

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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MISCELLANEOUS.

THE STRANGE COMBAT.

It was during the last war of this country with great Britain, that circumstances led me to be a passenger on board one of our merchant men, in which I had embarked what little property I possessed. Our seas were at that time covered with small privateers belonging to both belligerents, who did more mischief to the commerce of both nations than the public armed vessels of either. We had been sailing for two days with a good breeze, though now and then it would fall. And then we engaged heavily along through a fog, almost as dense as the waters that bore us. We were not far from our port, and our captain was willing to crowd sail night and day, as the risk of capture was superior to that of shipwreck, and disaster from the shipling of our spars. Our ship was about four hundred tons, heavily laden, and not a swift sailer. Her captain was a man of shrewd judgement and inflexibility of purpose, and rather given to taciturnity. He was of a slight figure, gentlemanly to equals, decided and prompt to those under him, in his orders, and in execution of their fulfilment. His keen dark eye and naval officer gait showed a kind of courage which one could not see in others to his own, while they were kept in ignorance of his views. I have seen him fix his eagle eye upon a sailor, and require him to look him steadily in the face for five minutes, and then dismiss him without a comment or reason for so doing; but I would bet my life almost that he had a good one.

After skimming through the mist, which I have spoken of, for two or three days, I happened to be on deck with Captain—. I was in conversation with him as to the probability of reaching our port free of the enemy's cruisers. He replied with his usual brevity, 'the fog and carrying sail alone can save us; I am a made man if we escape; if not I am ruined.' He said this in the same tone of voice that he would have given a common order—he looked up and said sternly, 'there is a fog-eater!' At this moment the sun seemed to flash upon our deck, and the fog rose from the sea like the hoisting of the curtain at the theatre—a small breeze took us aback, and before an order was given, we saw directly under our lee, a little black-looking, sharp built, tall rigged port bearing schooner, whose decks were crowded with men. 'I know her!' ejaculated our Captain, and the next moment there came a ball dancing across our bows, in imitation of a distracted porpoise; our Captain took the helm from a sailor, and gave orders to lay to. Another shot came within a few feet of the captain, and passed through the mainsail, which he seemed to regard as little as he would the flapping of a sea-gull. But his countenance grew dark and terrific—he had not a gun on board.

The privateer braced sharp on the wind, and at the same time came within musket shot; a boat came on board, and ordered us

under the pigmy's lee, in the style of an Admiral in the British navy. In the mean time the wind had freshened, and the Captain had privately given orders to have every sail in readiness for instant setting. The boat left us, and we bore down, apparently for the purpose of fulfilling the command which had been given us. To secure and pack my papers was the work of a moment, for the anticipation of the event of capture had placed me on my guard in this particular. When I returned on deck, we were almost within hail of the stranger under a flowing sail, which in order to bring to a proper luff under the lee of the privateer, would require to be immediately taken in, the captain was still at the helm, and was intent, apparently, upon coming as near to the stern of the opposite vessel as possible, though at the same time he seemed to grasp the whole of the little privateer at one glance; his brow was knit, and the veins of his forehead seemed to be swollen; he heeded nothing around him. At this moment he gave the words 'square away,' which brought our bows on the centre of the enemy's vessel. 'Luff,' said the captain; at the same moment the flash of a gun and ball were both seen and heard from the port hole of our antagonist; it raked us fore and aft, cutting every thing before it; in another moment the bow of our heavy vessel struck the quarter of the privateer with a tremendous crash; another moment, she passed over her, and nothing was to be seen of our capturer but a few floating barrels and some spars, and human beings who had escaped for a few moments the yawning deep. Never shall I forget the cry that came from the vessel, as our own was passing over her: it was allied to nothing human, it was of such shrill distress that a maniac's mind alone could grasp its dreadfulness. Our vessel was immediately laid to, and a boat sent to pick up such as survived. Our captain gave the helm to the mate, and went to the bows to ascertain our damage which was not excessively severe. Though our bowsprit, figure-head, and cut-water were carried away, and a leak was sprung, but yet not such an one as would be a serious inconvenience. Among those who were so strangely precipitated into the caverns of the sea, one was found alive who had risen to its surface. It was the Captain; he was the commander of the privateer, of six guns and fifty men in British employ. When taken up he was insensible, and remained so for a long period; after a while when he found himself in a strange vessel, all seemed to be a dream with him.

On a recovery from his trance, and when the facts flowed upon his memory, he seemed to recollect the consequences of his adventure with our clumsy merchantmen. He stated that he was leaning upon the taffrail, when he ordered the gun to be fired as we came suspiciously near; it was his first intimation of the intention of our commander. Still he declared it to have been a dastardly act, that previous to our understanding whether he was friend or foe, and when from the act of our pretending to obey his order, he might have presumed no treachery intended him; for us without moving, without even a hint of resistance, to bear directly upon his smaller craft, and by the weight of our ship, and by the bravery of our sailors, to sink as fine a crew as ever manned a privateer's deck—to send, not in open contest, but by assassin and viper-like guile to the mercy of the deep, and of God, so many unprepared souls, was an act unworthy of a mortal. He even regretted that he was left alone to mourn over them. He insisted that their ghosts would haunt them in sleep—and he prayed that the thunders of eternal vengeance might visit the head of its infamous projector. He described the terrific shrieks of those who went down with him, the rattle in the throats of the drowning—the crash which laid open his favorite vessel's side, even below her water mark—and yelled out anathemas upon its heartless author.

