

not, say so, for I wish to make things as pleasant as is consistent with my duty, and I've got another pair in my pocket. This remark he offers like a most respectable tradesman, anxious to execute an order neatly, and to the perfect satisfaction of his customer. "They'll do as they are? Very well! Now you see, George;" he takes a cloak from a corner, and begins adjusting it about the trooper's neck; "I was mindful of your feelings when I came out, and brought this on purpose. There! Who's the wiser?"

"Only I," returns the trooper; "but, as I am, do me one more good turn, and pull my hat over my eyes."

"Really, though! Do you mean it? Ain't it a pity? It looks so."

"I can't look chance men in the face with these things on," Mr. George hurriedly replies. "Do, for God's sake, pull my hat forward."

So strongly entreated, Mr. Bucket complies, puts his own hat on, and conducts his prize into the streets; the trooper marching on as steadily as usual, though with his head less erect; and Mr. Bucket guiding him with his elbow over the crossings and up the turnings.

SCENES AT SEA.

ON a beautiful Sunday evening, after prayers had been said on board the *Hector*, a merchant vessel bound for Jamaica, the crew and passengers continued to lounge upon deck, in order apparently to enjoy the tranquillity, if not the beauty of the scene, which harmonized remarkably well with the character of the day. We were now among the Lesser Antilles; and both for this reason, and the fact that slavers and pirates were then very numerous in the Caribbean Sea, we were obliged always to keep a sharp look-out, more especially at sundown. To take a minute survey of the horizon, was the regular practice of the captain before the expiry of the short twilight; but on this occasion, not a speck of any description whatever was visible. With the daylight the wind also died completely away; but, in case of sudden squalls during the night, our studding, and a great part of the other sails, were clewed up, and all "made snug aloft," to use the technical phrase. It might be about two hours after sunset, but the greater portion of the passengers were still on deck, amused by the efforts of some of the crew to catch a number of those heavy, sluggish birds appropriately termed *boobies*, which had settled on different parts of the rigging, and were there snoozing without the slightest apprehension of danger. One of the men had for this purpose crawled forward, almost to the extremity of the yard-arm, and was in the very act of putting his hand upon a slumbering captive, when we saw him suddenly look up, shade his eyes with his hand for a moment, then heard him exclaim in a loud voice: "A sail on the starboard-quarter!"

"Impossible!" responded the mate, whose watch it was.

"It's true, howsomever, sir," said the man, after another long and steady look; "though I

can not guess what she is, unless the Flying Dutchman!" and he began to descend the rigging with evident symptoms of trepidation, leaving the booby in undisturbed enjoyment of his nap.

All now crowded to the side of the vessel; and true it was, that in a few minutes we could perceive, between us and the sky, the tall spar of a vessel, which, by the night-glass, was made out to be a schooner. She was at about half a mile's distance from us, and by the way in which her royals were set, appeared to be standing right across our fore-foot. The circumstance seemed absolutely incredible. Scarcely one puff of wind had lifted our sails since long before sunset, and by the log it was seen that we could not have been advancing above half a knot an hour: yet there lay the strange vessel, come whence or how she may. Not a whisper was heard among us. Our captain, standing in the waist in order to bring the strange vessel more clearly betwixt him and the sky, remained silent, gazing anxiously through his night-glass. At last he observed: "She is getting on another course, and must only have now made us out. But it is as well to be prepared—she looks suspicious. Let the guns be shot, Mr. Clarke, and call up all hands to quarters. Bring her head up to the wind" (to the helmsman): "we'll soon see whether they really want to speak us or not."

These orders, which were not a little appalling to most of us passengers, seemed to diffuse the most unqualified satisfaction among the crew. A cheerful and lively bustle prevailed fore and aft; for it must be remembered, that merchantmen in those days were necessitated to be as well prepared for the battle as for the breeze. The ports were thrown open, and the carronades (then recently introduced) run out; and the men stood in expectation, or at least in evident hopes, of an approaching conflict. The suspicious-looking vessel, however, seemed to have no hostile purpose in view; she disappeared in the gloom of the night as mysteriously as she had approached us, and the respective fears and hopes of those on board the *Hector* were alike disappointed. But the captain appeared far from satisfied; he paced along the deck, silent and thoughtful; and although the men were ordered down to their hammocks, he himself remained on deck, and with five or six of the most vigilant of the crew, kept a continual look-out toward all points of the compass.

