life ; and having fixed his affections on a lady in the neighbourhood, the daughter of a landed proprietor, he became united to her, the Colonel performing at the wedding the parallel part to that his junior officer had on a similar occasion performed for him.

“ With all these changes of establishments, which you, as men of the world, well know form some of the most severe trials to friendship, even when cemented by the ties of blood, the affection of the adopted brothers survived, and they continued to make one happy household at Castle Maurice.

“The family of the elder O’Donnel, the prisoner, now had no further increase; that of the younger had; his wife, with whom he lived most happily, having borne him three sons in succession. About this time an opportunity offered the younger officer, of procuring his promotion to the rank of colonel by a short service; and he accordingly set off to England for that purpose, leaving his wife under the care, and at the seat, of his friend, from whom through life he had scarcely ever entertained a divided thought. At this time he would, it was conjectured, remain away not more than twelve months; six months, however, had scarcely elapsed, when he returned,—with his promotion, it is true, gentlemen, for he was now Colonel O’Donnel, but in all other respects most sadly altered. There was evidently a mystery, and a fearful one; and it seemed to influence him immediately he set his foot in the dwelling where he had hitherto enjoyed such unrivalled confidence and affection. Be it what it may, it left him a broken-hearted man.

“The baronet was not at the castle when Colonel O’Donnel came back to Ireland; he had gone to Dublin on a short visit; and without waiting for his return, the colonel hired a house in the adjoining county, and removing at once thither with his wife, she was there confined of a girl, afterwards known as Miss Kathleen O’Donnel, with whose murder the prisoner at the bar stands charged before you this day. And now, gentlemen, over this ancient and once cheerful family there seems to have been thrown the net of some dreadful destiny, from whose entangling meshes they have never since been able to set themselves free. The tie that once existed between the adopted brothers seemed suddenly by some extraordinary means, to have been severed. The wife of the colonel lay in, and the confinement, a most severe one—cost the unfortunate lady her life. But neither the baronet nor his lady stepped forward to relieve the drooping widower of his motherless child; that was left to the care of a hired nurse, who, however affectionate, could scarcely be expected to view it with

the fond attention to be looked for from those connected by the dear ties of long cemented friendship.

“From this time, gentlemen, no recognition past between the dissevered friends. The widower followed alone, with his children, the body of his late wife to her grave. Within a brief twelvemonths death once more claimed his tribute from among them, and the prisoner’s wife died also. One would have thought that death, which softens or dissolves most animosities, would with the greater ease have produced this effect upon men, whose lives had given such repeated proofs of their attachment. But, whatever might have been the secret of their quarrel, it was fated to go down with horror and violence to the tomb.

“Five years had elapsed since the baronet became a widower, and in the solitude of his own castle he continued to rear up the two boys whom his wife had left to him. The chief amusement of the baronet and his friend before their estrangement had been stag-hunting; and this, each in his own path continued to follow. As there were more

than one or two packs of dogs devoted to this field exercise in their neighbourhood, they were enabled to do so without meeting: which, since the time of the colonel's setting off for England, they had never done. From an attachment to the old baronial dress, I must tell you that some few country gentlemen at that time still continued to wear the *couteau de chasse*, or short hunting-sword, and among these were the brother officers. It so happened that one day in the hunting season two stags were to throw off for separate packs. The prisoner at the bar rode to field, and towards the end of a hard day's run, the approach of a violent storm drove him for shelter to a peasant's hut.

“Having dismounted, and tied up his horse in the best shelter he could find, he entered the labourer's cottage to dry his feet at the peat fire. While, however, in the very act of so doing, he heard the clatter of approaching horse-hoofs, as some brother hunter paced up to share his refuge. In full expectation of seeing some county acquaintance, he advanced to the door, and waited till his fellow-guest should enter. Hearing a heavy footstep, he

retreated to give room, and by the dim light of the smouldering peat, distinctly recognised his adopted brother. I will not attempt to detain you with any minutiae of that sad meeting; it resulted in an instantaneous quarrel, a personal contest, and the death of Colonel O'Donnel by the prisoner at the bar.

“These melancholy facts,” resumed the counsel, after a slight pause, “are told to you on no hearsay evidence; they came out in the most authentic form at the inquest, which, being held on the dead body of Colonel O'Donnel, acquitted the prisoner of any felonious intent. All of which will be duly tendered to you in evidence.

“I should esteem myself very fortunate, if the duty I have here to discharge, permitted me to abstain from mentioning facts that may not at first seem connected with this case.

“But it is one entirely of circumstantial evidence, in which the various parts are so fine, though each is so fully dependant on that which went before, that to omit one were to destroy all.

“ It is a family transaction throughout, and it would be as unfair to you, to ask your verdict, without giving you an explanation of the circumstances under which the family have been placed, as it would have been cruel and unjust to the prisoner to declare him guilty of murder before the body of the deceased had been found. To resume:—On the death of Colonel O’Donnel his children were removed to the residence of their maternal grandfather, distant only a few miles from Castle Maurice.

“ For some reason best known to himself, the baronet had charged his sons never to cultivate the acquaintance of the children of the deceased colonel. But female youth and beauty issue commands also ; these, however silent in their utterance, possess a potency— I should more aptly describe their power by calling it a spell—in comparison with which the fiats of the most despotic monarch are but matters of self-agency and free-will. The prisoner’s younger son, by some chance-meeting, encountered the daughter of Colonel O’Donnel, and at their first interview there sprung up, on his part at least, a feeling

of intense love. Indeed, if there be any correctness in a portion only of the accounts which have reached us of this ill-fated young lady, it was scarcely possible to be otherwise; since, to the greatest charms of person, she added those of mind, in a degree as eminent; while from the witnesses who will this day be examined, you will learn that her manner was as artless, and her disposition as affectionate, as ever blessed a human being.

“ Love once fixed on such a soil, gentlemen, takes deep root. It is the oak of mental growth—the monarch of the mind. The fiery blasts of fate may spread ruin and desolation on every side, but its basis is down, deep deep in the bosom of the mould from whence it sprang, to be destroyed piecemeal with the substance round which its tenacious fibres are entwined, but to be plucked from thence, by no human violence that ingenuity may devise. Such a love seeks the shelter and the privacy of concealment, and for many months the prisoner’s son visited Kathleen O’Donnel without his knowledge. And now, gentlemen, I must request your

more particular attention to what follows. Conscious that his youthful passion was returned, and that the happiness of himself and mistress were inextricably involved in its issue, the son went to his father, stated all that had occurred, and urging the truth and force of his affection, requested permission for their marriage. Your perception may already have anticipated what was to ensue:—the uncontrolled anger of Sir Maurice—his utter refusal of consent, and his deepest threatenings, should this manifestation of his will be disregarded.

“ You will not imagine from this, gentlemen, that any threat was held out against the young lady, of that violence which, alas! she was so soon doomed to undergo. That, I am bound to say, was not the case. The threats more particularly alluded to his discarding a disobedient child, and following up his anger in the more legitimate channel of *his* person and prospects, not her’s.

“ Notwithstanding, however, the very strong remonstrances with which the prisoner urged his objections, his son remained resolute on the

subject of his intended union, and for this purpose took such steps as promised, by making him independent of his father's maintenance, to place within his power that marriage on which he conceived the lady's happiness and his own to depend. Here, however, Sir Maurice interfered, and his son, who had previously contemplated the army, turned his attention to one of the civil professions—namely medicine. It is unnecessary that we should pause to discuss the prudence of this conduct; with that we have nothing to do. Whether so or not, this was, in my honest opinion, quite insufficient to authorise the outrageous violence by which it was endeavoured to put the obnoxious match out of his son's power.

“ On the —— of ——, at a late hour in the evening, the house of the murdered lady's grandfather was surrounded by a number of armed ruffians, who took possession of Miss Kathleen O'Donnel's person, and bore her off in defiance of every attempt made for her rescue, and in which her grandfather and brothers were wounded, the former severely.

Suspicion at that time immediately fell upon the prisoner, but he resolutely denied, or at any rate evaded, all knowledge of the affair. The principal actor and director, however, in this atrocious scene, was of his height and figure, although disguised and masked. You will hear that the poor frantic girl, seeing she was in the power of her enemies, and about to be carried off, threw herself on her knees before this man, whose misdirected will appeared to bear the force of law, and in the most touching manner implored his pity and forbearance. But though she entirely failed in obtaining this part of her prayer, she accidentally tore from his waistcoat pocket the fragments of a letter, which at the moment fell to the ground and has since then been traced and recognised, and respecting which evidence will be afforded you, to prove that it was written and sent by post to Sir Maurice, on business relating to this very marriage of his son.

“ The latter, on hearing what had happened, lost no time in devoting himself to the most unremitting search ; as also did the lady’s three

brothers. The only trace, however, of their relation's dreadful fate, which they were then enabled to discover, was in the cabin of one of Sir Maurice's tenants. I am not at liberty to tell you what character this man bore, but I may say that suspicion was aroused and led to the searching of this man's cabin, a rude kind of hut which he held rent-free from the prisoner, in return, as it was said, for discharging the offices of a sort of gamekeeper, or, to use the more popular expression, for allowing no one to trespass or poach on the prisoner's property except himself. This gamekeeper, or free poacher—call him which you will—was, like Sir Maurice, a widower, left with an only daughter, said to have been as handsome and amiable as her parent certainly was not.

“ I mention these facts to show that he was not an unincumbered or single man, and therefore able to flit here and there with little trouble, or for any trivial whim. He had his child to take care of, and that you will find a point for your consideration. I have already told you, that at the time of Miss O'Donnell's

being carried off, she had the blessing to possess three most devoted brothers, all of whom, with frantic eagerness, exerted every power of mind and body to discover her place of concealment, or the fate which might have overtaken her. But the taint of hereditary consumption from the mother's side has since then displayed itself in the family, and these three young men, whose evidence would have been so valuable, are now no more. Their depositions will, however, be read over to you, and you will have his lordship's observations upon them.

“ These three brothers then repaired to the cottage of the poacher. They found it empty and barricaded, with a pig still left in the sty, and ravenous for food. From this circumstance it will be for you to draw your own conclusions, whether the departure of the party they sought had been sudden, or attended with circumstances which might throw light on the mystery they were determined to sift to the uttermost.

“ Be this as may, they resolved on making forcible entry. They did so; and if their sus-

pitions had before been raised, their fears were now excited to the last degree. This cabin—a model of which, gentlemen, is now in court for your inspection—they found divided into a lower apartment and two sleeping lofts. In the former they discovered a large pool of blood, and lying in the middle of it a leather tassel, which was broken, and which was afterwards recognised as belonging to a sword of the prisoner. This weapon you will hear the prisoner's son had, since childhood, been accustomed to see in a lumber closet of his father's study; and, although ignorant of its past history, he, with the love of boys for arms, had often noticed this little ornament more particularly, and by the peculiarity of its knot was enabled to declare what it had been.

“From the lower apartment of the cabin, the deceased's brothers now proceeded to the sleeping lofts, in one of which there appeared only an unused pallet: in the other, which has since been ascertained to have belonged to the gamekeeper's daughter, were discovered drops of blood, that were tracked up the rude ladder of

ascent; and, most material of all, a piece of flannel, deeply saturated with the same fluid to all appearance, partly cut, and partly torn, from some female's dress, and distinctly marked in human hair with the letters, 'Kath——.' Here the weapon, which had severed it from the greater part to which it belonged, had cut off the continuation of the name, and still left the point in doubt. But, indeed, it will be for you to say whether it was not a most slender shade that remained to obscure the full truth from their eyes.

“The only course now open to the pursuit of the brothers was the apprehension of Donaghue, and for the requisite authority they had resolved to apply to Sir Maurice. Indeed, the second brother had already started for his residence, leaving the other two on the watch behind him,—when the youngest, in looking for a seat, discovered, behind some turf, the principal part of a letter.