Our captain had been standing at a little distance from the berth of his foe, but now walked up and placed his keen eye upon

him, and asked, 'Do you know me?' He replied, 'I must have seen you before. I know not where.' There was one of those pauses, like lulls in a gale at sea. 'Your privateer was stationed at Gibraltar, by the name—in February in 1812, was it not; I knew your vessel then—you spoke wrongfully of my sister; Henry struck you and you stabbed him with your dirk—he recovered, and he challenged you—you fought and killed him—I was on the battle ground—you afterwards, and there repeated, exultingly, your charge, when he was a corpse—I then challenged you, and you sneaked off to your ship, and met me not—I knew your vessel for its form was graven on my brain—I have rewarded your treachery, and when you reach our port, and you cease to be my guest, I will give you an opportunity of righting yourself from the charge, viz: You were an American, fostered by our family, have turned traitor to your country, aspersed a female who rejected your suit, are a murderer of her brother, a villain whose only absence from meanness is a passing show of courage. The first thing you have to do, sir, when you land, is to meet me in what is termed an honorable way, and that too, sir, before our sails are taken from the yards.—This cabin is yours, and the steward will do your bidding until then.'

We sailed on heavily without falling in with another vessel for some days. The moon came up one night in remarkable splendor, and as I was leaning over the bulwarks, I saw the captain of the privateer come from the gangway, and as the moon-beam fell on his countenance I observed it was peculiarly wild and dead. I endeavored to engage him in conversation, in reply to some question, he observed, 'I have been a black-hearted villain.' Sharks were playing around us, as if revelling in the flood of the lunar ray.

I passed from him to our captain, who seemed lost in a morose contemplation—the very sound of my voice seemed to startle him—before I had uttered a sentence, we heard a splash in the water, and saw distinctly our former foe on the sea, he raised his hands as if bidding us farewell, when a shark of uncommon size turned on his back, and with one snap of his enormous jaws divided in two distinct parts the unhappy sufferer. A tinge of red on the waters, as our ship glided past, was all that was seen of the lost commander, and thus perished the sole survivor of one of those pests of the ocean called a privateer. In a few days, we reached our port, but since our arrival, and even to the present hour, I cannot forget the going down of the privateer, over which our vessel boomed as if but a floating stick of timber was in its path. That death shriek will visit me in dreams, and scarce sleep from the 'still watches of the night.'

THE HUMAN PANTHER.

The Peoria Register—a paper which frequently instructs and amuses us with anecdotes connected with the settlement of the western country, furnishes us with the following sketch, which it says, was related by a gentleman of great respectability, living near the spot where the circumstances occurred:

In the latter part of that bloody tragedy, which spread dismay throughout this part of the State, there were about nine hundred Indians encamped on the Illinois river, opposite to the present town site of La Salle composed principally of the Iroquois tribe. They had always maintained a friendly intercourse with the whites in the vicinity, and had manifested a great partiality for one in particular. This was 'old Myers,' a perfect prototype of Cooper's trapper.—This state was the fifth in which he had erected his hut in advance of a white population. He had of course acquired more of the habits of the Indians than of civilized men, and was familiarly known among them as 'The Panther'—a title which he had acquired from them, by a daring exploit in killing an animal of that name, when leading them in one of their wild hunts.

At the period referred to, these Indians rallied under the Black Hawk standard, and were committing many depredations upon the settlers in the vicinity. When repulsed, they did not hesitate to wantonly murder their former friends and companions.—About the cabin of the Panther, nearly a hundred soldiers had come in for the safety of their wives and children, placing them under his protection. But among the victims of savage barbarity, there happened to be a brother-in-law of the Panther, with his wife and three children. Herein they committed an unpardonable outrage upon the family of their ancient friend and demi-savage. When the sad tidings of the cruel fate reached the garrison, the Panther was seen clothing himself in battle array. With his rifle, his tomahawk and scalping knife, in open day he silently beat his steps to the Indian quarters, about one mile distant. Fearlessly he marched into the midst of the savage band, levelled his rifle at the head chief present, and deliberately killed him on the spot.

He then severed the lifeless head from its trunk, and held it up by the hair before the awe-struck multitude, exclaiming, 'You have murdered my brother, his wife, and their three little ones, and now I have killed your chief. I am now even with you; but he added, "every one of you that is found here to-morrow morning at sunrise, is a dead Indian." All this was accomplished by the Panther without the least molestation. They knew that he would take vengeance for their deed of blood—and silently acknowledged the justice of the daring act. He then bore off the head in triumph to his cabin. The next morning not an Indian could be found in all that region. They left forever their homes and their dead, and that part of the State has not been molested by them since.