And the result proved the prudence of this watchfulness. In less than an hour, the cry was heard: "A sail on the larboard bow!" and all eyes were immediately directed to that quarter. It was at once made out that the vessel was a schooner, and from some peculiarity in her rigging, the captain pronounced her to be the same we had before seen. Strange to tell, she appeared to be bearing right down upon our quarter, although no alteration in the weather had occurred with us! Her royals, as before, seemed filled, and her course was altogether too direct and steady to allow us to suppose that she

was worked by means of *sweeps*. But her hostile purpose could no longer be mistaken, and there was an immediate piping-up among the crew. Several of the passengers also magnanimously prepared to assist in defense of the vessel, and a suitable supply of muskets, cutlasses, and ammunition was handed up from the hold. While this last operation was going on, the schooner had approached within a few cable-lengths of us, when she suddenly bore up. As she was within hailing distance, our captain bawled out through his trumpet, demanding to know her name, and where she was from. A confused and unintelligible jabbering, but which from the sound seemed to be in a barbarous Portuguese idiom, was the only response. A second and a third time she was hailed with the same result. While this colloquy was going on, by the dexterous management of her sails, she (to use the nautical phrase) *walked* round our stern, although no increase of wind was perceptible by our own canvas. As she again came round upon our starboard-quarter, our captain ordered one of the stern-guns to be fired across her bows; but no notice was taken of the salute, and our mysterious visitant at length bore away from us, and was speedily lost sight of. There was no doubt as to her being one of the noted piratical vessels which carried on this nefarious traffic between the Spanish main and those islands, chiefly Cuba and St. Domingo, where they had their haunts. They were built expressly for the purpose, with low hulls and immensely long spars, fitted to catch whatever current of wind might be prevailing in the upper regions of the atmosphere, and which the less elevated sails of other vessels might fail to reach. Some of their hulls, I was also told, were so constructed that, by turning certain screws, the sea could be allowed to rush into their false keels or bottoms, by which their speed was accelerated in an amazing degree. All this to me appeared extraordinary at the time, but I afterward had practical reasons for knowing the truth of the information.

As may be imagined, we continued on the alert during the night, but heard no more of the strange schooner. Dawn was fast approaching, when our attention was once more aroused by the flash, followed by the report, of a gun right ahead of us. From the loudness of the explosion, as well as the rapidity with which it followed the flash, it was easy to perceive that the vessel could be at no great distance, as well as that she must be a large man-of-war. After a few minutes' interval, another shot boomed along the deep, rapidly succeeded by several others of the same formidable loudness. At length these were replied to by other guns evidently of a less calibre, and proceeding from a different quarter.

"They are at it!—they are at it!" now for the first time shouted our skipper, who had served his time, and held a lieutenant's commission in the royal navy; "I'll stake my life, some of our cruisers have taken the pirate in tow! Will she do nothing!"—(to the man at the wheel, for

we were still completely becalmed)—"What would I not give, were it but to have a view of them?"

"She minds the helm no more than if she were a brute beast!" responded the helmsman in a tone and key in happy sympathy with our captain's impatient query, while he kept rocking from foot to foot with the rapidity of a stop-watch main-spring.

It is impossible to describe the excitement which prevailed among the crew, most of whom were old man-of-war's men. After some time, the sound of the large guns entirely ceased, while that of the smaller ones incessantly continued—implying, as was natural to suppose, that the latter had silenced the others, and that the crew of the supposed pirate were following up their advantage. At this crisis, a deputation of about twenty of our crew came aft, and entreated the captain's permission to hoist out a couple of boats, and allow them to pull to the scene of action. But the skipper understood his duty too well to give way to the enthusiasm of his men, although evidently gratified at their disinterested courage.

Morning at length dawned, and the nature of the conflict became distinctly visible, as also that the island of St. Domingo was about two leagues to leeward of us. A British frigate lay about a mile ahead of us, with the national flag drooping from the mizen-peak, but without any other rag upon her spars. At about two miles' distance was the identical schooner that had alarmed us so much during the night, her long main-mast being entirely bare excepting her royals, which, however, were now entirely useless, as not a breath of air lifted them. But long sweeps had been put in requisition, and were every moment increasing the distance between her and her assailant. The latter, however, had got out the jolly-boat, which, with a couple of large swivels fixed on her bows, maintained a running-fight with the enemy, who might easily have destroyed her, had not the necessity of escape been so imminent. The shot of the gallant little boat's crew, although obliged to maintain a cautious distance, was evidently telling, as appeared by the shattered rigging of the schooner, which was making desperate exertions to get within influence of the land-breeze.

There has seldom, if ever, been any situation so tantalizing as was that of all parties on this exciting occasion. The pursuers could gain nothing on the fugitives; the latter could make but the most inefficacious efforts at escape; and we, the on-lookers, were compelled to witness what passed in still more provoking inactivity. Fortune at last seemed to declare in favor of the cause of humanity and justice. *Cat's-paws*, the forerunners of the trade-wind, began to creep in from the southeast, lifting the sails (which were now invitingly spread out) of the frigate and our own vessel, while the land-breeze proportionally retired; and shortly the former came on slowly and steadily, bearing us toward our prize—as we now regarded her. When this change of

weather became perceptible to the crew of the schooner, a most extraordinary scene took place. In less time than I can take to describe the act, about half-a-dozen canoes, each capable of carrying not more than three persons, were lowered down from the schooner, and all began to pull toward the shore, although in many different directions; the latter being an expedient to distract any attempt to pursue them.