“You may imagine, after all I have told you, how eagerly reference was made to the superscription of this document, and what

were the feelings of its reader on finding it addressed to the very magistrate to whom they had applied for Donaghue's apprehension—in short, the prisoner at the bar! This letter was subsequently discovered to have part of its subscription torn away, and to correspond with the fragment picked up during the scuffle which accompanied Miss O'Donnel's abduction. Both the one and the other, gentlemen, will be produced to you.

“ The first act of the two brothers on watch was to overtake their messenger to Castle Maurice. This done, instead of getting thence a warrant against Donaghue, they proceeded with their weak and wounded grandfather to the lieutenant of the county, and obtained a similar authority both against Donaghue and his landlord Sir Maurice. The former was never apprehended, and is since dead. The latter, with every protestation of innocence, surrendered himself, and being of course refused bail, was remanded until the return of his son, into whose care had been entrusted the fragment of the letter before-mentioned.

“ At the time of Sir Maurice’s apprehension, a search had been of course made at his castle, and there was found the sword to which I have also alluded. On its hilt remained the greater part of the leather tassel, the knot of which was discovered in Donaghue’s cabin ; its blade was rusted with recent blood, and from the edge was chipped away a very considerable splinter of the steel. This sword, gentlemen, you will have an opportunity of closely examining.”

As the jurymen listened to this frightful token of guilt, a thrill of horror seemed to extend from their box throughout the crowded court, and whatever compassion my father’s appearance and station, together with the opening remarks of his prosecuting counsel, might at one time have raised for him, the multiplied evidence of his revolting crime was now rapidly melting away.

“ The prisoner’s son, gentlemen, having returned,” continued the barrister, “ a long and most attentive, as well as searching, inquiry was made into the prisoner’s conduct, as to the charge brought forward against him.

The facts which I have mentioned to you then appeared in evidence, and the depositions of the various witnesses then examined on oath, will presently be read to you. Such as are still living will repeat that evidence. But all the unremitting exertions made to discover any trace of the unfortunate lady's remains having proved futile, Sir Maurice resolutely denied any share in her murder; and nothing, therefore, remained for his late brother magistrates, but to bestow in a place of safety the various articles that appeared as evidence against him, and to liberate the prisoner on the most heavy recognizances—himself to give bail for twenty thousand, and two friends for ten thousand pounds each. His name was of course removed from the commission of the peace, and he himself, I need scarcely add, became an immediate absentee from the county.

“In the state of dark mystery, then, which I have just described, gentlemen,” continued the prosecutor, “did this singular and shocking transaction seem destined to remain. By no individual was the day of revelation ever

expected to arrive. So general an opinion, however, showed little confidence in the certainty of a day of justice. That day has now arrived.

“ I have said that immediately on his discharge, the prisoner went out of the county—I may add also out of Ireland. After some time his son also left the neighbourhood. Consumption, as I have already told you, attacked the sons of the once attached friend of the prisoner, and in two years all three died. Not a trace, not a tidings of the lost lady came to light, and the story of her dismal end seemed destined to die away from all but the affectionate remembrance of those humble friends to whom her generous heart was ever ready to extend its sympathy and relief; adding one touching tale the more to that rich but mournful treasure of traditionary lore, which is the only wealth in Ireland that her peasants are permitted to enjoy.

“ To all appearance, the guilty criminal was to escape. But there seems something so sure in the promise of vengeance on the violent

destroyer of life, that soon or late some circumstance occurs to strike the balance of justice even. As in the generality of cases, the way in which this was accomplished was most singular.

“ Mr. Robinson, the attorney for the prosecution, who resides in this town, had staying with him from London, a party of friends for the shooting season. Having a day to spare, and being himself fond of sport, he determined to accompany them. The spot on which they had fixed for their day’s amusement was a small lake or tarn on the prisoner’s moors, near the ruined cabin of Donaghue. This was frequented by a peculiar kind of fowl, and as no preserve of the game was any longer attempted, Mr. Robinson and his party set out.

“ Being provided with spades to throw up the turf into one of those temporary pits or hides which you have all observed to be used in similar situations, they arrived on the ground at an early hour in the morning, and set to work without delay. They had not proceeded

far in their operations below the surface of the peat, when they came to a series of flat stones. These attracting their curiosity, they displaced them, and discovered in the hollow beneath, some long substance, wrapped in what proved to be a mouldering blanket. With great care they removed the whole to the surface, and on unfolding it by degrees, discovered within, a female skeleton of the human species.

“The body appeared to have been wrapped first in linen, and then in flannel, and lastly in a blanket. The second only of these, from being protected by the blanket, had been able to resist the action of decay : for you all are aware, gentlemen, that woollen long survives linen against any action of time. This fabric, then, you will hear was curiously, and, to all appearance, hastily folded round the head, to which it adhered by a substance like coagulated blood ; part of it was, moreover, firmly entangled in a dreadful gash, that seemed to have severed the skull down to its base.

“One of the gentlemen present had been a surgeon. The conversation that ensued leading

to scrutinize the skeleton, the surgeon, by his anatomical knowledge, was enabled to pronounce with confidence that it had belonged to a female. They then examined the remains of the dress, for any marks, and turned to every corner of the only clothing that remained at all perfect—the inner flannel covering that surrounded the bones; but for a long time their search was in vain. At last they observed that this had, probably in the hurry with which it was thrown over the body, been misplaced, so that the portion which should have come just below the back of the neck, where some people usually mark their clothes, was now upon the head of the skeleton, and partly severed by the terrific blow that had divided the skull beneath.

“ Having detached this part from its hold, and gently rubbed off some of the dry blood, they distinctly deciphered, one after another, the letters composing the words—‘leen O’Donnel’—the rest had been cut off.

“ Acquainted as Mr. Robinson was with the facts I have detailed to you, he was induced to leave his friends to keep guard over these dis-

covered remains, with instructions to allow no one to disturb them in the slightest degree, while he rode back to the town and took the necessary steps to procure the holding of an inquest.

“Not a moment’s time was lost, and a jury having been summoned, they arrived that afternoon on the spot, where the skeleton still lay watched by those who had discovered it. The scrutiny now gone into corroborated in every particular that which had preceded it, and which I have detailed, with this most important addition, that when the medical men came more minutely to examine the frightful wound in the skull, with a view to deciding whether that had been the cause of death, they found sticking in the floor of the brain, near the orbit of the left eye, the fragment of a sword-blade!

“The steel, preserved from decay both by the oily nature of the bone in which it was embedded, and by the total exclusion of atmospheric air, was nearly as perfect as at the moment when a murderous violence first severed it from its original blade. This fragment, gentlemen,

you will have an opportunity minutely to examine, and it will be for you to say whether or not it corresponds in every particular with the gap found in the blood-rusted sword belonging to the prisoner !”

Up to this moment, at the recapitulation of every additional proof of my father's crime, a pang of the deepest emotion shot through my heart. Well I knew his proud, and, as I had always hitherto imagined, his honourable soul. Fully did I feel how deeply the iron must have entered into it, at every word of this exposure before the vulgar and incensed crowd. At the last climax, however, every feeling of pity for him seemed to have vanished from my bosom. One sentiment alone reigned predominant—one view engrossed all my attention. When I reflected on the cold, butcher-like revenge that he had taken on his gentle, lovely victim ! my blood boiled with a fire as unnatural as fierce !

In the whole of that crowded court, it would have been a task of the greatest difficulty to have selected one single individual who did not

hare these feelings. The prisoner's noble bearing, his known courage and ability, his birth and station, all had hitherto pleaded for him, with a generous-hearted auditory, who still hoped for his innocence. When, however, the depth of his barbarity was heard, and the long array of apparent facts that condemned him brought to a climax, by the closing sentences just delivered, the spectators seemed to shrink back even from his glance, as from some loathsome pestilence. A groan of horror filled the court as the counsel announced the last fact, and with that seemed to have breathed forth the last spark of compassion that extrinsic circumstances had created for him.

“ I have now, gentlemen of the jury,” resumed the counsel, “ little more to remark. Full and sufficient evidence will be adduced in support of the various points I have enumerated to you ; and I am sure I need do nothing further than refer you to the solemn oath you have taken, to insure your speedy and efficient discharge of the stern and mournful task your country imposes on you. This, however, I

may be allowed to say, that of all the cases of circumstantial evidence with which I am acquainted, I know of none where the links are so finely and yet so distinctly perceptible as in this. To so minute a connexion of every part, one with the other, do these tragical facts go, that as I view it—and with great sorrow I arrive at this result—they can but lead us to one conclusion.

“ Still it is a matter especially within your province to decide whether the facts, as they will be disclosed to you in evidence, carry that undoubting conviction to your minds which is essentially necessary before you can pronounce the prisoner guilty. If, ultimately, you should entertain any reasonable doubt of his criminality, he is entitled to your acquittal, but not otherwise.

“ It is true this is only a case of circumstantial evidence against Sir Maurice O’Donnel, and so no doubt he will urge it on you. But many authorities of great weight have preferred circumstantial before all other evidence, because it is the testimony of things,

not persons, and therefore exempt from all liability to prejudice, passion, or other human infirmities. In conclusion, you will have the benefit of hearing his lordship's observations on the whole case, and to whatever verdict you may feel your duty to guide you, I am confident it will do ample justice alike to yourselves, to my client, and to the country."

As the learned counsel finally resumed his seat, the court clock tolled forth the stroke of noon. His address had occupied exactly one hour. At the time of which I write, more especially in Ireland, the practice of courts of law had not attained anything near the regularity which now distinguishes it, and this will account for the introduction into the opening of this case of passages that would in this day be open to objection. Not that in the present case there were not many objections made, and statements excluded in consequence, but these interruptions I have omitted. To me, tortured with the double feelings of a lover and a son, how strange, how dreadful, seemed the habitual calmness with which his share in the trial was met by the

counsel for the prosecution. He was a man advanced in life; his complexion worn by deep study, late vigils, and restricted exercise, to a cadaverous yellow; but from his full, black, restless eye, shot forth all the fire of that intellect which was—horrible reflection—to bring my only surviving parent to the last—worst point of ignominy! Did he think of this? His speech had displayed, in many of its parts, much feeling, and had produced infinitely more; yet now he smiled and talked with some brother barrister, on the state of the weather, and other indifferent topics, and broke and ate a biscuit with as little care as if the hangman with the noose had never waited the result of his exertions.

“ Yet, alas!” thought I, “ it is but natural! If we paint man truly, the general outline of the figure is the same in every quarter of the universe. It is only the individual peculiarities of stature, or the accidents of climate and complexion, which constitute the marked variety. The sailor in action—the soldier at the breach—the surgeon at the operating table—the counsel

in a case of murder ;—death is so hackneyed to them all, that its impending presence is a matter of little moment !”

The first witness was now called, and Mr. Robinson, the attorney for the prosecution, was sworn. The junior counsel rose, and after the few first preliminary questions as to his name, profession, and residence, he was asked,

“ Do you remember the tenth of last February ?”

“ Yes ; early on the day in question I had gone with some gentlemen to shoot a particular kind of wild fowl found on a small loch some nine miles from this city, being, I believe the property of Sir Maurice O'Donnel. In pursuit of this sport, we thought it advisable to throw up a few peats and branches, over a slight pit, to protect ourselves from sight of the birds. In making this pit, my companions, to save labour, selected what appeared to have been a small natural chasm, close by the brink of the water. Whilst digging for this purpose, their spades came in contact with a row of flat stones, which they lifted carefully away. I was standing by,

watching the operation. When the stones were removed, I beheld a curious oblong-looking body, wrapped in a blanket much stained with dirt, and partially rotten. I had the whole mass removed with great care to the surface, and gradually unfolding the blanket, I saw a skeleton."

"Now then, sir, take time," interposed the foreman of the jury, "and be particular in describing the precise appearance of these remains."

"I will, gentlemen. In the first place, by their length and size, they immediately struck myself and companions ——"

"Leave your companions to answer for themselves," interrupted the barrister who was watching the case for the prisoner.

