

# THE LITERARY TRANSCRIPT, AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCER.

VOL. I.—No. 108.]

SATURDAY, 3RD NOVEMBER, 1838.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]

## THE TRANSCRIPT

IS PRINTED ON THE MORNINGS OF  
**Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday.**  
BY THE PROPRIETORS,  
**W. COWAN & SON,**

At the Office No. 13, St. John Street, opposite  
Police Street.

Edited by T. J. Donoghue.

### TERMS OF SUBSCRIPTION.

For Towns, 10s. per annum.  
When sent by Post, 12s. per annum.

Advertisements, Communications, &c. may be  
sent to the Office, and at the Book-Store, No. 26,  
not of Mountain Street, at which places the paper  
may be had immediately after publication.

Printing of every description executed with neat-  
ness and despatch, and on moderate terms.

## THE DESERTER.

The discipline of our ship was harsh and severe, without that only quality which can ever render it tolerable—fair and equal justice. Our commander was a fiery, passionate little fellow; a great stickler for discipline, yet more lenient and unreasoning, than firm or judicious. His crew were discontented, and despondent at every opportunity; and though when rebuked, were punished with extreme severity, it did not cure the evil; and during our winter in Smyrna, we lost some of our best men. Near vicinity to the town, the smoothness of the water, darkened by the high hills that surrounded the bay, rendered it an easy feat for the crew to swim ashore, in spite of the redoubtable vigilance of the sentries and the officers of the watch. Thus many succeeded in escaping to the city, where they found ready sympathy, and concealment, among the reckless crew of adventurers that infest the port of Franktown.

Irritated at the loss of his men, Captain— or from seeking to remove the cause of such defection, by ameliorating the condition of those on board, only became more unjust and tyrannical. The men were regarded with suspicion, and degraded ad spirit broken with the lash; and the officers, treated without leniency, were harassed and dishonoured. The latter, too, were frequently punished for the escape of the men, which it was out of their power to prevent; for in spite of all their vigilance would occasionally be baffled, in a night watch, by the adroitness of the sailors.

This had been the fate of young Meadows, one of our best men had escaped during his watch, and after a very short interview with our stormy commander, who seen in truth these proud men, who, dressed in a little blue authority.

Like angry ape,  
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven,  
As make the angels weep;

As ordered to take me with him, and proceed to the city; the captain shouting after us, "we left the ship's side," "Don't come on board my ship again until you bring back that man—dead or alive!" An order that Meadows intended to obey quite literally, being at a little mortified and indignant himself, at the man had baffled all his vigilance, and escaped during his watch.

This deserter was a Maltese by birth, and it is supposed had deserted from an English galleon at Gibraltar, where we picked him up in a square built powerful frame, gave indications of great strength, and the dark, sinister expression of his countenance, spoke of virile passions, and a engaging yet desperate nature. The sailors' gossip gave him the credit of having been a pirate in his time, and by the way he was generally feared and hated. Yet he was an excellent seaman, and a valuable man in any emergency that required daring, energy, or skill.

It was in the fore part of the day, when we were out in pursuit of Cudgel, which was the deserter's name; and though we had partaken to refreshment since our usual early breakfast, the continued novelty and excitement of the scenes we passed through, and the spirit of earnestness of our chase, left us no time to think of our mere physical wants; so dinner time passed unperceived, and night stole on, and saw us still absorbed in our fruitless search. Slighted nature, however, began to

remontate. Hungry and exhausted, and scarcely able to drag my leaden feet along the dirty streets and alleys, I at last ventured to hint to my indefatigable companion the propriety of seeking the "Old Europa" for a time, to recruit.

Meadows had a frame of too much endurance, and was too deeply absorbed in the chase, to have yet felt the same inconvenience; but at my proposition, he said, almost in a moment's pause, "You are right, my poor boy; I did not recollect you were unused to such duty as this. Well, let us go and get supper, and then if you still feel tired, you may turn in, while I look for that cursed Maltese alone; for have him I will, and that before morning."

The generous fellow did not mean it, but he a little touched my pride, and I answered with a tone of pique: "Never mind, let us keep on. I don't want any supper now, and I can keep awake as long as you sleep."

"Pooh! youngster," said he, "you are too quick; don't be offended; you know I did not mean any thing like that. To say the truth, I am very hungry myself, though it did not occur to me before you mentioned it. So let's get supper, and then, if you choose, we will sally out again. As it is all on our way, we will explore this villainous 'cut throat alley' again. Perhaps we may meet our gentleman on the road."

