

THE COLUMBIA DEMOCRAT.

"I have sworn upon the Altar of God, eternal hostility to every form of Tyranny over the Mind of Man."—Thomas Jefferson.

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TERMS:

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POETRY.

TO MY WIFE.

Pillow thy head upon this heart,
My own, my cherished wife!
And let us for one hour forget
Our dreary path of life:
Then let me kiss thy tears away,
And bid remembrance flee
Back to the days of halcyon youth,
When all was hope and glee.

Fair was the early promise love,
Of our joy-freighted bark;
Sun lit, and lustrous too, the skies
Now all so dim and dark;
Over a stormy sea, dear wife,
We drove with shattered sail,
But love sits smiling at the helm,
And mocks the threat'ning gale.

Come let me part those clustering curls,
And gaze upon thy brow;
How many, many memories
Sweep o'er my spirits now!
How much of happiness and grief—
How much of hope and fear—
Breathe from each dear lov'd lineament,
Most eloquently here!

Thou gentle one! few joys remain
To cheer our lonely lot;
The storm hath left our paradise
With but one sunny spot:
Hallowed for'er will be that place
To hearts like thine and mine;
'Tis where our childish hands appeared
Affection's earliest shrine.

Then nestle closer to this breast
My fond and faithful dove!
Where, if not here, should be the ark
Of refuge for thy love!
The poor man's blessing and his curse
Pertain alike to me;
For, shorn of worldly wealth, dear wife,
Am I not rich in thee?

MISCELLANEOUS.

Blockade of the Island of Curacoa.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "NELSONIAN REMINISCENCES."

Early in the present century the Hon. John Murray was entrusted by the vice-admiral commanding in chief on the Jamaica station with his Majesty's frigate La Fortune and two eighteen-gun sloops, in addition to his own frigate La Franchise, for the purpose of capturing the island of Curacoa, then a Dutch settlement, laying off the Spanish Main, and which the commodore pledged himself to subject to the British crown in a given space of time. It was my good or ill fortune (I have hardly made up my mind which) to be first lieutenant of one of these sloops. The proclamation of blockade was made in the Jamaica Gazette, and notice given to brother Jonathan that any vessel found within a certain distance of the island would be subject to capture; but this did not check the philanthropy of our Yankee friends, who could not brook the idea of people being starved on compulsion, and very charitably used every means in their power to counteract our cruelty by sending them provisions at five hundred per cent. increased cost. Commodore Murray, finding that the strictest blockade did not effect his purpose and that the governor and garrison, with true Dutch obstinacy, chose to live on without showing the least symptom of surrendering to his Majesty's forces, now adopted the novel mode

of landing a destroying party, from fifty to one hundred men, generally commanded by the first lieutenant of one of the squadron, with orders to burn every thing intended for human food, shoot down all kinds of cattle, leaving the glorious sun to complete the work of spoliation; and to cross the island in the most rapid manner, by seizing all the horses in our line of march; and part of the squadron moved round to re-embark the destroying party after having accomplished the good they had been sent to do. The Dutch boor of a governor could not see the humanity of these proceedings, and wilfully shut his eyes to the advantages to be gained in becoming part of the great British empire. He, with unparalleled impudence denominated our gentle proceedings, the acts of buccaners, and informed our commodore that he would hang up on Fort Amsterdam, as a pirate, every Englishman caught in those destroying parties.

The following night the first lieutenant of La Fortune with his party of lambs, being busily employed in this work of destruction, were surprised by the Dutch commodore, at the head of his flying camp, about one hundred men, selected from the crews of their frigates in the mole, and kept encamped in the centre of the island under this active commander, for the express purpose now effected. Our party, only half their number, flew to their boats, leaving thirteen of their rear-guard prisoners, in the hands of their exasperated enemy. As no doubt existed of Mynheer, the governor, fulfilling his humane determination of making the innocent pay the penalty of the guilty, I was ordered away at midnight, with fifty men, under the guidance of a Dutch renegade, named Horsica, to seize all the principal men I could catch, to answer with their lives for those of our captured men. The first estate pointed out by that most exemplary traitor, Mynheer Horsica, was surrounded by our men, and a seizure of ten horses effected, upon which we mounted the officers and worthy guide, forming a small body of cavalry. The master of the mansion, with his wife, were declared to be in the town of Amsterdam. The house was of the superior order; and the mate of the Fortuna, who most probably was seeking plunder, with great glee informed me, that in a small room he had discovered three young ladies, daughters of the owner, endeavoring to secret themselves. With the utmost speed, knowing the tender mercies of my lambs, (something like Col. Kirk's) I hastened to save them, and found the two younger sisters clinging to their elder one, apparently about seventeen, and all of them in my eye beautiful, half dressed and frantic with terror. I saw some rude ruffians around them, and ordered them to draw up outside of the house, in marching order, at the same time desiring Mr. Smart, the aforesaid mate, to put himself at their head. To this he demurred; and proposed the ruin of those unfortunate innocents. With some difficulty I disarmed the monster, and caused him to be bound to the back of one of my mounted sailors. The poor girls, who had fallen with fear at the angry altercation and clashing of naked sabres, now crawled towards me, and on their knees watered my hands with their tears, bestowing many kisses on them. It is one of the few good and redeeming actions of my life, and to which I have often in the hour of peril, turned with pleasure, that I used my best endeavours to soothe the terrors of these pretty innocents, and left them, as far as regarded us, in security and comparative happiness.