Mr. Robinson looked particularly pleased and pleasant for a few moments, and then proceeded. "The first sight of the skeleton then, gentlemen of the jury, from its small bones and stature, made me at once believe that it must have belonged either to a young lad or to a female; but my knowledge

of the human frame was insufficient to decide which. While I was turning this over in my own mind, one of my friends, who was a surgeon, questioned me as to whose remains those then before us might be; pointing, at the same time, with his finger to the skull; this more particularly drew my attention towards it, and I then saw a frightful gash in the bone, which yawned apart with a dark sharp fissure, as if from a sudden cut, that seemed to have extended from the back of the head over the left eye, down through the temple to a level almost with the empty socket."

"On seeing this, what steps did you take?"

"After some further conversation, I left my companions in charge of the skeleton, and returned to this town to give information of its discovery to the proper authorities, that the necessary inquest might be holden."

"You left the skeleton there, you say, in the charge of your companions?"

"I did, sir."

“ Did you see it again ?”

“ Yes ; on my return in a few hours with the coroner.”

“ Did you find it in the same state as when you left it ?”

“ Precisely.”

“ No alteration, then, had taken place in it, consequent on its exposure to the atmospheric air ?”

“ None whatever, that was at all perceptible to my examination.”

“ Have you seen the skeleton now in the custody of the officers of this court ?”

“ Yes ; I saw it a few minutes previous to the meeting of the court.”

“ Is it the same that you saw disinterred ?”

“ It is.”

“ How do you so distinctly recognise its identity, as to swear to it thus positively ?”

“ By its general appearance, for one thing, and more especially by the frightful gash over the crown of the head, which I have already described.”

“When the skeleton was first found, was it encased in anything to protect it from the earth?”

“Yes, it had two separate wrappers.”

“Of what were they formed?”

“The first was formed of blanketing, I think, and was partially rotten. The second was soiled, and in many places stained with dark patches, which I took to be dried blood, but it was whole, not showing symptoms of decay, and was made of fine flannel.”

Here the witness unfortunately stopped short, without adverting to the most material part connected with this article of clothing. The counsel for the prosecution having in vain allowed the witness a few minutes to recollect himself, the examination was of necessity resumed.

“Now, Mr. Robinson, calling your attention to the subject of clothes’ marks, did you observe anything?” This question was objected to, but the objection was overruled, and the question repeated.

“Yes,” replied the witness; “I observed, on

a minute search of the flannel wrapper I last mentioned, that just below what should have been the back of the neck, a name had been sewn at full length in human hair."

"Did you read that name?"

"After some difficulty, and rubbing off a little of a substance that looked like encrusted blood, I read all that was to be deciphered; but the dress not being in its proper place, part of the name seemed to have been severed by the same blow which had caused the frightful gash I have mentioned: the remaining letters formed these words, which, as I made them out, I wrote down as strongly as I could in pencil; they were "—leen O'Donnel."

"As you have so minutely described the inner wrapping, would you know it if you saw it again?"

"Certainly I should."

"Is this it?" handing to him, on a small tray, the flannel in question. The witness looked at it, till he recognised the cut and the marking;

"Yes, sir, that is the same flannel."

Here the examination of Mr. Robinson closed. The prisoner was asked if he wished to cross-

question him on any part of his evidence ; this, by a motion of the head, Sir Maurice declined doing, and the surgeon who was present at the discovery of the bones was next called.

“ What is your name, sir ? ”

“ Charles Hautville. ”

“ Where do you reside ? ”

“ In Canterbury ; but I am now on a visit to a friend in this town. ”

“ What is your profession ? ”

“ Surgeon in his Majesty’s navy. ”

“ Are you employed in that service at present ? ”

“ No ; I am now on half-pay. ”

“ Do you remember the tenth of February, and where were you on that day ? ”

“ Near this city, on a moor of Sir Maurice O’Donnel’s, where I had gone with a friend to shoot wild fowl. ”

“ Did any particular circumstance occur to mark that day in your remembrance ? ”

“ Yes ; the finding of a skeleton as we were digging to erect what sportsmen technically term ‘ a hide. ’ ”

The surgeon then went on to describe the bones in a manner precisely similar to that of the last witness. Having also identified both those and the inner casing of flannel with the same articles now in court, he answered several professional questions put to him, with a view of eliciting evidence of the age and sex of the skeleton.

The next witness was called; this was also a surgeon, a Mr. Sullivan, the principal medical man in the assize town, and one who attended the inquest by desire of the coroner. His evidence differed little from that of Mr. Hautville, save in one important particular, when his examination assumed a more interesting nature.

“Did you make any attempt to examine the skeleton?”

“I did; and to the best of my knowledge and belief, death must have been caused by the wound on the skull—so formidable a one I never saw before.”

“What was the extent of the wound?”

“It extended longitudinally from the orbit

of the left eye diagonally across the cranium to the opposite point of the cerebellum,—penetrating in depth through the floor of the brain, embedded in which I found a splinter of iron or steel, seemingly the fragment of a sword-blade, which I delivered to the coroner.”

“Is this it?”

“I believe it is, or, at any rate, one precisely similar.”

“Look at it again, and, if possible, speak with certainty.”

“Certainly, then, it is.”

“That is all I have to say to you.”

“Before that witness leaves the box, I desire to ask him one question,” said Sir Maurice, for the first time breaking silence. Every eye was turned upon him.

“Sir,” said he, addressing the last witness, “can you swear *without a doubt*, whether the blow on the head of the skeleton was inflicted *during or after* life?”

On hearing this inquiry, the surgeon paused for a few minutes, and then replied:—

“Most unhesitatingly I should say—”

“ *Without a doubt?* ”

“ Yes, without a *particle* of doubt, that the blow was inflicted *during* life, and was the cause of death ; for setting aside the improbability of any one so hacking a dead body, this gash could never have bled in the profuse manner which, to all appearance, it must have done, from the state of the hair and clothing.”

On receiving this decided answer to a question rash and imprudent in the extreme, Sir Maurice seemed to fall back into that abstraction which hitherto had chiefly marked his bearing : the surgeon withdrew from the box, and the fourth witness was called. Nothing could have been more unhappy than this attempt on the part of the prisoner to cross-question the evidence against him. Even in modern days, when a criminal's case is allowed to be entirely undertaken by counsel, scarcely any part of the difficult practice of the law is so replete with peril, or demands more nerve and skill, than this. Indeed, this is almost invariably so much so, that prisoners, from a want of knowing how to put their questions,

generally admit two facts against them in their desire to dispute one. An inconsiderate question by the cross-examiner may, to use the expressive term of the profession, at once hang his client. And something, not very unlike this, Sir Maurice had just done, though, Heaven knows, the weight of testimony bore him down sufficiently, without the need of any such additional onus. Some good is, however, to be gathered from every ill, and thus, perhaps, Sir Maurice was benefited, if in no other way: for his want of success in this attempt to shake the proofs against him seemed to have so far disconcerted him as to preclude his putting any similar interrogatories to the succeeding witnesses.

At this stage of the proceedings, were put in, and read by the court, the depositions of the three deceased brothers, and other persons, as taken at the examination of Sir Maurice, which terminated in his being held to bail, and which bore out the various facts mentioned by the leader in his opening speech to the jury. These being ended, the next witness was called.

This was Mrs. Kilpatrick, the second wife of Kathleen's grandfather. Her sex and age induced the judge to order a chair for her; and after the few first preliminary questions as to name, residence, &c., her examination thus proceeded.

"Were you well acquainted with the person of Miss O'Donnel?"

"No one better, sir," was the reply; "for since her mother's death these arms have been her cradle many a long night through!"

And the remembrance of the past came over the poor lady so bitterly, that she sobbed aloud, with a degree of irrepressible anguish that forced many a stern eye to bear her company in her tears. After a few minutes pause she was asked,

"By your last remark do you mean to say, that Miss O'Donnel was brought up under your care and supervision from the time of her mother's death?"

"Entirely, sir."

"Had you the care then of her wardrobe?"

"I had."

“Did you mark her clothes?”

“For many years I did, till she grew of an age to do so herself, and by that time my eyes were failing me, and I was glad of a younger pair to take the task.”

“Have you ever seen her engaged in such an employment?”

“Often and often.”

“Had she any favourite method of so doing? what coloured ink did she use?”

“No ink at all, sir; I have seen her use red silk, but mostly she sewed her name at length with her own hair, for the raven’s wing was never darker.”

“How was this kind of mark likely to wear?”

“As long as any mark can, sir; I have seen such washed for years, and even plain and legible when the clothes have been nearly worn out.”

“Do you happen to possess any of Miss O’Donnel’s late clothing, so marked as you have described?”

“Yes, sir.”

“Is it in court?”

“It is, sir.”

“Will you be good enough to produce it?”

In answer to this request the old lady received a packet from her servant behind, and having looked at her seal previously placed upon it, and broken the same, she handed it to the counsel for the prosecution. From within this, the latter unfolded to the jury a flannel robe, in every respect similar to that one found round the head of the skeleton, with this exception, that the second one was as pure and spotless, as the first was blood-stained and disfigured. The first point to which the counsel turned his attention was the back of the neck-band, and there distinctly visible were the words “Kathleen O’Donnel,” worked in hair, and corresponding exactly with the mark on the other.

“Now, Mrs. Kilpatrick, are you sufficiently cognizant of Miss O’Donnel’s mode of marking, to be able to tell her work from that of another, when you see it?”

“I have no doubt of it, sir.”

“Then be good enough to inspect this wrapper,” handing her the blood-soiled robe.

“’Tis her own, sir, ’tis her own!” exclaimed the witness, with a frantic cry that would have sent conviction to the heart of even the most sceptical hearer, if any such were in court. “Well I know it!” weepingly exclaimed the old lady in continuation—“These very hands cut them all out together, and my little Kathleen made them under my own eye: measure them, sir, measure them!” she added with increasing earnestness of manner, “and if they differ, either in size or pattern, even half an inch, set at liberty the murderer of my child!” casting on Sir Maurice a look of despair and abhorrence.

Hysteria prevented further utterance, and calling on her “darling child,” and uttering piercing screams, in which Kathleen’s name was suddenly arrested by the hysteric sob, Mrs. Kilpatrick was removed from court.

In compliance, however, with the suggestion she had made, the two wrappers were com-

pared, and 'it then became evident that they had, as she said, been cut from the same pattern, and, even to the very work, displayed the same relative origin.

Mr. Kilpatrick was then sworn, and questioned as to the abduction of Kathleen, the finding the fragment of the letter afterwards on the ground, and more especially as to the identity of the skeleton. Nothing could be more clear and decided than his testimony that these remains corresponded entirely with her figure, and formed indeed all that was left of Kathleen, except the love we bore her.

The various minor victims had now gone through their torture, but the chief was still to suffer at the stake. No life, however infinitely prolonged, can weaken the impression still left of my feelings, when the usher of the court came to tell me that my turn to give evidence had arrived.

CHAPTER X.

“ Around numberless the rabble flowed,
Shouldering each other, crowding for a view.”

JANE SHORE.

UNUSED as I had been through life to the stare of public assemblies, this fact in its simplest form would greatly have disconcerted me. A moment's reflection on the position I occupied, a glance at the sea of eager faces turned on mine,—as I stood in the witness-box, some with a heartless curiosity, using an opera-glass, many with spectacles and eye-glasses, all seemingly bent on the prying object of reading, if possible, to the very soul, a son sworn to give

testimony against his father: when I thought of all this, I felt as if I could compel my energies to nobler purposes than those of sinking under the load imposed on me.

A momentary sight of Captain Howard and Caustic sitting not far off cheered me for the instant; but had death been equally near, the depression under which I laboured could not have been greater. How in that moment faded from my heart every particle of resentment against him who was—yes! still was, my father! Strongly did I try to steel my bosom against him by painting his horrible, his bloody, and relentless persecution of an innocent and endearing girl; but memory could not exclude from this dark picture, the strong lights of my boyhood and his love, before the first deep affliction of our family had changed his very nature.