So kindly locking my arm in his own, he turned down a narrow street into a dark, dismal lane, that zigzagged through a nest of low wretched looking hovels, having barely width for two to walk abreast.

Meadows was well acquainted with all the intricacies of Franktown, for he had often been on such expeditions, through its miserable by-places. He now walked confidently on, saying, "This is called cut throat alley. It tolerably well deserves its name. Have your dirt ready, youngster, for I know not how soon you may have to use it!"

We had been through this alley, with the agreeable name, before, during the day, but then we had light to direct our steps; now it was in pitchy darkness, only relieved here and there by the glimmerings that proceeded from the crevices of the door or window, in some low mud hovel, from whence came frequent noises that betrayed the living wickedness which was festering within. Up to our ankles in filth, we stumbled on, as we best could, paying no attention to the frequent shriek of distress, or the wild laughter of drunken mirth, that rose from these haunts of vice, where the earth's self-scouring held their unhallowed offices. At last, in passing the half opened door of one of these huts, Meadows, whose vigilance had never for a moment slumbered, suddenly dropped my arm, and saying, in a low startled tone, "Follow me!" sprang into the house.

It was a long, low, narrow room, whose bare, unplastered walls, and floor of hard trodden clay, gave it a most desolate and comfortless appearance. In the centre, a rude ladder communicated, through a trap-door, with the apartment above. At the farther end, a group of rough looking men were seated around a table, so deeply engaged in some game they were playing, as not to notice our entrance. At the end nearest the door was a kind of bar, garnished with dirty decanters and bottles, and lighted up with three or four greasy candles. Behind it stood a tall, attenuated, dark looking man, with sunken, fiery eyes, and a profusion of coarse black hair, covering the greater part of his hollow face.—His attire consisted of a blue wollen shirt, and dirty canvas trousers, around which a large red shawl was girded, and a small Greek scull cap stuck on the top of his head. He looked up with a glance, half of inquiry, half of anger, as we entered. Meadows went directly towards him, and, in a bold tone, said that we were American officers, in pursuit of a deserter, who was now in the house, as he had observed him running up the ladder, and we wished to go up and take him.

The gruff, dark-looking personage shrugged his shoulders, and shook his head growing some reply in his unintelligible *lingua franca*. "Pooh!" said Meadows, turning impatiently

to me, "we are losing time in talking to the ghost of misery; follow me." Just as we were about to mount the ladder, the "ghost of misery" sprang actively over the counter, and running fiercely towards us, warned us not to ascend. His barbarous language we could not understand, but his excited gestures were expressive enough. He pointed at our dirks with contempt, and at me, Meadows' only supporter, with a sneer that raised my blood to indignation. He then counted twenty upon his fingers, to show us the number of persons above, and drew his hand significantly across his throat, to show the manner they would serve us, if we intruded ourselves among them. Besides, he lifted up a frail ladder a moment from its place, to let us see that it was quite in his power, by removing it, to cut off our retreat and leave us to the tender mercies of his friends above.

While he was thus threatening and gesticulating, Meadows regarded him with a patient coolness that amusingly contrasted with the excited ruffian's grotesque vivacity. The stern and scornful expression, however, which I saw stealing over his manly countenance, prepared me for the result that followed. After surveying for a moment the room below, the slight ladder which led to that above, and from head to foot the dark visaged bandit beside him, he turned round and said in a quick sharp tone, "Youngster, will you follow?" "To the death!" replied, with enthusiasm.

"That's right, my brave boy! I see I may depend upon you. Cudgel is here, and you know it is our duty to take him, dead or alive. Perhaps we may have to fight for it; but," added the gallant fellow, as if to encourage me, "we are both young and active, and, at the worst, this place is not so high but we may spring down without danger to our necks, even if this black rascal should unhiss the ladder.—So come on!"

We mounted the ladder rapidly, without regarding the exclamations and gestures of the whiskered ruffian, who still sought to detain us, and I followed close at his heels.

Emerging from a trap door, we found ourselves in a long, low, dismal looking apartment, under the roof, dim with the smoke from chiboucs and cigars. Its only walls were the roof, over tiled rafters, and a few straggling boards composed the floor. In the roof were two or three narrow apertures that answered the purpose of windows. Huddled round in a circle, were half a dozen fierce looking men who, by their countenances, and the red cap, we judged to be Greeks. They were playing at cards. They all looked up, and two or three sprang to their feet, and clutched the long knives which they all wore at their girdles, as we entered. Cudgel was seated at the farther end of the room, with his arms folded, and quietly smoking a cigar, looking in no manner disconcerted at the sudden appearance of his officers.

