

THE LITERARY TRANSCRIPT,

AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCER.

VOL. I. No. 39.]

QUEBEC, SATURDAY, 21ST APRIL, 1838.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.

POETRY.

[From the *Memoirs* of H. M.]

ON THE PRESENTATION OF THE COLOURS TO THE QUEEN'S LIGHT DRAGOONS.

BY W. F. HAWLEY.

Take ye the Banner of the brave,
The Red Cross of your sire—
The Flag that sweeps the ocean wave—
That guards your household fire—
There vain to bid ye guard it well,
To triumph or the grave,
For ye were nurtured by the fire—
“The free are ever brave!”
“Saint George and England” was the cry
At blood-stain'd Azmoun.
Aid, should that glorious battle show
Rug through the land once more,
Guard well the Banner—will ye see
The gleaming Red Cross fall?
No, sooner shall that Banner be
Your fared and lovedon post!
To vain to bid ye guard it well;
Your hearts are true and free
As were your gallant sire's of yore,
And truly as his of old;
Where ye not tread while many slept
Amid a waking foe?
Your hearts are true and free—
The Flag that sweeps the sea!

THE SMUGGLER.

Generally speaking, there is something peculiarly interesting in the character of seafaring men, even of those whose voyages have extended little beyond their own shores. The fisherman's life indeed may be grounded one of the most constant perils. For daily bread, he must hunt for his prey. In that season when the billows of the ocean rest from their labours—when the storm and melancholy are sheltered within the dwellings—when the domestic and the social life in their woolly nests, and the little birds find shelter in hollow banks and trees; or sweep to milder regions the poor fisherman must encounter all the fury of the combined elements—for his children's bread is scattered on the waters.

It is this perpetually enforced intercourse with danger that interests our feelings so powerfully in their behalf, together with its concomitant effects on their character—undaunted hardihood—unshakable perseverance—almost heroic daring; and generally speaking a simplicity of heart, and a tenderness of disposition towards the female and little ones of their families, finely contrasting their rugged exterior. But, unfortunately, it is not only in their ostensible calling of fisherman, that these men are forward in effrontery. The temptation of contraband trade too often allures them from their honest and peaceable avocations, to brave the laws of their country, and encounter the most fearful risks in pursuit of precarious, though sometimes considerable gains. Of late, this desperate trade has extended almost to an organized system; and in spite of all the preventive measures adopted by government, it is too obvious that the numbers of these “free traders” are yearly increasing, and that their hazardous commerce is more daringly, and vigorously carried on. Along the Hampshire coast, and more particularly in the Isle of White, almost every seafaring man is engaged in it, to a less or greater extent. For the most part they are concealed in secret associations, both for co-operation and defence; and there is a sort of free masonry among them, the signs and tokens of which are soon apparent to an attentive observer. “The custom-house sharks,” as they term them, are not their most formidable foes; for they wage a more desperate warfare with that part of our naval force employed by government on the preventive service. Some of the vessels on the station are perpetually hovering along the coast; but in spite of their utmost vigilance, immense quantities of contraband goods are almost nightly landed, and nowhere with more daring frequency than in the Isle of White.

In my rambles along its shores, the inhabitants of almost every cottage and fisherman's cabin, for many miles round, became known

to me. I have always a peculiar pleasure in conversing with these people, in listening with familiar interest to the details of their feelings and opinions, and to their family concerns. With some of my new acquaintances I had ventured to expostulate on the iniquitous, as well as hazardous nature of their trade; and many wives and mothers sanctioned with approving looks and half constrained expressions, my remonstrances to their sons and husbands. These heard for the most part in stilted down-looking silence (not however expressive of ill-will towards me), or sometimes answered my arguments with the remark that “poor folks must live” that during the war they had earned an honest livelihood in other ways; but now they were turned adrift and must do something to get bread for their little ones; and, after all, while the rich and great folks were pleased to encourage their trade, it was plain they could not think much harm of those who carried it on.” This last was a striking observation, one of those with which babes and sucklings so often confound the sophistry of worldly wisdom.