A few weeks since, this veteran of eighty years, was seen in the same hunting shirt and weapons which he wore when he killed the chief, started for Missouri. After travelling a few rods, he returned and asked permission to give his "grand yell." The gentleman to whom he had sold the land, giving his assent, he gave a long loud and shrill whoop, that made the welkin ring for miles around. "Now," said he, "my blessing is on the land and on you; your ground will always yield in abundance, and you will always prosper." Again he took up his march for a new home in the wilderness, where he could enjoy the happiness of solitude, undisturbed by social ties.

THE RESTING PLACE.

However dark and disconsolate the path of life many have been to any man there is an hour of deep and quiet repose at hand, when the body will sink into a dreamless sleep. Let not the imagination be startled if this place, instead of the bed of gravel, or the rocky pavement of the tomb.

No matter where the remains of a weary man may lie, the repose is deep and undisturbed, the sorrowful bosom leaves no more, the tears are dried up in theirountains; the aching head is at rest, and the stormy waves of earthly tribulation roll unheeded over the place of graves. Let armies engage in fearful conflict over the very bosoms of the pale nation of the dead, not one of the sleepers shall heed the spirit-stirring tramp, or respond to the rending shouts of victory.

How quiet these countless millions slumber in the arms of their mother earth! The voice of thunder shall not awake them; the loud cry of the elements, the winds, the waves, nor even the giant tread of the earthquake, as it overpasses the continents, shall be able to cause any inquietude in the chambers of death. They shall rest securely through age, empires shall rise and fall, the bright millennium shall come and pass away; the last great battle shall be fought, and then a silver voice, at first just heard, shall rise to a tempest tone and penetrate the voiceless grave; for the trump shall sound, and the dead shall hear his voice.—Forbes.

MARIA.

A Remarkable Instance of paternal Forgiveness.

Look around the habitable world, how few know their own good or knowing it pursue! In the west of England lived Mr. Spencer, a gentleman of handsome fortunes who was left a widower at an early age with an infant daughter. The only consolation he felt after the loss of a partner whom he tenderly loved, was to the contemplation of the opening charms and grace of his little Maria, who soon promised to become all that he had so much admired in her deceased mother. He attended to her education with the utmost care and assiduity; procuring her instructors of every kind of approved merit, taking a pleasure often upon himself, for which his good sense and knowledge eminently fitted him.

With these advantages she grew up lovely and accomplished in an uncommon degree, and seemed in every respect formed to complete the warmest wishes of a parent. He accordingly doted on her with the most extreme fondness, and formed no other desire of purpose in life, than that of seeing her happily and honorably established.

In pursuit of this design, he did not, like most parents, cast his eyes on wealth and rank. Convinced from an impartial observation, that happiness in the conjugal state is only to be expected from a mutual confirmed relish for sober rational felicity, the first and greatest requisite he looked for in a son-in-law, was a mind formed to steady and habitual virtue. The character usually distinguished by the title of a man, pleasure was therefore the object of his most rooted aversion and dread.

Maria had received from nature that dubious gift, a heart of exquisite tenderness and sensibility. This, while it made her return her father's fondness with the warmest filial merits of a stronger and more dangerous kind. Unpractised in the world, she did not look at mankind with the discerning eye of her father, and where she saw an amiable appearance, she was easily led to imagine that every thing else was correspondent.

A young officer happened to be quartered in the town where she lived, who, to a most pleasing figure and address, added a manner and conversation the most specious and most insinuating that could be conceived. He appeared all softness & refinement, at the time when his heart was vitiated by the loosest principles and most confirmed habits of debauchery. Accident gave him an opportunity of commencing an acquaintance with Maria, before her father was aware of the danger to which she was exposed. The impression that he made was too strong to be eradicated; and although her father as soon as he discovered the connection, used every exertion of paternal authority to dissolve it, he was unable to succeed.

As Mr. Spencer constantly refused his consent to an union, the unhappy consequences of which he clearly foresaw, the lovers had no other resource to gratify their passion than an elopement. It was long before one educated in the habits and principles that had so carefully been implanted in Maria, could resolve upon so rash and guilty a step; but at length it was determined on and effected;—and the unfortunate girl was too late convinced of the dreadful exchange she had made, of caresses of the most indulgent of parents, for the fugitive embraces of an abandoned and faithless husband.

Justly incensed as her father was, she durst not attempt to soften his resentment which founded on an act of disobedience, that overthrew all his dearest wishes, was likely to be steadfast and durable. After suffering a variety of misery, both in mind & body, in following a husband who treated her with brutal neglect, and returned to England in the utmost indigence, the third year after her marriage, with a son about two years old.

She had the good fortune to meet with a