Still I felt his arm clasped round my mother's waist and mine—still I saw him supporting me on my pony ere I had yet learnt to ride—still I heard his gentle and affectionate voice calling a favourite son to those sports of child-

hood which a father's manhood did not disdain to share. All that was bright, beautiful, and redeeming in his character, kept rushing full upon me. His "hand open as day to melting charity;" his courage, which knew but fear in his compassion for the timid; his winning manners and accomplished mind; his lofty pride; his high and fiery enthusiasm; his heart once over-flowing with gentleness and affection; he who had been at once my nurse, my parent, my playfellow, my friend;—must my voice be lifted against a being with so many claims on my gratitude and love, to doom him to the ignominy of the gibbet? Deeply as I adored the memory of the murdered Kathleen—could the affections long since withered in her grave be called back to life by accelerating the death even of her assassin?—or the fresh joyousness of youth and hope be restored to me, when he who had wrecked them was like them destroyed? Ah, no! And the voice of my soul cried within me, like Richard's murdered spirits, "Despair and die!"

The counsel who was to conduct my examination, guessed at the agitation so busily assailing me from within, and with that knowledge of nature, of which his profession forms so melancholy a school, began by putting a few unimportant questions, to lead me from the point on which my distress was concentrated. Having given the date of my age, my birth-place, my service in the navy, and other similar matters, he handed to me the weapon of murder that lay upon the bar table.

“Be good enough to tell me if you have ever before seen that sword?”

“I have.”

“More than once?”

“Yes.”

“Where did you first see it?”

“In the private oratory of Castle Maurice.”

“To whom does Castle Maurice belong?”

“To my father, Sir Maurice O’Donnel.”

“For what purpose is the private oratory of Castle Maurice used?”

“Of late years as a painting-room and smaller

library or study for my father, with whose dressing-room it communicated by a secret passage."

"As one of the family, did you frequent this room much?"

"Never when Sir Maurice was at home, except by his invitation; when there, it was understood by all that he wished to be alone."

"How came you then to see this sword there?"

"In the absence of my father, the oratory was Lady O'Donnel's favourite sitting-room; that sword was kept within the entrance to the secret passage, and, while Lady O'Donnel worked or read, was one of the favourite playthings of myself and brother."

"Did Sir Maurice ever see it in your hands?"

"No, I should not think he ever did."

"Had he any clue by which to suppose you were acquainted with its shape, size, &c.?"

"I should think none."

"Had the sword no other ornament than is now appended to it?"

“Yes; an old leathern tassel frayed and worn.”

“Could you recognise this tassel again?”

“I think so.”

“Is that it?”

“Yes, it is.”

“When did you last see that sword and tassel perfect?”

“I cannot answer as to the precise day, but the period is still deeply fixed in my remembrance, and was between four and five years since.”

“Did any particular event occur to you about that time then, to make this concurrent impression so strong?”

“Yes,” I replied;—but—I could add no more. I felt as might have done the sorcerer Faustus when his period of immunity drew to a close, and the spirit of all ill made good the horrible demands of hell upon his soul. But I had this advantage only to sustain me—I was the wronged, and not the criminal party; I had no guilt to bear me down, but only dire misfortune to bear up against; and fearful as was the

effort to stand under it, I made the struggle. It was not, however, till after the lapse of some seconds that I could reply to the question that ensued.

“ Pray may I ask, Mr. O’Donnel, to what marked occurrence you allude ?”

“ The forcible abduction of a lady to whom I was engaged in marriage.”

“ Were you so engaged *with* or *against* the consent of your father, Sir Maurice ?”

“ *Against* his consent.”

“ How long before your contemplated marriage was this lady’s abduction carried into effect ?”

“ A few hours.”

“ Now be good enough to give this question your best consideration—how long was it before the abduction you have mentioned, that you saw in its accustomed state the sword now in your hands ?”

“ Only a few days.”

“ Can you state the number ?”

“ Perhaps five or six at the utmost.”

“ Was the sword-tassel, that you have since

recognised, dissevered, then whole, and attached to its handle?"

"It was."

"How are you enabled to speak so positively?"

"The answer to that question involves a long story; but it was in this way:—Sir Maurice was from home; I had that morning communicated to him my attachment to Miss Kathleen O'Donnel, and received, what I thought, an unreasonable denouncement of it. This had determined me to trust my fortunes and affections to my own guidance. I intended on the following morning to set off to Dublin with this view, and seek a commission in the army. A low state of spirits led me to take what I thought might be a last ramble over my favourite parts of the castle; but I got no further than the oratory, for there my eye happening to alight on the works of Sterne in my father's book-case, I took down the volume which contains his affecting episode of "The Sword." To a boyish imagination, at once heated and depressed, it seemed to bear on the

aspect of my own fortunes : the sword in question, like that of the French Count, was a family one ; it had been borne by an ancestor at the battle of the Boyne. I took it from its place, drew it, and laid it on my knee, while I read the story. I did not then imagine that the realization of the latter would have been so similar as it has since proved. But some singular feeling, for which I was at a loss to account even at the time, induced me to do what I had never before thought of doing—namely, to oil the blade carefully, before I returned it, sheathed, to the accustomed corner. The sun was then getting very low, and I lost no further time in riding over to Mr. Kilpatrick's, to take leave of Miss O'Donnel, whom, after that meeting, I never had the happiness to behold alive again !”

After another pause, I attempted to remove the sword which remained on the bar of the witness-box.

“ With your leave,” interrupted the counsel, “ there are one or two more questions which I wish to put, before this topic is dismissed. After the particular attention with

which you regarded that weapon on the evening in question, are you able to state to the jury in what condition was the blade when you returned it to the sheath? Was it whole, or was it broken?"

"Whole."

"Was it rusted, or was it free from rust?"

"It was clean, but dark with those stains which time usually leaves on steel."

"At any rate it drew from its sheath with ease, and was what you term a whole weapon?"

"It was."

"And this state of the sword became known to you five or six days before Miss O'Donnell's abduction—did you not say?"

"I did."

"When did you next see it?"

"About six weeks afterwards."

"Pray what had you been doing during that interval?"

"I had been in pursuit of Miss O'Donnell's abductors."

"Did you find out any clue to them?"

“ Nothing that could be relied on.”

“ On the return from your fruitless search did you find Sir Maurice O’Donnel at his residence ?”

“ No, I did not.”

“ Where then was he ?”

“ He was in prison.”

“ Now, then, Mr. O’Donnel, give your attention to this point. During the interval that elapsed between your putting so carefully away the sword before you, and the subsequent hearing, on your part, of your father’s imprisonment, had you at any time, during this interval, *seen* that sword ?”

“ No, I had not.”

“ When did you next see it ?”

“ On the day after my return from my unsuccessful pursuit.”

“ Did you see it in your father’s oratory ?”

“ No.”

“ In whose hands, then, did you see it ?”

“ In the hands of the officers of justice.”

“ Did you, on thus again seeing it, make any examination of its condition ?”

“ I did.”

“ Can you say whether the state in which you found it differed in any particular from its state at your last previous scrutiny of it ? ”

“ Yes, it did.”

“ Be good enough to state to the jury in what particulars it differed ? ”

“ The blade, gentlemen of the jury, was covered with recent rust, and the marks of blood hastily and ineffectually wiped off, seemingly before returning it to its scabbard, which could only with difficulty be detached from it. A long splinter also was shivered from the edge of the blade, one-third from the point, and the leathern tassel, apparently wrenched from the hilt, was severed, and though then in the same legal custody as the sword, also covered with blood.”

“ This, then, Mr. O’Donnel, was the state of the sword when you *last* saw it ? ”

“ It was.”

“ Will you now draw the weapon from the sheath, and say if it is still the same ? ”

With some difficulty I did so. “ Gentlemen, it is still the same.”

“ The leathern tassel you have already recognised—there it is again. Is that, too, still the same ? ”

“ It is.”

“ Now, then, sir, to pass to another subject ;—did you know a tenant—indeed I believe a sort of servant—in the employ of Sir Maurice, named Donaghue ? ”

“ I did.”

“ Did you ever, after Miss Kathleen’s abduction, enjoy any opportunity of questioning Donaghue on that subject ? ”

“ No, never ; though four times thrown in his way abroad, since the abduction of Miss O’Donnel, in the most strange and unexpected manner, and each time most cruelly prevented, by the force of circumstances, from carrying into effect this, my most earnest desire on earth.”

“ On what occasion did you last see him ? ”

“ On the occasion of his execution for piracy at Port Royal, whither, by kind permission and furtherance of the Honourable Sir Percy Howard, I had hurried, in the strong hope that

such a fate impending over him would lead to some important disclosures. I had the deep misery and misfortune, however, of only arriving in time to see him suspended on the gallows; and there for ever ended all hopes from that desperate quarter."

"Have you, Mr. O'Donnel, examined the skeleton in the possession of the court?"

"I have."

"Minutely, may I ask?"

"Very."

"I have now, then, only one question to ask of you; but that I may not at this solemn moment take you by surprise, I must candidly tell you, that on the answer you return to it, much may depend; collect yourself, therefore, before you reply. Could you pronounce that skeleton to have belonged to any one you once knew? In putting this question home to you more particularly, I bear in mind—beside other considerations—that you are a surgeon, and that your profession will enable you to speak with more certainty than most men, on this important point."

As this question was put to me, the perspiration started on my forehead, and my heart involuntarily trembled within me. In an instant I remembered that, as the affianced husband of Kathleen, none could be supposed more surely to distinguish her beloved form, under even the most terrible of changes. As a surgeon also, that judgment would be the more acute—the less liable to error; while, as the prisoner's son, whatever I might utter would be considered as the unprejudiced testimony of a man who, however deep the wrongs he might have suffered in his own person or affections, would still be most anxious to shelter the head of his family from the horrible disgrace of the gallows.

My unhappy word, then, was to be the pivot on which the trial was to turn. How could I save my father from his disgraceful fate? Too well I knew, that in every particular in which it was possible for man's judgment to exert itself—the length of the person—the form of the hand—the foot—the forehead—the shoulder—even to the very hair—all spoke of Kathleen so plainly, as to prove that dumb things

have a tongue. Yes, I was sworn to tell the whole truth. How then could I save my unfortunate—unhappy—guilty father?

I looked at the judge; his eyes seemed bent on me in pity. Well might they bestow their compassion on a wretch who seemed to have nothing better in life left for him! I turned towards the jury—the painful silence in which they waited for my words was worse than the agonies of the stake. I looked for a moment on my father, but his glance did not, thank Heaven! meet mine. The poisoned Socrates, discoursing to his weeping pupils of approaching death, was not more calm and undisturbed. Could that be guilt? Was it not possible that I—that all of us—might be deceived! Great God! to think that my bare word might unjustly deliver over my father to the hands of the executioner, and some future year discover my unintentional error!

With a feeling of frenzy I endeavoured to run over the heads of the evidence—but in vain; a mass of disjointed and confused images alone presented themselves in the dark obscu-

rity of my mind. I could distinguish nothing—say nothing—do nothing—but press my hands together, in a silent paroxysm of despair.

“ I am afraid, Mr. O’Donnel,” interrupted the counsel, “ that you have forgotten the last question ? ”

“ No, I have not, sir ! ” cried I—the pent up agony of my soul finding some vent in the vehemence of my expression—“ I never can forget it while I live. Do not—do not for the love of God—press me to answer it ! Surely you have enough of evidence already for the attainment of truth ! Why press the victim of so much misfortune as myself with the additional misery of a father’s death. Consider the relation I bear to the prisoner !—the affections—the reverence which the Almighty plants in the bosom of a son ! What human force can tear these out ? and surely justice should not be the first to outrage them ! ”

A dead and appalling silence followed this appeal. The counsel looked down as if at his brief, but, in reality, to conceal the emotion which had proved too powerful, even for his

long habits of control. After a few seconds he looked up and said :—

“ I feel most deeply, Mr. O’Donnel, the sad force of your argument ; but there is a heavy duty imposed on each of us. Its discharge can be pleasant to neither, but its fulfilment is imperative on both. I fear, therefore, I must require your answer to the question last put to you.”

