

# THE LITERARY TRANSCRIPT, AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCER.

VOL. I. No. 26.]

QUEBEC, TUESDAY, 10TH APRIL, 1838.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]

## ORIGINAL POETRY.

[For the Literary Transcript.]

### OLLA-POURIDA.

Our words are like the waves,  
Brawling most illly o'er the silent depths  
Of that which has unchangeable below.

Oh, solemn Night!  
Methinks thou art the shadow of our God  
Bending above us with a father's care.

Our life is naked garden-ground, wherein  
Are germs of many plants: some murder one  
And some another. But there is a plant  
Which few have tended: 'tis a lovely flower,  
But full of honey, and a distance seen,  
—So true it is that all our noblest joys,  
Friendship, ambition, useful energy,  
Kindred affection, and true patriotism,  
Are leaves and blossoms of this herb to plant.

Thinking of absent friends,  
The memory of their weakness is gone,  
Their virtues only do we think upon.  
—So barren mountains, at a distance seen,  
Lose all their bleakness and rigidity,  
And wear an aspect soft and beautiful.

We were reminded by thy fragrant Word  
To call Him Father. Merciful is He  
In thus allowing what our nature asks.  
We shrink in awe from that the terrible,  
Whose breath is lightning, and whose ways are dark,  
But cling confidently to God the sire.  
—The traveller, fatigued and wearied-worn,  
Sinks, for a resting place, no farther east  
Whose summit hangs between the cliff and star:  
A smooth, unobscured stone is better far.

Eighty—  
It is the moon of torrid climes, which blazes  
And unlooseth corrupt whatever it shines upon.

The freshness of our first affections has  
One steady exposure. In after life  
With many we divide the joys we cherish  
But bitter is the remembrance of that first  
And strongest tie, it rises the very soul!  
Torn from its anchor, o'er the waste of life  
Our bark is driven, hopeless, rudderless,  
Until experience hath taught us how  
To find another anchorage.

Half of our lives  
We have led fair: knowledge said the other half  
Unlearns our hard-learned lessons, and cast out  
The produce of our maturing toil.  
'Tis ill to learn too early. Some there be  
Grow old before their time, and waste their youth  
In bookish study. Fools! that never away  
A jewel, which can never be replaced,  
In vain attempts to lift old Kris' veil.

Shame, slander, misconstruction, infamy,  
Things which we tremble at, what are they but  
The shadows of our notions—shadows which  
Are small or large, according as the sun  
Of our prosperity is high or low.

E. T. P.

## THE WRECKERS.

BY JAMES SHERIDAN KNOWLES.

(Concluded.)

\* By the fire of a miserable hut, was seated a female of youthful, but haggard appearance. She had an infant at her breast, and was endeavouring to lull it, rocking to and fro, with a melancholy hum. Every now and then she paused and listened, and after a second or two resumed her maternal task.

"Be quiet, Shark? be quiet!" she would occasionally cry, as a lean, black rough-contoog, between the Newfoundland and the mastiff, and which was stretched across the hearth in the would raise his head, and turning it in the direction of the wind, keep howling amidst the gusts of the storm, which was slowly and fitfully subsidizing.

At length the infant fell asleep, and was transferred from its mother's lap to a wretched pallet in an adjoining room. Her charge being thus disposed of, she returned into the outer apartment. A cooking vessel was on the fire. She lifted the lid. The steam faintly rose from the contents.

"Will it never grow hot!" she impatiently

exclaimed, and resorting to a bellows, through the creviced sides of which escaped the greater portion of the wind which was intended for the proper vent, proceeded assiduously, but also in vain, to urge the sluggish fuel. "He'll brain me if he comes home and nothing ready," she cried to herself, in a querulous undertone. "Heaven send him luck, and I shall have peace for a day or two," continued she. "But for my baby, I wish I had never seen the face of Black Norris!"

"Let me in," cried the wrecker at the door.

"Thank heaven, he has met with luck," ejaculated the wretched wife.

She let him in. He had a trunk upon his shoulder, and under his arm he carried a bundle of clothes.

"Good luck, Norris!" tremulously, and half doubtfully inquired she.

"Yes," was his still-in reply. "Why do you ask with such a face as that?"

"I've a suspicion you had not met with any."

"Why?" demanded she sternly.

"For your looks," timidly responded she.

"Cute the child!" muttered the ruinian: "what business hast thou to mind my looks?"