Amongst these humble families there was one of whose cabin I stopped oftenest, and the poorest looking, in my evening rambles. The little dwelling was wedged in a manner into a cleft of the grey rock, up which, on every slanting ledge, the hand of industry had accumulated garden mould, and fostered a beautiful vegetation; and immediately before it a patch of the lowliest greenward sloped down to the edge of the sea sand, unconnected with aromatic wild thyme and dotted with tall of thistle, cresswort, and cinquefoil. The peculiar neatness of the little cabin had early attracted my attention, which was further increased by the singular appearance of its owner. He was a large tall man of about sixty, distinguished in his person by an air of uncommon dignity, and by a dress, the peculiarity of which, together with his commanding carriage, and countenance of bold daring, always suggested the buccannery of romantic legends to my fancy. He wore large loose trousers of shaggy dark blue cloth, a sort of woollen vest, broadly striped with grey, for the most part open at the throat and bosom, and buckled in at the waist with a broad leathern belt, in which two pistols were commonly stuck, and not infrequently an old cut-throat; and over his shoulder was slung a sword-hilt of broad white knittin, to which a pocket flask, a leather pouch, and often a thick short duck-gun, were suspended. A dark fur cap was the usual covering of his head, and his thick black hair was not so much intermingled with grey, as streaked with locks of perfect whiteness. Notwithstanding this formidable equipment, the harmless avocation of a fisherman was his ostensible employment. At almost all hours of the night, a light was seen burning at the cottage window, and the master of the family, with his son, was invariably absent, if it was sometimes my custom, I looked in on them after dark, on my return from some distant spot towards my own habitation.

At such an hour I was wip to find the female inmates the wife and widowed daughter of the man I have been describing, in a state of visible perturbation, for which it was easy to assign a cause; but I had somewhat of a vain with the infatuated husband, and it was still more fruitless to argue with the helpless women. Richard Campbell was not a native of the Isle of White, nor one trained from his youth up to “go down to the sea in ships, and occupy his business in great waters.” For many generations, his family had owned and cultivated a small farm in the north of England; himself had been bred up a tiller of the ground, contrary to his own wishes, for they had pointed from his very cradle to a seafaring life. Just as he had attained his twentieth year, his father died, leaving him (an only child) the inheritor of all his little property, and at liberty to follow the bent of his own inclination. The temptation was strong—tumultuous wishes, and powerful yearnings, were busy in his heart; but he was “the only son of his mother, and she was a widow.” He staid to comfort her old

age, and to cultivate his little inheritance, partly influenced perhaps, in his decision, by his attachment to a pretty blue-eyed girl, whose sweeter smiles rewarded his filial piety, and whose hand was very shortly after its richer recompense.

Many children were born to the young couple, “as likely boys and girls as ever the sun shone upon,” said the wife of Campbell, from whom, at different times, I gleaned the simple annals I am relating. “But God was very good to them. He increased their store with the increasing family, and provided bread for the little mouths that were sent to claim it.

She never grudged her labour, and a better nor kinder husband than she was blessed with never won her heart. To be sure, he had his faults and particular ways, and when he could steal a holiday, all his delight was to spend it on the bay that was near their farm (the worse luck) for many an anxious hour had she known even then, when he was out in his little boat shooting wild-fowl in the dark winter nights. But no harm ever came to him, only their eldest boy, their dear Maurice.” (The mother never named him without a glancing eye) “took after his father's fancy for the sea, and set his heart on being a sailor.” And the father called to mind his own youthful longings, and would not control those of his child, especially as he had another son, a fine promising lad, who took willingly to the farm. The mother grieved sore at the parting of her first-born, (what feelings are those of a mother towards her first-born?) and the young Maurice was her most loving and faithful child, and she had reared him with such anxious tenderness, only methods free, though the perilous years of a sailor's life; but the father jested with her fears, and entered with the ardour of a loyal heart into his son's enterprising hopes; and at last the youth won from her an unwilling consent. And when she shook her head mournfully to his promises of bringing rare and beautiful things from foreign parts, for her and his little sister, coaxed a half smile into her fearful looks by concluding with—“and then I will stay quiet with you and father, and never want to leave you again.”—“My Maurice left us,” said the mother, “and from that time everything went wrong. Before he had been gone a month, we buried my husband's mother; but God called her away in a good old age, so we had no right to take on heavily at her loss, though we felt it sorely.”