Once again the tones of his voice died away, and the deep stillness of the court was unbroken as before. Every eye almost was turned on me ; but I no longer felt the gaze. My tortured fancy went with my father to his condemned cell—watched the sleepless nights that preceded execution—followed him to the scaffold—and felt throughout—that I—was the instrument of all !

A stray bee had in the interim entered the open window, and flew humming through the court, whose deep silence made that sound perfectly audible in its faintest intonation. A host of images of summer sunshine—happiness and youth—were called up by this simple accident,

making the contrast of my present horrors still more dreadful and real. Still I could not summon courage to say the fatal words—I felt tear after tear slowly trickle down my cheek, but I was dead to the shame this weakness might cast on my manhood.

A voice but too well remembered here came sternly upon my ear. Eagerly I turned—Sir Maurice himself addressed me.

“Do not discredit, sir, the lessons of your youth—do your duty, and know no fear.”

The counsel made a motion to Sir Maurice as he resumed his seat, and, turning to me, repeated his last question—“Do you, in the skeleton below, recognise, to the best of your belief, the bones of any former acquaintance or friend?”

Deep as my own death-knell sounded the sepulchral tone, which was all the voice I could command for the reply that every one conspired to wring from me—“*I do.*”

“What is the name of that friend?”

“Kathleen O’Donnel.”

On receiving this reply, a death-like pause

followed, succeeded by a momentary murmur through the court; but no words can describe the intense, the overwhelming avidity which every one but Sir Maurice himself seemed to hang upon those last terrible words, when they saw that an answer of some description I must make.

“My lord,” said the counsel, addressing the judge, “that is the case for the prosecution.” Adding, turning to me,

“Mr. O’Donnel, if Sir Maurice has no questions to put, you are at liberty.”

“None,” said Sir Maurice; and, looking towards me with a smile that spoke—oh so bitterly!—of former days—he held out his attenuated hand.

Everything beside was forgotten! I sprang towards it—but no more—Nature had already been taxed beyond her powers of endurance, and Caustic’s opportune and friendly arms received in his fall one who, to all appearance, had for ever quitted a world in which his share had been one of almost unmixed affliction!

On recovering my senses, I found myself in

a private room with Caustic and Howard, and by the aid of restoratives was enabled to regain some degree of tranquillity. I was now urged to return to the court, and hear my father's defence. This, however, I declined; and Caustic, affectionately insisting that he would not leave me, much against my will, declared his intention of remaining absent likewise. On this Howard remarked that my absence might mislead Sir Maurice, and by a belief that some accident, or serious illness, had suddenly befallen me, distract some part of that attention and thought which ought to be exclusively devoted to himself.

Caustic added also, that in bare justice, I, who knew so many facts militating against him, should also hear his defence.

These arguments decided me to return into the court at once, while yet the judge and many of the auditory, as well as the prisoner, were absent, during the forty minutes' interval which followed the close of the prosecution. The judge having returned, and order being restored, Sir Maurice rose.

“The few words, gentlemen of the jury, that I have to address to you, I will neither dignify nor ridicule by the title of a defence—I have no defence to make. You have yourselves seen that I sought to cross-examine none of the numerous witnesses brought forward against me, neither shall I summon any in my own behalf. I perceive, gentlemen, that most of you have been, in happier times, known to me. When I resided at my seat, many of you were in the habit of supplying the wants of my family. I dare say it is not too much to affirm that I was then known to all of you. Of this much I am sure—not one of your number but is aware that I never disgraced my lips with a falsehood—that, let my faults be what they might, I never broke word with human being. Hear me then, gentlemen, while I affirm, in the presence of God and man, by everything I hold most sacred—I am entirely innocent of the murder laid to my charge. Unfortunate—deeply unfortunate I may be—but of this dreadful crime there is not a man amongst you more innocent than myself. It is for the puerile and the weak to lament misfortunes—the privilege

of the great in mind, is to bear—and to repair them! The last I cannot do. The grave has closed over the only witness who could prove me innocent; and I will not incur the ignominy of telling a doubted and unsupported tale—to excite the wonder of the world, yet leave me in as unhappy a position as before. All, then, that is left to me is to endure my misfortunes unrepiningly—I do—I will—nothing shall wring from me a single complaint. In a choice of overwhelming miseries, I chose what seemed the best. It has proved the worst; still it shall be borne. If, despite of the solemn assurance of a man who would not stoop to falsehood for the preservation of a thousand lives, much less one—if, despite of this, you pronounce me guilty, I am content to die. You take the life of a guiltless man;—but be that upon your own heads. No disgrace will accrue to my family from my death, for, in all probability, the justice you refuse me, Heaven will render to my name at last, and the legal murder you have committed, appear in all the hideousness of the truth. My lips are mysteriously

sealed from saying more. 'The mountains which you behold from these windows, to all appearance, are blue,' (pointing to a view of some distant and still visible hills which the old assize court of that town commanded;) "did we see them for the first time, we should be ready to swear that they are of that colour. Such, however, is not the fact; they are red, brown, green, and a variety of hues—indeed almost of every colour except blue; but distance, nevertheless, mellows them into that uniform tint which you behold. Thus, however strongly, facts may to man's fallible senses appear to militate against me, I assure you, by everything that we hold most dear, that they have perfectly misled you — misled the whole of you. I here enter my solemn protest against them, and reiterate, however you may disbelieve it, my perfect innocence in this transaction."

CHAPTER XI.

" I am overwhelm'd with wonder.
 What prodigy is this ?
 Do you deal with witches, rascal ?
 There is a statute for you !
 ————— To save thee
 Would beggar the stock of mercy !"

MASSINGER.

THE degree of wonder and surprise produced upon the jury and the court, by the line of conduct Sir Maurice had adopted, is not easily to be imagined.

" After the overwhelming mass of evidence against him, how can he be so lost to common sense," said many of the bar, " as to think that his single, unsupported word is to bear down everything else ?"

Notwithstanding, however, that this was the common sense view of the question, the jury

were exceedingly staggered by his resolute asseverations ; while the judge, to whom his character had long been well known, could scarcely conceive it possible he could resort to such a mere trick if guilty ; and yet how could they, after all they had heard, believe him innocent ?

Sir Maurice had, however, not long resumed his seat when the chief justice, who happened to try the case, began to sum it up to the jury. His lordship having at great length, and with much care, recapitulated all the evidence which had been offered, interspersing it with such occasional remarks as appeared desirable to facilitate the labour of the jury, concluded his charge to them with these observations :—

“ Whether, therefore, gentlemen, we regard the startling variety of facts brought under our notice, or the character of the witnesses by whom they have been adduced, they are equally entitled to command your most serious consideration. The witnesses, you will bear in mind, are no illiterate people, likely from want of education and reflection, to be easily swayed and prejudiced into believing a guilt that never

existed but in their own too credulous imaginations. This too often has been the case, and a virtuous horror of one crime has unknowingly led many a witness before now, into the commission of another still more baneful. But in this case the witnesses are in the same rank of life as the prisoner, than which, as far as education and knowledge go, none can well be higher. Of all these, Mrs. Kilpatrick and her husband, and also the prisoner's son, are alone likely to have been unintentionally led by their feelings to overcolour facts. But you must ask yourselves whether the facts to which they have borne testimony are such as can be susceptible of such error. On the whole, therefore, gentlemen, it remains for you to consider how far this consecutive chain of evidence has been shaken by the defence or exculpation of the unfortunate prisoner. Sir Maurice O'Donnell has contented himself with simply denying the whole charge, and reminds you that he has ever borne in the world the highest character for truth. Here, however, I must guard you from falling into an error: Sir Maurice has not

thought fit to bring any witnesses to state this, and his ipse dixit cannot be accepted in their stead. The beautiful simile by which he has reminded you that distant hills deceive us, is equally open to your inquiry as to how far it can be made to bear upon his case. You must consider whether it is only at a distance that the deceit takes place, and whether the comparison would not have been more unexceptionable before the discovery of the skeleton; for when the truth is brought home to us—when the hills are beneath our feet, the deception can exist no longer. Which, therefore, is now the case, gentlemen, it is your province to decide. I have no doubt that, let your verdict be what it may, it will be the conscientious result of your deliberate judgment. This finally bear in mind,—should your efforts at a just decision lead you after all to doubt, that doubt must be rendered in favour of the prisoner, for this it is his right to claim, and your duty to award.”

The summing up had ceased—the jury retired to find their verdict. The judge, after the long trial of his patience, rose for a few

minutes' relaxation, and the death-like stillness, which had but so lately been broken only by the voice of the chief justice, was once more disturbed by the various opinions and speculations of those around me. These were at first given in a low whisper, whose murmur gradually deepened into the ordinary tone of conversation, occasionally broken by a laugh, as jest or sneer drew forth the mirth of the unfeeling.

How painfully did sounds, which would have passed unheeded at another moment, then strike home. In vain I tried to shut out the opinions so freely bandied around me. Not one appeared to entertain a hope as to the innocence of the prisoner, nor, after all that had passed, could I.

Anxious to spare myself the pain of hearing the final and the fatal word given, that was to doom so near a relative, I soon rose to leave the court; but the sudden re-entrance of the jury on one side, and the judge on the other, affected me to a degree, that did not even permit the power or volition. I sank back in

my seat, unable either to fulfil the wish I had formed, or even to express it. My eye involuntarily wandered to my father.

How I envied him the stern calmness apparent in his eye, as the clerk of the court demanded of the twelve, "Gentlemen, have you considered your verdict? How say you, is the prisoner at the bar guilty, or not guilty?"

At that terrible question every eye was turned upon the foreman, every ear strained to catch the syllables which he should next utter, bearing with them, as they would, the weight of life or death. That it would be the former, no one could even for a moment conceive. The very rapidity with which they had come to their decision at once forbade this belief. But this knowledge only the more awfully increased the expectant stillness of the moment.

The foreman, on hearing the question of the clerk, turned his eye towards my father, as if in momentary pity of the pang he was about to inflict, and then looking towards the judge, said, **GUIL—**" The final syllable yet trembled on

his lips, when a wild piercing cry arrested its further utterance. The eye of every one was turned to the quarter whence the noise came, a low door, a little behind the bench on which I sat, being in the sight of the prisoner, and giving the public admittance to the court.

“What is the meaning of this interruption?” angrily demanded his lordship from the bench.

The crier of the court elbowed his way out to ascertain and remove its cause; but the quick repetition of the cry, and the wild exclamation of “I must be heard!” was explained by the sudden appearance of a stranger within the door of the court, while another of a strong herculean frame, in a sailor’s dress, cleared the way. Some one still stood betwixt me and the intruders, but I distinctly heard the words, “My lord, I throw myself on your protection!”—Another moment, and the speaker stood before me. I looked up: Father of mercy! could this be?

Kathleen herself stood beside me! I looked—could this be reality?—Could this be life,

and no distempered vision that gave her back to me? I passed my hands across my eyes, scarcely knowing how to doubt—scarcely daring to believe. At this moment she turned, her eye caught mine, and the recognition was complete.

What language can do justice to the scene that followed? One whom all human calculations had consigned to an assassin's malice long years since, now appeared to confound those who were truly about to steep their hands in a judicial murder. In the last extremity of surprise, every eye was fixed upon us; that of the jurymen in particular, who yet only half comprehended what had happened, or how great an error they, more particularly, had been saved from rendering irretrievable. No one, however, could behold such a scene unmoved.

Kathleen's tears flowed fast and freely on my neck, and for a few seconds not a sound could be heard to interrupt her sobs. As for the judge, had he been suddenly transformed to stone, he could not have appeared more ut-

terly petrified. At last recovering himself, he demanded the meaning of the scene, and the lady's name. At this question, Sir Maurice, who hitherto had remained the most unmoved of all, now rose, and, with a sternness and self-confidence redoubled from what had occurred, pointed to Kathleen, saying,

“That, my lord, is Miss O'Donnel, the lady for whose murder you had taken steps, a few minutes since, to doom me to the gallows.”

As my father said this, he directed the attention of the amazed spectators to something which lay upon the judge's desk, and which, when his lordship hastened to remove it, was at once seen to be—the fatal black cap.