Meadows fixed his keen eye upon him, and pointing him out to me, as I did not at first observe him, through the smoke, said, "Ah, there is the rascal we are looking for." "Yes, here he is," said Cudgel, in a calm tone; "now come and take him!"

Meadows paused a moment to look round. "Do you speak English," he asked, addressing the threatening group of desperadoes before him. There was no reply, but they talked loudly and rapidly together. I drew his attention to one who had not risen, and who appeared to be deeply engaged in studying the dirty pack of cards on the floor. I recognised him as one who often came off to the ship in a fruit boat, and who was known on board by the sobriquet of "Jack Straw." Meadows at once called to him, but he seemed by no means pleased with the recognition, and somewhat doubtful whether it would not be prudent to give us a decided cut. In truth, we were rather unrepresentable acquaintances for Jack to his very remarkable looking friends.

But Meadows was not easily daunted on such occasions; so, walking boldly towards him, he said, in his cool, off-hand manner, "Jack, my good fellow, don't let us interrupt your friends; we are merely after that rascal in the corner, and when we have se-

cured him, we will leave you to yourselves." "You will never leave this place alive, if you attempt it!" shouted Cudgel, with a scornful laugh.

Meadows paid him no attention, but went on talking with Jack Straw.

"Tell your friends I am in the execution of my duty and shall take that man at all hazards. I am sufficiently armed to fight my way through, if there is any opposition; so Jack, keep them from interfering, or there will be blood spilt."

"Take care your own is not spilt, boy!" threateningly cried the deserter, who heard what Meadows had been saying. Jack Straw shook his head doubtfully and advised us to retire, as he despaired of being able to restrain his excited associates, who, he told us, were very desperate characters; but evidently wishing to keep on good terms with us, and finding that we were determined to seize the deserter, he talked very earnestly with them for a few moments, and, by his gestures, seemed both imploring and threatening, to induce them not to molest us.

While we paused to observe what impression his arguments made, Cudgel rose up and coming a few steps towards us, again spoke.

"Mr. Meadows," said he, in a voice of deep excitement, whose hoarse tones seemed to come from the very bottom of his huge chest, "Mr. Meadows, I respect you more than any officer of that bloody slave ship, and there is not a man on board who would not go through for you. But you see this"—taking from his breast a large Spanish clasp knife, and springing open its long pointed blade—"I'll sooner put it into my own heart, than go on board that ship again. Not the whole ship's company, marines and all, should take me.—I am a desperate man; you had better not meddle with me, for I give you warning, that if you come towards me, I'll give you this to the hilt, as good an officer as you are. Ha ha!" he frantically yelled as he brandished his murderous weapon, "midshipmen, you shall get more than you came for!"

"I'll see to that, your cursed Maltese rascal!" said the unforgotten Meadows, whose indignation at being thus braved, made him forget for a moment the others who were still loud in fierce dispute; and advancing towards him, with an air of fearless resolution, he put his hand on his collar, and in a brief, stern voice, said "Come with me, Sir!"

The moral superiority and commanding bearing of the young officer awed the desperate deserter. He was what might be called "taken aback." Habits of obedience seemed to retain their influence, even over his fierce nature. He covered beneath the stern glance of Meadows, and he stood irresolute, muttering sullenly to himself.

"Give me your handkerchief to tie this fellow," said Meadows, turning to me.

"Never!" shouted Cudgel, dashing his fist in his face, and springing toward one of the apertures in the roof. Meadows staggered with the heavy blow, and appeared for a moment blinded. I ran towards him, thinking he had been struck with the knife. "Are you hurt?" I asked. "No, no—never mind me—stop him!" answered the resolute officer. I turned immediately to grapple with Cudgel, who was endeavoring to force his Herculean body thro' the window.

"Don't come here youngster!" cried he desperately; "I won't be so tender of you."

My blood was fully up, and, fired with his threat, I rushed upon him. He made a frantic blow at me with his knife, which was well aimed at my face; but throwing up my left arm, almost involuntarily, I received the point just below the elbow, deep to the bone.—I planting my dirk at the same time nearly to the hilt in his side. The impetus of my blow or the convulsive twinge that followed my blade sent him out of the window, and he fell to the earth.

"All right!" said Meadows, who was now by my side, "now, boy, for a retreat. Hillo!" said he, as we turned to depart; "there's more ado! We are in a scrape. Keep cool, youngster, and follow my motions."

Our Greek friends seemed resolved not to put with us so easily, and surrounded us with