In addition to his own land, Campbell rented some acres of a neighbouring gentleman; disputes arose between them, and proceeded to such lengths, that both parties referred their differences to local arbitrament. After many tedious and apparently frivolous delays, particularly irritating to Campbell's impatient spirit, the cause was given in favour of his opponent; and from that hour he adopted the firm persuasion that impartial justice was banished from the land of his fathers. This fatal prejudice turned all his thoughts to bitterness, banished him like a phantom in his fields, by the cheerful heart, in his once peaceful life, by the very embrace of his children.

In this state of mind in an evil hour Campbell was persuaded to embark his fortunes with those of some self-exultant emigrant, who were on the point of quitting their native country, to seek wealth, liberty, and independence in the back settlements of the United States. The tears and entreaties of his wife and children were unavailing to deter him from his rash purpose; and the unhappy mother was torn from the beloved home, where her heart lingered, most tenaciously in the persuasion that if her lost child was ever restored to his native country, to the once happy abode of his parents his first steps would be directed.

The ship in which the Campbells were embarked, with their five remaining children, and all their worldly possessions, performed two thirds of her voyage with celerity; but as she approached her destined haven, the wind, became contrary, and she lost sea-way for many days. At last a storm, which had been gathering with awfully gradual preparation, burst over her with tremendous fury.

Three days and nights she drove before it, but on the fourth her masts and rigging went overboard, and before the wreck could be cut away, a plank in the ship's side was stove in by the floating timbers. In the confusion, the leak was not discovered till the water in the hold had gained to a depth of many feet; and though for a time the pump was kept going by the almost superhuman exertions of crew and passengers, all was unavailing; and to betake themselves to the boats was the last hurried and desperate resource. Campbell had succeeded in lowering his three youngest children into one of them, already crowded with their fellows in calamity, and was preparing to send down his eldest son and daughter, when a woman, pressing before him with desperate haste, leaped down into the crowded boat, which upset in an instant, and the perishing cry of twenty drowning creatures, mingled with the agonizing shriek of parents, husbands, and children, from the deck of the sinking ship. The other boat was yet aloft, and Campbell was at length sent ashore by his two surviving children, and their unmerciful mother, who had sunk into a state of hopeless insensibility when the drowning essence of her lost little ones, rung in her ears. Five-and-twenty persons were wedged in this frail bark, with a cask of water, and a small bag of biscuit. Their compass had been lost in the large boat, and faint ideas were their hopes of ever reaching land, from whence they had no means of computing their distance. For the unsleeping eye of Providence watched over them, and on the fourth day of their melancholy progress, a sail making towards them, was descried on the verge of the horizon. It was seen to be the ship proved to be a long-ward bound West India trader, into which the perishing adventurers were received with prompt humanity; and on reaching her appointed haven Campbell, and the remnant of his once flourishing family, once more set foot on British earth. Once in his younger days, he had visited the Isle of White, and the remembrance of his stone cottages and beautiful boys was as fresh in his mind. He crossed over with his family, and a few weeks put him in possession of a neat cabin and small fishing boat; and for a time the little family subsisted in fragrant comfort by the united industry of the father and son. Soon after their settlement in the island, their daughter married a respectable and enterprising young man the owner of a pilot vessel. In the course of three years she brought her husband as man of children, and during that time all went well with them; but her William's occupation, a lucrative one in time of war, expired him to frequent and fearful dangers, and one tempestuous winter's night, having ventured out to the assistance of a fishing vessel foundered in the attempt, and the remaining life floated her husband's corpse to the feet of his distracted wife, as she stood on the sea-beach watching every white sail that became visible through the haze of the gray clouded dawn.

The forlorn widow and her orphan babes found a refuge in the humble cabin of her father, and he and his son redoubled their exertions for their support. But these were heavy claims, and the little family was just entering on their manhood, and the coarsest necessities. When temptation assailed the poor man, by holding out to his eyes, the means of becoming the harbinger and privy of those that were dear to him as his own soul, it is to be wondered at that he so often fails, when others, without the same excuses to plead, set him the example of yielding? Campbell (having first been seduced into casual and inconsiderable ventures) was at last enrolled in the gang of smugglers who carried on their perilous trade along the coast; and from that time, though comparatively plenty resisted his cottage, the careless smug of innocent security no longer beamed on the features of its inmates. Margaret struggled long, with well principled firmness, against the infatigations of her husband and son; but flushed with success, and emboldened by association with numbers, they resisted her anxious remonstrances; and at last, heart sick of fruitless opposition, and shrinking from the angry frown