Indeed, so surely had the criminating verdict of the jury been foreseen, that, till this moment, his lordship's temporary forgetfulness in preparing to pronounce doom had escaped observation. Paying no attention to this part of my father's observation, his lordship now asked if any one in court could identify Kathleen as the relation whose supposed remains had that day been exhibited. This the counsel for the pro-

secution was at once able to do most completely ; and well it was so—for how could I, or any of those who had made such a dreadful mistake already, undertake this new identity?

The only question that now remained, was how to proceed in point of form, in rehearing evidence on a trial so far closed, that even the verdict was partially given. The jury, however, saved all further trouble on this head, by intimating their readiness to return and reconsider their verdict, which was immediately given—Not Guilty.

CHAPTER XII.

The fearful mystery is solved in vain,
If bliss bring new-born terrors in its train.

STRANGE, indeed, was the story which Kathleen had to relate, and one which might well induce admirers of circumstantial evidence to pause before they condemn a fellow-creature, even though a criminal, on the translation of facts that may as easily bear one interpretation as another. She stated, that, on being carried off from her grandfather's residence, she was borne blindfolded, and with her arms secured, to a cottage, distant three hours' ride, and which she afterwards identified as

Donaghue's cabin. Here the leader of the party had her dismounted, and given to the care of a young female, of her own height and figure, whom she had never seen before, but who was called Carry, and who, by her description, was doubtless the daughter of the ruffian Donaghue.

This girl, it seems, showed her all the kindness in her power but, from motives of fear, resolutely declined entering into any of the circumstances of her abduction; and while telling Kathleen that she had no resource but in submission, promised that no harm should befall her, and that she would always be by her as an attendant. Assurances similar to these had been previously made to her, on the way from her own home, by the leader of the party, who, however, endeavoured to say as little as possible, to prevent being recognised. With the same view, he spoke in a disguised tone of voice, of which, though she entertained strong suspicions, she could not be at all sure as to the identity.

On arriving at this cabin, the girl al-

ready mentioned took her to her own sleeping-room, the rudest loft that could well be imagined, and made offer of some food, which she declined. Being in great distress of mind, she took off part of her clothes and lay down, her companion sitting by her side, endeavouring to console her. While thus engaged, she heard, by the sound of horses' hoofs, that the greater part of the men who had brought her thither had ridden away, and that only two voices could afterwards be distinguished, as if in earnest conversation. Soon, by the increased noise below, she judged the remaining two to be quarrelling, and, in particular, imagined that she heard her own name pronounced in the voice of Sir Maurice O'Donnel.

On this point, however, she would not undertake to make any positive assertion. In a few minutes the sounds of quarrel increased to a violent degree, and were succeeded by the noise of blows like the elashing of two swords. Her companion, who had been preparing to lie down and sleep beside her, now started up, and, seizing in her hurry by mistake

part of Kathleen's dress, she threw it over her, and rushed down stairs. Kathleen then stated, that for a moment she heard the girl's voice endeavouring to interfere, and that this was suddenly ended by a most piercing shriek, followed by a breathless silence and whisper.

Meanwhile, Kathleen had no sooner been rid of her guard, than she too arose, with the intention of slipping noiselessly out of the house during the affray. When, however, she gained the bottom of the stairs, she beheld opposite to her two men, whom she believed to be Sir Maurice and a stranger—the latter with a heavy sword still in his hand, and the former, with a broken one lying at his feet, both being in the act of supporting the poor girl, who, a few minutes since, had left her side in perfect health, but who was now to all appearance a corpse, with her head severed nearly in two, and the blood gushing from her in torrents.

This appalling spectacle so overcame all presence of mind that she fainted, and had too indistinct a recollection of what happened for

some time to make any positive statement ; the only images that she could at all recall, being those of a second journey on horseback, succeeded by the deadly sea-sickness of a sailing-boat. At last she found herself in a French convent, strictly watched and guarded, and visited occasionally by the wretch whom she believed to be the father of the deceased girl.

Having been caught in one or two endeavours to fling over the walls of the convent, letters describing these particulars, as well as in making preparations for a personal escape, she was once more placed on board a vessel ; and, under the command of the scoundrel who came to see her, she, after a long voyage, which she described as being accompanied by dreadful suffering, was once more landed and placed in a second convent, where the authorities were French people, though in a tropical climate ; and she was forewarned, that in proportion as she endeavoured to effect her escape, would her treatment become more harsh. Fully believing in the truth of this, and her energies

being now somewhat deadened by despair, she became conscious that those around her, though they would never hear her story, were still inclined to make her happy after their way. She resolutely abstained, therefore, from any idle effort to obtain freedom in a spot where she was convinced she had no real friends; and though she resisted all the persuasions used to induce her to become a convert and take the vows, she found that resignation could alone support her in abiding the issue of her unhappy fortunes.

In this manner one twelvemonth after another rolled away; remittances from England were regularly forwarded to her, though she knew not through what channel; but as Donaghue called every few months to inquire after her health, she concluded that they were conveyed through his agency. At last both his visits and the remittances ceased, and the superior of the establishment seemed willing to allow the departure of Kathleen, had she possessed the funds. But though she had carefully saved up, for some such contingency

as the present, some part of the money that had been allowed her, when she learnt that she had been residing in the island of St. Domingo, and came to inquire as to the expenses of her return to England, she found her means utterly insufficient to the end proposed.

The grief that she now felt, was, perhaps, more bitter than that experienced by her in any former part of her heavy trials, from thinking that when so slight a bar to her escape interposed, she should still be prevented from regaining that country and those friends from whom she had been so cruelly torn! With this feeling was mixed the apprehension, that with every day's delay the return of Donaghue became more probable; and with the remittance which he might bring, the riveting of her chains would be ensured.

Hitherto, by the kindness of the superior, she had always been spared the deep disgust and horror of seeing her persecutor. One morning, however, all her worst fears were quickened into fresh life by hearing that a stranger, in a sailor's dress, desired to speak

with her. For a long time she hesitated to grant the interview required; but, on doing so, she learnt to her delight that the object of her detestation and dread had just been executed at Jamaica for piracy; and that the individual who addressed her, having found among the papers of one of his vessels all the correspondence which related to her, as well as being acquainted with me, to whom he expressed himself under some obligations, had hurried to set her free, and expedite her passage to England, whither the Epaminondas with myself had already gone.

The rest of her narrative explained itself. For my own part, I did not doubt that it was Beckett who had finally displayed his gratitude by this important service; while, knowing the danger of his own return to England, and still desirous of executing his generous purposes to the utmost, he had given Kathleen in charge to the trusty fellow who had attended her up to the very moment of her rushing so opportunely into court.

The first information gained by her inquiries

after reaching England, was that of my father's trial. Notwithstanding the deep and unpitying wrongs wrought her by a hand that she now knew to have been his, she hurried off, resting not a moment either by night or day till she gained the court, and there saved the life of one who had hitherto embittered all her own.

CHAPTER XIII.

New mysteries, new doubts, new crimes, new fears,
Ending, at last, in hopes of happy years.

SIR Maurice O'Donnell was now once more at liberty—Kathleen was restored to me—Caustic, Howard, and Lady Redmond, were gathered round me, and at last my happiness seemed to be as complete as the lot of humanity allows. One bitter alloy only presented itself, and that was in the person of my father.

Could we ever meet again as friends after the atrocious outrage he had instigated? Would he brave the scandal of the world by remaining in Ireland after all the exposure of this trial? And, after all the other

ills he had wrought me, must I too share in that? Our poverty! that also was still to be contended with—and thankful would I have been, had that been the only burden I was to bear. The half-pay of a surgeon in the navy was, to be sure, a mere pittance; but as I had always taught myself to prize wealth chiefly for the extended good it might enable me to achieve for those around me, I could bear in silence the privations of my penury, and trust to honourable exertions for eking out a sufficiency in my profession.

Still I was not romantic enough to imagine that love, however ardent, was alimnt sufficiently substantial to support existence; and I trembled as the experience of life depicted to me the sad and often irresistible attacks which straitened circumstances will in time effect upon the purest affection. These last were, however, but the passing misgivings of the moment—I was infinitely too much overjoyed at the miraculous preservation of her I loved, to allow such thoughts to distress me. The position which I occupied with

my father formed one infinitely more urgent and distressing; and while I was discussing with my friends the course I ought to take, the following letter from him was put into my hands.

“ After all you have heard and experienced, you have doubtless assigned to me a character of the greatest cruelty perhaps ever borne. Be that as it may, I do not now write to my only son to exculpate myself, nor even to allude to, much less explain, the past; but to state a few melancholy facts, and to discharge one of the most terrible duties of a miserable existence.

“ You are now aware of the sad history of my poor friend, which, for the sake of all of us, I have so long endeavoured to bury in oblivion. Some dreadful curse has hitherto, however, rested upon our family. We have bent under it in every direction, and now the crisis has arrived which is to annihilate—not our happiness,—that was wrecked long since—but even the last vestige of our peace.

“ The cause of that deadly quarrel between

myself and Colonel O'Donnel, which public curiosity has so long and so vainly endeavoured to ascertain, is one which I have striven with all my soul, and in your case, I fear, too unguardedly, to carry to my grave; but it is now placed perforce in your possession. Act as you will with the accursed secret. The knowledge of it will, in all probability, blast every hope of joy which you possess; while to keep you still in ignorance would produce results not less deplorable, and be in me a crime of deeper complexion than any my unprosperous destiny has yet thrust upon me.

“ You have seen that, in hopes to avoid this dreadful narrative, I had wound up my resolution to undergo unjustly the disgraceful death of the gibbet; and I call to witness those solemn powers which have so afflicted me, that a consideration for you leads me to a confession which my own scandalous death never should have wrung from me.

“ My friend's wife, one of the most amiable and well-conducted young women I ever met, was of a delicate habit, and afflicted with the

infirmity of sleep-walking. You well know with what extreme caution this disease, for it is no less, requires to be treated; and Colonel O'Donnel, fully aware that insanity has resulted from waking people too suddenly under similar circumstances, was accustomed to keep a strict scrutiny over her when in this deplorable state, and, by rising and following her, guard his wife from any harm.

“ By extreme care this habit in Mrs. O'Donnel had been, as we believed, quite cured; and after showing itself only when external circumstances had grievously oppressed the mind, a long interval elapsed without any recurrence, and we ceased to fear that such would be the case.

“ The colonel almost forgot that it had ever occurred, and this led to his neglecting the precautions that guarded against its evils. When he, as you are aware, left Castle Maurice for his promotion, his wife greatly wished to accompany him; but as he had a peculiar aversion to such a step, she remained behind, and, it being their first separation, was in great distress.

At this time both my brother's room and my own were doubly furnished chambers, and when my wife rose on the following morning she came to my side. The discovery which ensued I cannot, dare not relate to you in detail ; suffice it to say that the happiness of a life was blasted in a moment, for all three. The unspeakable agony, the horrible debate that followed, I cannot dwell upon. Mrs. O'Donnell became a gibbering idiot ; my wife fell into almost as pitiable a state ; and I was thenceforth the melancholy being you have always known.

“ At first it was thought advisable to conceal the truth from the colonel ; but that becoming impossible, I wrote to him a letter conjointly with your mother. To her part of this letter he replied. But whether his reason tottered under the blow, I know not ; I cannot, however, think otherwise. He refused to believe anything but the vilest treachery on my part—spoke of his immediate return—and vowed to attempt my life whenever he should meet me.

“ Hoping that a calmer hour would arrive, I purposely went out of the way. He removed

his wife to the next county. Here Kathleen was born, and the mother died.

“The rest is known to you, and you are too dreadfully able to account for my apparent cruelty in preventing a union between you and one who, I was too well aware for my own peace of mind, was, unhappy boy!—*your sister!*”

“Where is this wretchedness to end? Two more are now sacrificed, and my unwilling hands have wielded the fatal weapon. Where is this misery to cease? In you and Kathleen are the only remains of our family—and can—but I dare not pursue the question. Alas, what is left for you I know not! We shall never meet again, and this is something spared to both of us.