"Saw ever mortal eyes any thing to match that!" cried our captain, after a long pause of astonishment. "The cowardly villains, that would not stand one broadside for that trim piece of craft! But I am cheated if they have left her worth the trouble of boarding. Bear off from her—bear off from her!"—he continued to the helmsman; "there's mischief in her yet, I tell you." And his words were fearfully verified almost as soon as spoken. First a thin blue smoke shot upward from the hold of the schooner, next moment a fierce blood-red fire blazed through between every seam of her hull; the tall mast seemed absolutely to shoot up into the air like an arrow, and an explosion followed so tremendous—so more terribly loud than any thing I had ever listened to, that it seemed as if the ribs of nature herself were rending asunder. Our ship reeled with the shock, and was for a few seconds obstructed in her course, in a manner which I can liken only to what takes place in getting over a coral-reef. When the smoke cleared away, not a vestige of the late schooner was to be seen, excepting a few shattered and blackened planks. But the destruction, unfortunately did not stop here. It was evident that the explosion had taken place sooner than the pirates themselves had expected. Three of the canoes were swamped by the force of the concussion; and the same thing, if not far worse, had happened to the boat which carried the gallant little band of pursuers, who had incautiously pulled hard for the schooner as soon as she had been abandoned, instigated at once by the love of fame and prize-money. Boats were instantly lowered, both from our own ship and the war frigate, in order to save if possible, the lives of the brave fellows; but the whole had probably been stunned, if not killed, by the explosion, and only two corpses out of the eight were found floating about. At this spectacle, as well as at the destruction of the prize, which was looked upon as a most unfair and unwarrantable proceeding, the fury of the men knew no bounds; and although few of them had arms, either offensive or defensive, the whole fleet of boats began to pull after the fugitives with a speed that threatened more accidents than had yet befallen. But the surviving canoes, which skimmed along the ocean like flying-fish, were too speedy for their pursuers; and the latter only succeeded in picking up three captives belonging to the canoes which had sunk, including, as luck would have it, the commander of the late piratical vessel. It was with difficulty that the men were restrained from taking immediate vengeance on the persons of the captive wretches, but they were at length securely lodged

on board the frigate, which, as well as ourselves (who were extremely glad of such a consort), stood away for Port-Royal with all sails set, where, on the second day thereafter, we arrived about noon, the frigate there coming to anchor, while we beat up to Kingston. We afterward learned that we had escaped the menaced attack of the pirates by their perceiving, through their night-glasses, the quantity of muskets and other small-arms handed up from our hold, as they bore down on us the second time, as before mentioned. In a few days after our arrival, the wretched captives were brought to trial, and hung at the yard-arm.

The glee and satisfaction diffused among us at the destruction of the pirate, was damped by a circumstance of a most melancholy nature, which took place almost as soon as we had cast anchor within the palisades. There was among the crew a mulatto boy, about sixteen years of age, a native of Kingston, where his only relative, a sister, resided. He had been absent from her for about three years, and in the impatience of his affection, he came aft and solicited permission to go ashore, were it but for half an hour, promising faithfully to return within that time. But the captain refused to permit him to leave the ship till next morning. The poor little fellow retired with a full heart and overflowing eyes, and I saw him station himself in a disconsolate manner in the forepart of the vessel, looking wistfully toward the town. In the mean time dozens of boats and canoes put off from the wharfs, the former filled with relatives of the passengers, or newsmongers seeking the "latest intelligence" from the mother-country; and the latter with negroes, offering their cargoes of fruit and vegetables for sale. I was seemingly the only uninterested individual on deck, and could not help feeling a melancholy sense of desolation, as an entire stranger, and 5000 miles from home, amidst the scenes of affectionate greetings between friends and relatives that were passing around. While indulging in this mood, I observed the boy I have spoken of suddenly strip off his cap and jacket, spring over the side, and begin to strike out for the shore. The splash attracted the notice of those on board, and two of the crew, by the captain's orders, jumped into a boat, and pulled after him; but their purpose was anticipated by a more deadly pursuer. The poor boy had scarcely got four fathoms from the vessel, when the huge fin of a shark was seen darting after him. A general shout was raised to warn him of his danger, and he wheeled round on his enemy, just as the latter made a rush at him. With the most astonishing courage and presence of mind, the little fellow struck out right and left with his clenched fists at the voracious animal, and with effect sufficient to drive it off, when he again began to make for the shore. A second and a third time the attack was made, and repulsed in a similar manner, and all began to hope his escape from the threatened danger, when, just as the boat got within oars-length of him, he disappeared below the surface with a loud shriek

which was responded to by all who witnessed the scene. He rose in the course of a few seconds, and was pulled into the boat with almost the whole flesh stripped from one of his thighs, and the blood streaming from him in torrents. The sailors pulled instantly for the wharf, but ere the boat reached it, the warm current of life was exhausted; and the poor little fellow was carried to his sister's house a lifeless and mangled corpse!