"Here, I had a hand, and help this load from my back." The trunk was deposited upon the floor.

"What, nothing ready? Hast thou not virtue in the house? Hast thou not fire? Hast thou not hands? and why is not my dinner ready? Be still there, I have something to do in the next room. On thy life let me not be disturbed till I have done."

"Give me the key of the big chest."

"Do't wake the baby," intrusively enjoined the wife. "He has not slept the whole morning, and is only just now dropped off."

"Cuss the child!" cried the wrecker. "That think of nothing but the child. Look to my dinner." He went into the next apartment, shut the door after him, and locked it.

He examined the jewels again. He emptied the purse of its contents and counted them. He opened the rest of the pockets. The trousers he had taken from the bundle and thrown upon the floor of the other room—all contained fishes. He placed them upon the mantel, applied the key, and hastily began to deposit them at the bottom of the chest.

In the progress of his work, he started and stopped short, at a shuffling of feet which he heard in the outer apartment, accompanied by the sound of voices, as of persons speaking in a low key. Muttering a curse he proceeded.

"Norris, Norris?" whispered his wife at the door. He replied not, but went on.

"Norris?" she whispered again. "You are wanted!" He answered not, but listened anxiously—all was silent.

"Norris?" she repeated.

"Silence, and confound thee!" was the ruffian's reply.

"I cannot help it, Norris!" rejoined she, still whispering. "You are wanted husband! O come! Do come!"

"Presently!" he vociferated. The last article was put in. He locked the chest, and unbolting the door, threw it open.

"Well, is my dinner ready?" he noisily demanded, entering the outer apartment, and looking toward the table—which had been constructed out of the fragments of a wreck—a corpse lay stretched upon it. At the head, and at the foot was a group of his neighbours.

He stood for a moment or two transfixed.

"What means this?" at length he hotly inquired, with a loud voice, striving to conceal a cowering heart.

"Merciful powers!" exclaimed one, lifting the rifled trousers, which the wrecker had thrown upon the floor. "Merciful powers! if it is not your father's body, Norris, that you have been stripping!"

"My father's body?" echoed Black Norris, the blood utterly forsaking his cheeks.

"Yes, there it is stretched upon the table!" Black Norris did not attempt to speak. He looked at the body—at the by-standers—at his wife—at the body again—with an expression of utter vacancy in his countenance. He then approached the table, half seated himself

on a corner of it, his back to the corpse; and with one leg upon the floor, kept swinging the other, looking wildly around him. His wife, who had dropped upon the stool on which she had been nursing her child, sat the image of horror. The rest kept silence.

"It can't be helped!" at last exclaimed Black Norris. "The dead have no use for clothes. We'll bury him tomorrow, and wake him to-night."

His auditors looked at one another, but made no remark. Pipes, tobacco, and spirits, were speedily procured and placed upon the same table with the corpse, which was now covered with a sheet. Black Norris seated himself at the head. His neighbours, whose numbers were now increased by occasional droppers-in, accommodated themselves as they could with stocks, empty kegs placed on end, and pieces of plank converted into temporary forms, set ranged around. The room braved merrily, save when the wrecker's wife sat crouching near the fire, her head supported by the wall. At length the first supply of spirits was out.

"I'll bring you better," cried the wrecker. "What we have been drinking was watered, I'll bring it to you as pure as fresh the still."

He disappeared; and after a lapse of about ten or fifteen minutes, returned with a fresh supply. He opened the door unobserved, but stopped short upon remarking that the piece which he had just quit—was occupied by three or four who were intently employed in examining the head of the dead body, from which the sheet had been partially removed. The rest of the company were leaning forward, apparently absorbed in what was passing.

"'Tis an ugly mark!" said one.

"No neck could do that," observed another.

"No!" interposed a third: "his neck like the blunt end of an axe-head; see! Here is the regular mark of the edge all here."

"I would not be Black Norris for all he has got by this day's work."

"Why not?" vociferated the wrecker, springing forward and confronting the speaker.

Every eye was turned toward the wrecker, in whose countenance desperation and gathering fury were fearfully depicted. No answer was returned to his question.

"Why not?" repeated he, with increased vehemence.

"Why not?" echoed the young man, recovering from temporary surprise. "Why, who was it stove your father's forehead in, Black Norris?" added he after a pause.