“I leave you the estate that came to me, out of which I have secured the trivial competence that suffices one whose wishes are bounded by the desire of a speedy grave. You will soon hear the rumour of my death, and it is my wish that it should be believed. When your thoughts wander to one so doubly wretched, think of me as among the many victims of misfortune—the sport of every cala-

mity, and one whose evil destiny has pursued him to the uttermost. The last words that I shall ever address to you are these : By every hope of future happiness I protest that I have been the victim of accident, and not of crime. You will, perhaps, more readily give credence to this assertion, when you reflect on the wrong your suspicions have already done me, as to the death of Donaghue's child, the particulars of which are enclosed.

“ MAURICE O'DONNEL.”

It was not until after the third perusal of this letter that the whole of the harrowing truth was made out by me. A moment since, and hope and promise spread before me the smiling, though, alas, too visionary prospect of everything which, for the last two years of my life, fancy had pictured as most desirable and least to be expected. Now, as by the shock of an earthquake, a deep and impassable gulf was fixed between me and all that my soul most desired ; while plunged at the bottom of this deep abyss of misery and despair, lay every hope, beyond all realization,

my torment being doubled by the view of that happiness which never could be mine.

Astonishment, horror, grief, anger, and despair, filled my soul by turns. A thousand dark resolves passed through my mind, each changed and succeeded by another, and none remaining. Well might my father ponder on what steps I should pursue! Alas! I knew not myself—I was lost! To marry Kathleen was impossible—to tell her the dark truth appeared equally so—yet, in a few days, I was pledged to lead her to the same altar that should sanctify the vows of Lady Desmond and Howard. What excuse could I make—how could that union, before so desired—now so dreaded—be evaded? I knew not.

One only mode appeared at hand to terminate all my sorrows, and some dark fiend seemed with laughing accents to whisper it to my ear — “It would indeed complete the mystery of our family to the public!” But then, how would the case stand? In this world my woes would certainly be terminated: but taking no other view of it, how would such a

step under every circumstance affect Kathleen, otherwise than to plunge her in the wildest grief—perhaps insanity? And had she deserved this act of selfishness from me?—she, who through so many severe trials—so many wearing years—had never flinched from me even in thought? Perish the idea—an eternity of woes were better than one such deed!

Courage came to my rescue; after so many vials had been poured on my defenceless head, surely one more might be borne, though even more bitter and burning than all which had preceded it. I would seek Caustic; his heart would, I knew, afford me sympathy under any ills, much less such as those which now oppressed me. Nor was his head less equal to advise for them.

As I rose for this purpose, my servant came to tell me that a gentleman desired to speak to me.

“I cannot see him,” I replied.

“I doubt that,” said the stranger, advancing into the room; and Caustic himself stood before me!

“What is the matter?” said he, starting back as his eye beheld on my face traces of the agitation at work within me.

“Everything, my dear friend,” I replied, “that can befall a ruined man.”

“Say rather, a man who is the luckiest mortal I ever heard of.”

“Caustic,” I replied, “for once you might have forborne a jest, if you are acquainted with my deep cause of anguish;—though I know not how that should be possible.”

“Jest! man alive, what ails you? I never was more in sober earnest in my life. But what has happened to make your venom more than you can swallow?—though, after all I have just heard, I am ready to believe anything—I doubt, however, whether I shall long keep my recollection. But that’s by the way. And now lend me thine ear, and whatever woes you have to tell, I feel convinced you will tell them with a lighter heart after the good news which I have been sent to communicate to you.”

“Good news to me? Alas! their arrival is

too late. There is a depth of misery, at which even good fortune itself is bitter."

"Ay, indeed, that's what I should call a very wholesome bitter, and a capital tonic no doubt it is. I wish to Heaven some one would take to dosing me with it; by gosh, sir, straightway would I abandon all other drugs in future. But hear me, man—in the first place, the hitherto supposed Miss Kathleen O'Donnell is in reality Viscountess Desmond; so that you and Howard have just changed shoes in your wooings."

"Explain yourself, for your words have excited in me a confusion of ideas that amounts almost to derangement."

"What, in the name of Nemesis, is the matter with you? what has gone wrong—what have you behind the curtain?"

"You shall hear presently—but—"

"Say I my riddle first?—*bene!* Yesterday evening a despatch reached Lady Desmond—as I will call her for the sake of perspicuity—entreating her to visit a sick person, formerly in your family as a nurse, who had some important

secret to intrust to her. Though this message created great surprise, the request was granted, and Lady Desmond and her father set out to see the invalid forthwith. They found her extremely ill, though less so in body, I believe, than in mind. No entreaties could induce her to communicate what she had to say to Lady Desmond's father, and his lordship, in no slight pet, was obliged to leave them *tête-à-tête*. After much preliminary matter, and no slight hesitation, the woman said that she had sent for the heiress solely to beg that out of her abundance she would make some allowance to you and Kathleen, of whose return she had heard.

“ Though, from having brought Lady Desmond up for some years, she possessed great influence in that quarter, Ida plainly perceived that some cause for this request was in the back-ground, and therefore affected to give it a blank denial. By way of enforcing her argument, the woman let fall some hints as to the *right* which Miss Kathleen had to be so taken care of. Still her ladyship persisted in

a firm denial, and partly by contradiction, partly by coaxing, and partly by representing to her the sin of concealing, on what might be her own deathbed, facts necessary to the rendering of justice towards another, Lady Desmond at last obtained this singular explanation.

“At the birth of Miss O’Donnel she was nurse in your father’s family, and being possessed of some knowledge, though of what kind she would not in any way confess, which led her to believe that the little infant would be unkindly treated, she took an opportunity, when in company a few days afterwards with the nurse of the Desmond family, to exchange her little charge for the young heiress of that house, who, as you know, was born on the same day, and whose mother, as well as Miss O’Donnel’s, had died in childbed.

“The eyes of the infants, being of the same colour, made the deceit less difficult. The clothes worn at the time, she exchanged, dressing each in the other’s linen, the baby being left in her charge while the nurse kept an ap-

pointment with some lover. After having committed this act of virtuous roguery, it seems that her affection, naturally great for the only Miss O'Donnel, increased to such a degree as led her, at the earliest opportunity, to leave her own situation and get into one then vacant in the Desmond family. Thus she had once more the satisfaction of acting as mother to the child she had wrongfully made 'Viscountess in her own right.' Such freaks does fortune play in this queer world of ours.

“ It would be curious, by the way, to analyze the motives of that woman's most eccentric love—but I will not moralize, for I see that you are most marvellously on the tenterhooks. However, the nurse, it seems, having afterwards witnessed with compunction the deep sufferings the wronged child had undergone, she, by way of atonement, resolved to make this appeal to her own child, as she called the supposed Lady Desmond, on behalf of her whose rights the latter had usurped; never dreaming, in her primitive simplicity, of that

justice and honourable feeling which would prompt a disclosure of the deceit.

“With a worth of character, however, beyond all fortune, her ladyship instantly disclosed the whole story to her supposed father, and to Howard, who as instantly has forwarded it to you through me. The nurse has produced ample proofs of her story, and now what is to be done?”

For some minutes I was speechless—lost in an ecstasy of thankfulness and surprise. It was not the sudden possession of immense wealth;—though that has enough of noble uses to make its possession as great a blessing to a well-regulated mind, as it is a curse to a feeble one. But it was the turning of a whole life, with all its warm affections, hopes, and prospects, from darkness into light—the sparing me from a fate too dreadful to contemplate, to the enjoyment of one blest and fortunate indeed!

Yet how little had I deserved this change! I, who in the first burst of the storm had basely thought of deserting the helm! Never could I be too humbly grateful for the inter-

position which had saved me! — nay more, which had brought me through all the heart-rending alternations of a fate so varied as mine, that I might the more acutely estimate and enjoy the brilliant change that had come upon me. My heart was full even to breaking, and I could only hold out my hand to the warm friend before me, and pour out my soul in tears.

Nor, when Caustic had heard the sad story of my father's cruel destinies, was he surprised at my emotion. A simple course was now, however, before me; and, after debating the point at length, we agreed that the secret of Sir Maurice's narrative should, if possible, be confined to our own bosoms. My next inquiry was, as to how far my cousin's candour might affect herself?

“She is now, Caustic,” said I, “like me, a beggar. Howard, though an excellent creature, is not without his fault, and that is—caprice. Will he still, think you, consider their engagement as binding! or even then will he remain faithful to her in heart?”

“By gosh ! sir, if he doesn’t, I’ll marry her myself!” exclaimed Caustic, slapping his hand upon his thigh, with an excess of energy that did not permit him to inquire how far this exchange might be agreeable to the lady herself.

Smiling at his characteristic ardour, I ventured to hope that there would be no occasion to test his kindness of heart so severely as to tempt the breaking of his monastic vows. To which he gravely replied, with eyes still flashing with excitement—

“I hope not, sir ! I hope not. His soul’s too honourable. I devoutly trust there will be no occasion—none !” As if the marrying one of the most lovely and amiable women of her day, had been a sacrifice as great as leaping into the gulf of the Forum.

On communicating the change in her fortune to Kathleen, she received the intelligence with that humble thankfulness, which is the priceless result of affliction acting on a sterling heart—the gold of the mind thrice purified by fire. Her first proposal was to share her

wealth with her to whose integrity she was indebted for it. This proposal I therefore made to Howard ; but with characteristic candour he said, “ No, my boy ! the generosity of youth has overshot the mark : the experience of manhood, however, acknowledges the costliness of the proposal. Money in itself is dross ; the ability to dispense it is power, the power of giving, and, therefore, of receiving happiness ; so in the name of my future wife I accept one half of what you offer with great thankfulness, and wish you every joy on earth with the remainder.”

Nothing could have more delighted either Caustic or myself than this conduct on the part of Howard ; since to men moving in the whirl of life as it passes among the titled and ambitious, the sudden abstraction of so many thousand a year from an income of five-and-twenty, is greatly calculated to test one’s philosophy ; more especially when this lot falls upon a man blessed with every natural capacity for getting rid of an annual half million, without feeling at all oppressed by the exercise

My first act in this altered state of affairs was to send, as quickly as I could, some intelligence of what had happened to Sir Maurice. This, however, was not easily done; for though he had made arrangements with his steward for receiving the sum he had reserved from his own rental, no possibility of tracing out his retreat was left to human being. In all probability, therefore, it was from the public papers that he first learnt what had occurred.

Amid all these changes none struck us more forcibly by its results than the perfect bewilderment of Lord Desmond, who now seemed as if he had two daughters, and now as if he had none. That respectable denizen of the farm-yard, generally distinguished by the title of a hen, when she suddenly beholds her duck-legged progeny adopt the water, seemed to be the best comparison that could be applied to his lordship, either by Howard, Caustic, or myself. He appeared greatly pleased at no longer possessing a consumptive daughter, because— he hinted—he should never again have to attempt wintering in the West Indies, where the

memory of Yellow Jack was anything but grateful to his prejudices.

He insisted that Kathleen should, though greatly against her inclination, adopt her new titles, and did everything in his power to oppose her marriage with myself. Nor, though my own income was now nearly double what the gallant captain's had been, did I feel much surprised at being thus excepted against, by one, whose modest sense of his own merits had led him to consider even a Howard unworthy to call him "father-in-law." But in this matter I was only too thankful to know that I had the lady on my side, and his lordship was heartily welcome to all the rest of the argument.

Having, therefore, interposed as much delay with as little success as possible, he was reluctantly forced to yield. Caustic and his lordship at length crowned all the joys of Howard and myself, by giving away the two brides; to which the doctor added many jokes and much advice. The greatest compliment that I received in my matrimonial estate, came

also from the same quarter. At the end of six months spent with us at Desmond, he stood in sudden irresolution on the steps of the carriage waiting to carry him to Dublin.

“What is the matter?” said I.

With a most thoughtful countenance he slowly dragged one hand from the depth of his breeches pocket, and then hanging his head on one side, observed, “By gosh! I begin to doubt the soundness of my disbelief in happiness!”