THE LAST DAYS OF BURNS.

IT is December in 1791. Burns has quitted the pleasant farm of Ellisland for a small house in Dumfries. The exchange is in every point of view undesirable. He begins to live a town life, and the life of a small country town is most unfitted for a man of his habits. There were always idlers and loiterers ready to fasten upon a man who had seen the social circles of Edinburgh, and who could charm away an evening as no other man could. Then there were the country lairds anxious to secure him for some merry-makings, where strangers from the south were to assemble, eager to get a glimpse of the untaught genius. The work of an excise-man was not very engrossing. His evenings were generally his own—the taste for tavern parties was strong in Dumfries, and more hours were spent in the society of boon companions than in that of his patient, trusting wife, and her young children.

About this time the excitement of the French revolution was beginning to have most perceptible effect. The same misguiding star which diverted Coleridge, Southey, and Wordsworth from the beaten track of employment, and filled them with an enthusiasm for what was, after all, but the phantom of liberty, attracted Burns by its wayward and fitful light. He expressed too open a sympathy with the chiefs of the French nation to suit the taste of some of his friends among the higher orders. Alienation follows, and an increased violence in Burns. He despises those who are swayed by such miserable feelings. He pours forth lampoon after lampoon in severe and relentless revenge. The tavern is more frequently sought by him, and the society of those whose opinions agree with his own more sedulously cultivated. It seems strange, too, that during the two first years of his residence at Dumfries, when the political rancor was at the greatest, he should have enriched the language with the choicest of his songs. His engagement to supply his friend Thomson with the proper materials for his collection, is upon the whole rigorously fulfilled; and even when the violence of his politics threatened to draw down the displeasure of the government, he pursues his task, and discharges it most ably. Nothing would tempt him to receive money for these songs. It was a cause, he thought, in which every true-hearted Scot should feel interested. He had no feeling about accepting whatever the sale of his poems brought him. Many persons have expressed wonder at this

determination, but the distinction we hold to be a just one. The songs were the free "outcome" of his mind. They had risen to the heart, and poured themselves forth. They were more the children of his brain than the elaborate and finished productions of his pen. No true man could bear to receive money for his child—Burns could not accept it for his songs.

The professional excursions of Burns brought him into contact with many strange persons and places. Like the gauger in "Guy Mannering," he was often a welcome guest at the tables of country gentlemen; from the acquaintance he enjoyed with several of these, he reaped great benefit. He was reputed merciful in his calling, and there occur many instances of forbearance and gentleness quite unusual. In quiet times there appears to have been great attention given to the education of his sons, and although his frequent aberrations would have lost him the love and approval of many women, it is on record that his wife declares that his conduct to her, though not altogether blameless, was on the whole tender and affectionate. Life must have passed with him pleasantly in "the seasons of fair weather." The day's labor over, he would often wander with his children by the Nith, repeat psalms and fragments of old songs to them, and endeavor as far as possible to direct their minds in the same manner as his own revered parent had done. But there is another side to the picture. The political and masonic reunions would be succeeded by suppers and drinking bouts—there were bitter days of remorse and grief—there were constant failures in the provision for the wants of the family. Many of the letters written during 1793 and '94 display sad traces of the effects of this mode of life. Petulance and impatience at times bursting out into absolute infidelity, disfigure them; and, indeed, it becomes a grave question how far Mr. Chambers was justified in giving so many of these letters to the public. It is true that they give us the whole mind of the remarkable writer, but still there are limits in cases like this, which, it seems to us, have in some few instances been transgressed.

On the 14th of April, 1796, illness, from which he had been for some days suffering, threatened to prevent Burns from giving attendance at a meeting of Freemasons. He made an effort for the sake of his friends; and we have been told by one of the few persons among his intimates who now survive, that he never was in greater force. Soon after this he was compelled to abandon the graver part of his excise duties. Through the remainder of the month he was in the most miserable state. Some fine days in May revived him; and on the 17th of that month he penned the song, "To Jessy," which contains perhaps the sweetest stanza in his works:

"Although thou maun never be mine,
Although even hope is denied;
'Tis sweeter for thee despairing,
Than aught in the world beside—Jessy!"

This song was composed in honor of one who