Horsica, whose angry passions were roused by the escape of the mate, to whom I judged him no friend, advised, and in some measure commanded me to fire the house and out-buildings; but in the frame of mind I was then in, I would sooner have burned myself, and with considerable pleasure, his ugly carcass, whose visage would not have disgraced the devil, displaying all the bad passions supposed to originate in that important personage. "Close your

files and move forward in quick time." And I with Horsica rode to the head of our cavalry. He advised a rapid movement on the next house, a large farm establishment, from which we put in requisition twenty more horses, with the respectable farmer and his two manly sons.

Morning dawned, and displayed our grotesque cavalry, for all the sailors had mounted, and were not contemptible horsemen. We had eight Dutch prisoners and Smart, the mutineer, to guard, with the dread of a Dutch commodore and his flying camp. Horsica said, a burgomaster, highly respected and of great note, lay on our route to the boats, and if we caught him the lives of our captured seamen were safe. "Here is his mansion," pointing to a good looking house not far distant, and we closed upon it at a hard gallop.

"Surround the house and let no one pass" called I to my mate; and with Horsica and two seamen rode through a very pretty garden to the east door. To repeated raps from our pikes, an upper window opened, and the head of a female somewhat in a disordered state, was thrust out. To Horsica's preemptory demand for instant admission a scream of fright from the demoiselle was our reply.

"Time presses," said Horsica, "force the door,"—and a post was instantly torn from its situation and propelled with great violence, as a battering-ram, against it; three sturdy blows—bolts, bars and hinges gave way, and Horsica, with myself, and two orderlies burst into a good sized room or hall, the bottom of which was composed of handsome Dutch tiles. As we had naked sabres in our hands, with pistols in our belts, it was very natural that the half-dressed demoiselle should fly in all directions; but Horsica intercepted an old woman in her flight, and on pain of instant death compelled her to point out her master's bed chamber. Her exclamations and entreaties not to enter, were in some measure ludicrous. Horsica explained to me that she said her master, Mynheer (something) had brought home a fair young bride from Amsterdam only the previous evening, and urged upon us the impropriety of entering the bridal chamber.

"Call to him, Horsica," said I, "to come forth, and surrender himself."

"And lose him for our pains," said the ruffian, as he threw himself with violence against the door, that acknowledged his power by giving a free entrance.

A tall genteel looking youth in the act of arming himself, met my view. He was agitated and pale, dropped the sword he was drawing, pointed one hand to the bed, in which lay his bride, and raised the other with an air of entreaty to Horsica. I caught a glimpse of a fair hand and arm, throwing the sheet over her face, as unable to bear the view of armed men in her bridal chamber. To the young Dutchman's demand of what he wanted, Horsica replied, "Himself, as hostage for the lives of thirteen English seamen, held by the governor under sentence of death according to his proclamation."

"I am a non combatant," said the youth, "and not answerable for the governor's conduct."

Horsica pointed to his military accoutrements. "It is the militia merely to enforce order, and protect us against our slaves." Horsica said fiercely, "This is trifling! Secure him with the other prisoners."

And as our stout orderlies proceed to bind his arms behind his back, his wife conquering her sex's fears in the extremity of distress, threw herself at Horsica's feet. He roughly repulsed her, and pointed to me as a nominal commander. I never yet could resist gentle woman's pleading eye, and least of all then, that I saw this lovely girl at my feet, her light auburn tresses partly shading the beauty of her strongly agitated and heaving bosom, her blue eyes fixed on mine with such an imploring look of anguish and entreaty for mercy! I did not understand the language she uttered, but the soft voice in which it was conveyed

went directly to my heart, while the natural grace of her movements, graceful because they were natural, her unaffected terror, conquered by her affection for her youthful lord, spoke eloquently without words.

"Horsica," said I, in strong agitation, "I cannot consent to the slaughter of this interesting creature's youthful husband." "And yet you will be the murderer of thirteen of your countrymen. I will not accompany any other party commanded by a boy—this business requires men. If this man is liberated, I shall instantly return to the commodore, and tell him that the tears of women, are estimated more than the lives of your comrades."

This uttered in a harsh tone checked my romantic feelings, particularly as I was fully alive to the importance of my prisoner. "Then," said I, "speak in a consoling tone to this afflicted girl. O that I could make her understand me! Say, her husband is in no danger, and will be tenderly treated," and I took her fair hand to call her attention to Horsica. What he said I know not; but the tone it was uttered in grated on my hearing, and produced a wild hysterical scream with a frantic movement to clasp her husband. The orderlies, who had bound the youth's arms, would have repulsed her, had I not called out in a loud tone, "Monsters, desist!" and I hastened to unbind his arms with which he clasped his beautiful and youthful bride.