“What!” said I, “my dear friend, have I brought you to that at last? Thank Heaven! It would, indeed, be a shame that one who confers so much happiness on others, should never taste it himself. Send back that rumbling rattle-trap, and strike your tent here, once and for aye; there’s plenty of room for both.”

“Sir,” said he, most energetically turning round, with an expression of *fierce* that seems present to me at this moment—“Sir, I’ll see you d——d first; excuse my bad French! But because one man loves another, is he to give up his own independence? Sir, I wouldn’t live at

rack and manger with the king, except on service!—always except on service. No, sir, I may, perhaps, if we don't quarrel beforehand, look about me for a snug tub and some straw in your neighbourhood."

"Egad! then I'll supply it you. Castle Maurice stands empty, and so for me it ever will. Yet no place can be more delightful as a residence; you'd be doing a real kindness to me to rent that."

"Rent that! why the devil don't ye talk to me of renting Babylon? I may rent it, and engage for a pack of hounds in the moon, but how are you to be paid?"

"Why set the rent yourself. I'm not such an unreasonable creature as to expect you'll pay for what you can't use. A peppercorn rent is the thing between friendly farmers; but for two of the sons of Galen, we may find something more appropriate. Come now, I'll hold you at an annual cathartic, provided always that you take the part of swallowing it yourself, or find a deputy."

"A deputy! a deputy by all means; Jew, I

thank thee for that hint. But still, sir, that will hardly be dose enough for my pride, unless you allow me to add to it a few drachmas *auri duri et argenti puri*. Come now, I intended, in the shameful waste and profuse munificence of my soul to go to a decent yearly rental for my tub, and if you're fool enough to take the same for Castle Maurice, why I'll send in my books and a few potatoes incontinently."

"No, I cannot take that; first, because a little haggling is necessary to make any bargain last; and next, because I do not like money from a friend: take, therefore, whatever rent you intended to expend, and give it annually to the poor, or lay it out yearly on the premises."

"Agreed then, agreed. By gosh! sir, it will make a fine tub after all. I'm fond of long sweeps of rooms; it stirs the thoughts. Oh it'll be grand, sir, grand! I hope there are a few ghosts!"

"Bushels of them!"

"That's right, that's right! I wouldn't give

a fig for an old house without ghosts. Some people are not partial to them; I am. Too much solitude is not good for a man of sedentary habits; hobgoblins, spectres, witches, and all that kith, keep a man alive and sharp of a cold dark night. And in a haunted house, let alone a regular castle, a man would be a most egregious blockhead to want society. Very well, then, it's a bargain. And now, remember, sir, when you mention me in my absence, more especially to your noble father-in-law, Lord Fiddlefaddle, let us have none of your vulgar familiarities, such as, 'that mad doctor of mine,' or 'my old shipmate Caustic,' or anything of that sort. But watch a favourable moment when you think his lordship *is* capable of entertaining an idea, and then make mention, as Jack Falstaff says, of 'an elderly gentleman' Anthony Caustic of Castle Maurice, M.D. Think of that, sir. There, God bless ye. I must go to Dublin, but I'll be back soon to take possession. Now I think of it, do you conceive you could keep a secret? I mean from your wife?"

“Why, I have never had more than one hitherto, but, at your particular request, I’ll try another—what is it?”

“Why,” taking me aside with unwonted solemnity, “there is a woman—”

Now, for the life and soul of me, I could not here help a slight smile from tickling the corners of my mouth. Whether my extraordinary friend saw it, I know not, but he turned abruptly round, and brushing off with—“No, it’s too dangerous,” jumped into the chariot waiting for him, and made the postilions drive rapidly off. I often afterwards tried to lead him back to the same point—“there is a woman,” as if there were but one—and find out what it was that could be connected with this mysterious “woman;” for I entertained a strong suspicion that his mind at that period was, as he would himself have expressed it, somewhat “infected with the matrimonial taint.”

On his return from Dublin, however, he came as he went, alone; but was as good as his word, and took up his residence in what he styled “the big tub.”

His society ever proved one of the dearest blessings with which relenting Fortune recompensed the sufferings of my former days. In the domestic quiet and unambitious joys of our little circle he seemed to realise many of his own views. By the aid of reading, music, painting, and sport, life has glided from us like some dear dream, bright day, or crystal river. Resolutely, however, abjuring all approach to absenteeism, there has always been—alas!—sorrow enough in our neighbourhood, to prevent the heart from growing more idle than the head.

Amidst even this overflow of happiness some, cause for grief was to be expected; and that we experienced in the still precarious health of the noble-minded *Ida*. The hereditary scourge that had so mercilessly mowed down her family has ever seemed hourly about to extend its threatened horrors to herself; and these have only been averted by constant care, and a life banished to a warmer and, alas! a distant climate: for when the heart owns its proper love for the country of its birth and youth, no

foreign beauty can reconcile us to the decree—
There shalt thou not dwell !

For a week or two in our finest summers we have occasionally had the delight of reuniting at Desmond a most happy party ; but every separation has brought with it, strong fear that would be the last.

As for Howard, he was obliged to leave the service for his trick on Sir Ginger Pop, but was soon reinstated — again of course —and offered a command. This he, to my great surprise, declined. I immediately accused him of having proved the truth of Lord St. Vincent's assertion, that an officer's marriage ruins him for the service. " Yet," added I, " it could hardly have been expected that you would so soon have lost your ambition."

" No," said he, " you are wrong ; I no longer choose to serve, it is true ; not from a want of ambition, but an excess of it. Since the death of immortal Nelson, there's nothing to be done worth doing. Fortune has so well taken care of me, I've nothing to fight for but glory—and this now—plague on it ! is only

sold out in such small parcels as do not tempt my appetite. A pack of frigate actions, and all that sort of thing—no hopes of a Nile or a Trafalgar. As a young post-captain I got as fair a share of those matters as I can well expect; so I shall make the most of the sunshine, and take care of my wife till I see my name on the admiral's list. By that time the enemy may have gathered head again. Then, if the command of a fleet is to be got, see if I try not my hand at making a dish for history;”—and his blue eyes sparkled like an Alexander's. “That, however,” he added, growing calmer, “must be many years hence. Meantime, the greatest prize that I intend to take from the French, shall be the best cook that can be lured by money, and a taste to appreciate his labours. There's a conclusion for a hero.”

I could not help smiling at this characteristic trait in the gallant voluptuary; and, after all, it would not greatly have shown his wisdom, with all the enjoyments of existence about him, to go and lose an arm or a couple

of legs, perhaps, to take a rotten old bundle of French timbers called a ship, that could prove of no sort of use to him when obtained. Still, having seen him in action, and knowing that there he could be excelled by none, a momentary, however ridiculous, regret would at times steal over me, to think that these abilities were lying idly on shore. Abilities to do what? — shed blood! Strange infatuation of our minds! Yet are we, or are we not, to hope for that degree of refinement and improvement, when abilities conducing to such an end shall be the least prized of all?

Two {years after the marriage of Kathleen and myself, Sir Maurice died in Italy; but another twelvemonth had elapsed before the intelligence arrived.

Often did I think, with a flushed cheek and throbbing pulse, of the mistaken view we had all taken of those facts which so nearly led us to condemn one, who, if not, directly speaking, innocent, was at least not guilty. And when in discussing the merits of circumstantial

evidence, Caustic termed it "shooting men in the dark," I felt that there was often far too much truth in the observation.

It was long before I could bring myself to look at the explanatory memoranda enclosed to me by Sir Maurice in his letter relative to the real facts of the case; and when I did, I found them to be these.

Sir Maurice had, as we suspected, so far been misled by false notions of family pride as to head the party of O'Donaghue's brother smugglers, who effected Kathleen's abduction. Having repaired to the hut of his wretched tenant, he gave his instructions to the latter, as to how Kathleen was to be secreted in a convent. A quarrel arose between the principal and his agent, as to the sum of money that Sir Maurice was to pay. Before the outrage had been carried into execution Sir Maurice had offered Donaghue two hundred a year, provided he should prevent the return of Miss O'Donnel to Europe, and yet produce quarterly testimonials, in her own handwriting, that she was well treated. When, however, Donaghue ima-

gined the baronet to have so far committed himself as to be in his power, instead of two he demanded six hundred a year. Irritated by some language that escaped the seoundrel, Sir Maurice seized his sword; the other, knowing it was a better weapon than his own, snatched it out of his landlord's hand. In so doing, the leathern sword-knot fell off. Sir Maurice grasped Donaghue's wretched cutlass, but they had barely interchanged blows when the poacher's daughter, hearing the seuffle, snatched up in the dark a portion of Kathleen's dress, and rushed down to interpose.

Sir Maurice at once lowered his sword-point, while his enraged and raseally assailant, thinking him at his mercy, gathered all his immense strength into a single blow, which only eleft the skull of his hapless child. This brought him too late to his senses. They earried the slaughtered girl up stairs, but soon saw that she was killed; and wrapping her, as she fell, in a blanket, they buried her as quickly as possible.

In the eonfusion of the moment, — never having contemplated such an event, and Sir

Maurice, moreover, conscious of no guilt in the transaction, carelessly left to Donaghue to obliterate the traces of what had happened. The latter, knowing that he was about to fly the country, contented himself with placing Kathleen, bound and senseless, outside the door; which he then barricaded from within, and climbed through the chimney vent.

The affection he had once felt for his daughter he seemed so far to have transferred to Kathleen that she never had to complain of any want of care, beyond her imprisonment; while Sir Maurice increased his allowance from two to three hundred annually, besides the expense incurred for Kathleen. So vicious, however, was the mind of Donaghue, and so attached was he to a life of plunder and dissolute violence, that not even this handsome competence for one in his class could deter him from turning pirate, and fulfilling his destiny at the gallows.

After all my father had suffered, I never would permit myself too severely to dwell on the faults of his character, as shown in these dark and tortuous methods of repairing a ter-

rible calamity. Falsely-estimated notions of family pride had led him thus far astray ; and I only, therefore, resolved to gather from the irreversible past this conviction,—that there is no link so pure or so desirable, no mode of directing those who are most dear to and dependent on us, so unerring, as an open and unremitting confidence. Had Sir Maurice held this opinion in former days, what misery might it not have turned aside from both of us !

Severed as I had been from him, still I could not help lamenting, with no feigned sorrow, that he should not have lived to see and bless the tiny representatives of his honours which Kathleen has so liberally bestowed on me.

However, while she confines her gifts within the moderate number of five-and-twenty, I have not the least objection to such patriarchal dignity as having my quiver full of arrows. There is a thousand a year for each of them, and I am but too happy to possess these multiplied images of that dearest of friends, who, if

once the cause to me of so much anguish, has ever since remained the source of every joy!

Here, gentle reader, ends the tale of *The Naval Surgeon*. Are we unfortunate? From the trials and successes of others we may learn endurance, and gather hope for our own. Are we prosperous? Let us be reminded by the unprovoked sorrows of our neighbours, that calamity is not always restricted to the vicious! Do we suffer under unmerited reproach? Patience and innocence will bring us through at the end. Are we given to suspicion and a sanguine readiness to condemn? There is no cheat more injurious than he who cheats himself; and the most patient investigator may be misled even by facts.

Here, my good friends, are a few apothegms with which I find it infinitely more easy to conclude my story than to rule my life. But I discover, that in proportion to my success in so

doing, is the tranquillity obtained ; and if you choose to work the same problem, you will in a few years agree with me that something is to be learnt even from the pages of a novel. For indeed, if these be pictures of life, by them we gain from the experience of others, that which as yet we have had no opportunity of learning from our own.

What, for instance, can be more like a novel than the lives of such men as Scott and Byron? yet what at the same time can be more melancholy?

Should we not, therefore, have altogether failed in realising the views which led us to adopt “a tale of circumstantial evidence,” the subject is still far from exhausted ; and if the same may be said of thy own patience,—we propose to attempt in “Paul Perriwinkle” a pendant to the “Naval Surgeon.”

THE END.

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