He had scarcely time to duck his head. The vessel which the wrecker carried flew over it and in the next moment the young man's throat was in the millian's grip. "Lose your hold of him," cried several all at once. Black Norris paid no heed to them. Thrice or four of the strongest and boldest rushed together upon him at once: a superpowered him and rescued his almost suffocated victim. The wrecker drew his knife and brandished it. They rushed upon him again before he had time to make a stroke with it, and wrenched it from him. His wife, who, it appeared, had retired into the inner apartment during the interval of her husband's absence, now burst from it, sank on her knees before him, and clasping him round the legs with one arm, while with the other she supported her infant, implored him to be calm. A blow levelled the child and mother to the earth. With honor of the savage act, the spectators stood awhile, as if bereft of the power of speech or motion. For a second or two the wrecker glared around him like a fiend then suddenly vanished into the inner room. He searched here and there, blaspheming all the time, cursing this thing and that thing, as anything came to his hand except what he wanted. At length, however, he succeeded in finding his pistols. Then a pouch, filled with slugs; and last of all a powder-horn, presented themselves. Hastily he loaded and primed the weapons, and proceeding to the door with one in each hand, advanced a pace into the outer apartment.

"Now," roared the wrecker—"now, who is the man to come on!" No one stirred. "I

give you just as much time," continued he, "as it will take to clear the house. When that is expired, I fire at the man that remains."

A wild, shrill, piercing laugh was the answer to his menace. It came from the head of the corpse. The man was standing there. The wrecker's axe was in her hand—the blunt end resting on the mark in the dead man's forehead.

"Ha, ha!" she cried exultingly, "there is your father, Black Norris, a corpse upon the plank of wood, to get possession of which, you murdered my father; and here is your axe upon the mark which you made in your father's forehead when I told you as you were rifling him on the beach, that his eyes were moving, and you coaxed me to leave you alone with him. See how nicely it fits. But I knew you, and stole back. I did Black Norris, snatched up your hatchet when you threw it behind you; and ran away with it. Give you joy of your diamonds and your gold, Black Norris. A fair day, is it not? A fair lovely day—a fair, lovely, bonny day."

The wrecker had been gradually raising his right arm. It was now nearly brought to a level. He fired—but the charge perforated the roof. His arm was struck up by some one, and at the same moment he felt himself powerfully pinioned. He looked round; he found himself in the hands of four of the preventive guard, accompanied by Kate's lover, with a staff of a boarding-pile in his grasp.

That day, having completed the business which called him from home, had the young man returned. His first inquiry was for Kate. She had been at her usual pannels, and had stolen away. He sought her in all her haunts—she was nowhere to be found—dispirited, and fatigued too, for he had walked upward of thirty miles since morning, he was repairing home, when he received from a group returning from the wreck, and of whom he made inquiries after her, an account of her appearance among the wreckers, and her wild, mysterious prophecy, which had been so strangely fulfilled. Revolving what he had heard, he lifted the latch of his mother's door and entered; but stopped short. A female almost naked to the zone, was sitting with her back toward him; her skin of so pure a whiteness, that it fairly shone. The waist and shoulders of such a mould, as of itself appressed the beholder of the presence of surpassing richness; although unadorned, unadorned, he is utterly at a loss to tell in what it lies. A moment he stood—then was on the point of retiring, when the female turned suddenly round.

"Kate?" burst in astonishment from the young man's lips.

The next moment, the maniac was hanging upon his neck. Willy she kissed him, straining him to her bosom, and laughing.

"He has done it—he has done it!" she almost shrieked. "He has murdered his own father. Here is the hatchet with which he beat his forehead in," added she, springing from him to the other end of the room, and snatching up the instrument and flourishing it; her sun-burnish'd hands and neck forming an extraordinary contrast with the snow, which had never been before revealed to the eyes of her lover, whose mother now entering from an adjoining room with some articles of apparel upon her arms, hastily retired again drawing the poor, half-resisting girl along with her. The former presently returned.

"She has been down on the shore all day. There has been a wreck," said she, "for about a quarter of an hour ago she came in, for you that you might take Black Norris, as she said, and hang him, for he had murdered his father. She was wet to the skin with the spray and the rain, and I was macking her charge herself when you came in. Hist—she is here."

Kate entered. Her lover looked at her. Nothing appeared now, but the hue that was the child of the weather. The hatchet was in her hand. Exultation and impatience were painted in her looks.

"Come, come," she cried; and opening the door, it opened the way to Black Norris's.