"Oh, myn Gott," said Horsica, "the boy is mad!—seize, and bind that prisoner to the stoutest man that rides, and drawing near me he hoarsely said, "Will you load your soul with the murder of thirteen comrades, a disobey your orders and lose your commission for a woman?"

I felt the good sense of this remark, tho' it grated harshly on the excited state of my mind, and I closed my hand on my eyes to shut out this cruel scene. The devoted and affectionate girl was in an instant at my feet, embracing my knees, and watering my hands with her innocent tears, and I shamed my manhood by letting mine fall upon her lovely head. The infernal hideous voice of Horsica, "All is ready," roused me to my duty, and as I tore myself from her grasp her maddening shrieks harrowed up every tender feeling in my heart, and pulling my hat over my eyes, I sprang upon my horse, and ordered a forward movement in double quick time. We reached the beach, that had fortunately just touched the Dutch commodore's flying camp whose vanguard hove in sight as our rear-guard re-embarked. I threw myself into La Fortune's barge with the prisoner, Smart, who came ashore in her as her officer, and now, with his arms bound, faced me from the bow of the boat. He maintained a dogged and sullen silence, which accorded well with my frame of mind. As Horsica had urged on me the necessity of shooting the horses that had rendered us such good service, and some angry altercation ensued, the whole of the prisoners went off to La Franchise in the commodore's barge, the young burgomaster, looking peculiarly mournful at parting with me, his only friend. Arrived on board the La Fortune, Captain Vansittart inquired with great surprise the cause of his mate's degradation, and on my explaining his conduct, expressed the greatest horror and dejection.

Wait till we set sail,"—for the signal was flying on board the commodore, to hoist in the boats, and make all sail;—"and I will teach him a lesson that he shall long remember, Mr. Evans," addressing his clerk, "disrate Mr. Smart to landsman," and to the first lieutenant—"When the signal is obeyed turn the hands up for punishment, and I will give that monster five dozen."

I afterwards heard he punctually performed his promise. I begged for the jolly-boat to drop me on board La Franchise, for I felt most anxious to interest the commodore for my young friend, the burgomaster. This request was complied with, and I stepped on board La Franchise as she bore up for

Fort Amsterdam having directed the Rein Deer, by signal, to cruize to windward of the island.

THE EXECUTION.

So many years have elapsed that memory's log does not enable me to describe precisely the person of the Hon. John Murray, (whose sister, Lady Augusta, was married to his Royal Highness the Duke of Sussex,) but I remember well, that on entering the cabin of La Franchise, a tall slender gentleman, much emaciated in person, and looking in extreme ill health, rose from his easy-chair, in which he was reclining in his dressing-gown, and with courtly address answered my bow, saying, "You are the officer, I presume, who commanded last night's party on shore."

I again bowed (affirmatively); he resumed his seat, and motioned me to take one near him.

"I am far from well," said he, "and very weak, which must be my apology for only seeming rudeness."

This was unnecessary, for a more finished gentleman, with polished urbanity and suavity of manner, it had never been my good fortune to meet.

"From Horsica's report, I judged your feelings were too susceptible for the irksome duty imposed on you."

"I hope, Captain Murray," I rejoined, "that I carried your intentions into execution in the most lenient manner that circumstances would permit. Horsica's advice appeared to me to spring from the disposition of a demon, and I feel assured, not only from your appearance, but from the high character for humanity you bear, that were you, sir, in my place, you would have acted in a similar manner."

He replied, "at your age I should. My remarks are far from intending to convey any censure; on the contrary, I highly approve of the feelings you evinced, and have liberated the youngest of your prisoners, on his promise to put the burgomaster's and other letters in possession of the governor in two hours. I have also addressed him, with official information, that those, whom the fortune of war, has placed in my power, shall be hanged in sight of Fort Amsterdam, at the hour of noon, that is, should but one English prisoner suffer death in accordance with the proclamation the governor had communicated to me."

"O sir! would that you had been pleased to have made the youthful burgomaster the messenger, perhaps it might have saved from madness a lovely and most interesting female.—Had you witnessed the agony of this picture of innocence and youthful beauty, as with clasped hands and streaming eyes she knelt at my feet, and with all the devoted and intense affection of woman's heart, implored for the safety of her youthful husband, Capt. Murray," I pursued, "had the world's welfare depended on his death, you would have liberated him."

The commodore here leaned his face on his hand, which prevented me from reading his mild and benignant countenance; but I saw, from the excited state of his nerves displayed by his agitation, that he was strongly affected; and being warmed, I went on to state the unutterable misery and agony of grief that she was now suffering, concluding with the following appeal.

"Captain Murray, I have portrayed what I have seen; but for your future peace of mind, and for your soul's sake, harm not that young man's life."

The commodore raised his head with a slight look of surprise, sighed very heavily, and motioned me to ring the bell. He seemed near fainting, and his servant presented a restorative draught. He again bowed to me, which I construed into a dismissal, rose, and with a low obeisance retired, heartily glad that I was not loaded with the same heavy responsibility that preyed so much on his susceptible mind.

I found the squadron under a crowd of sail, standing for Fort Amsterdam, distance three leagues, with the exception of the Rein Deer, who had hauled her wind, and with tack, and half tack, took short boards