

A CANADIAN HEROINE.

(In the war of 1812-15 Mrs. Maria Hill, a soldier's wife, carried provisions to the soldiers in the heat of one of the battles.)

O'er the battlefield she came
Through the fitful flash and flame,
Duty-bound.
Seeking not a noble name,
Striving not for gain or fame,
O'er the ground among the dying
Came she flying,
Where the vying
Armies strove in deadly battle,
And the musketry's wild rattle
Echoed round.

Though the fight was raging wild,
With a sob she clasped her child
To her breast;
Then beside some luggage piled
Left it, while it crowded and smiled,
And at once went fleetly rushing
Where the gushing
Blood was flushing
All the ground with crimson gore,
And the brave ones crowned in glory
Sank to rest.

On her noble mission bent,
Never faltering she went,
Till she found
Where her husband, weak and spent,
Stood in ranks by bullets rent—
Ranks whose courage had availed not,
Though they'd quailed not,
And they'd failed not
To return each blow with vigor,
And with fierce heroic rigor
Held their ground.

To the struggling soldiers there
Striving hard against despair,
Undimmed
Did she come, an omen fair,
And with cheers they filled the air,
And uprose the spirits drooping,
As they trooping
Round her grouping,
Thankfully took the provision,
Which this unexpected vision
Now displayed.

O'er the field both bread and meat
Had she brought for them to eat,
Heroine.
And prevented a retreat,
And disastrous defeat,
By a courage fresh instilling
Into willing
Hearts, and thrilling
By her zeal each stalwart soldier
To exertions fiercer, bolder,
E'en to win.

Not so much the food she brought
Nerved the ranks, as did the thought
That she came,
For her country, braving aught,
O'er the field with danger fraught,
And this thought to every feeling
Quick appealing,
Firmly stealing
Ev'ry heart for death or glory,
Won the strife, and filled the story
Of her fame.

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THE REMARKABLE STORY OF JOHN OSBORNE.

WHO WAS A BUCCANEER, AND DIED A FASHION-
ABLE PHYSICIAN IN LONDON.

It is perfectly true, though I can hardly realize it as I sit here in my stately house in St. James square, that when I was a poor lad—and even when I was older than a lad, and ought to have known better—I was little, indeed nothing, better than a buccaneer on the high seas, that might, with law and justice, have been hung up to the yardarm of any of his Majesty's frigates. But I really did not know, so to speak, my right hand from my left; and was engaged even in atrocious deeds with a light heart, and almost with an innocent conscience. And this has always made me very forbearing towards all young lads. I cannot think that they would be really bad if it were not for their surroundings. And so when my boy, Jem Rushton, who would have made a very promising pirate if his lot had been cast in that line of life, stole my silver flagon, and might pretty well have filled it with the loose silver which he stole besides, and the police runners were after him, I made him a present of the whole concern rather than prove, as might easily be the case, his ruin both in body and soul. And coming home to my own house last night after attending my Lady Marjoram for a fit of the megrims, the result of bad temper and possibly strong waters combined, when I found a little scoundrel, the exact image of myself when I was at his age, asleep on my doorstep, I fixed a silver piece in his hand that he might make sure of a breakfast. That summer night in the air would do him no harm; and I am sure he would sleep far more soundly than I, who sleep at the best times only indifferently. Likewise our good curate, at St. Anne's Church-in-the-Fields, did speak very well yesterday se'nnight on his fair text, "God bless the lads," to which, with all my soul, I say Amen. And perhaps the Christian folk of London may one day take it into their heads that they ought to, in what way they can, bless the lads, and not let them run wild in London gutters until they may be old enough to be strung up a dozen at a time at Newgate.

For going back as far as I can remember, there was a big fellow standing over me with a rope's end, belabouring me with it as hard as he could, while I was roaring out lustily; and small wonder thereat. He told me that he would give me a flogging that I should remember as long as I lived. And therein spake he truly. For I have forgotten many other things; but that flogging do I yet remember. It may be that I have con-

fused one flogging with another—and such a many of them might well cause confusion—but anyhow, my first remembrances of things were all floggings. I used to console myself by thinking that when I was a man I too would flog the small boys, and I promised them plenty of it in my own mind—but now I have learned to think very differently of the thrashing business, and am perhaps now too pining therein; for had I exercised my cane on that boy Jem, he might not have stolen my silver goblet. The ship in which I was a cabin-boy was a slaver, and the negro slaves were whipped with pickled rods pretty often; but I think no nigger had caught it as much as I did. I was sorry for the little negro boys too, who, as I was told by the overseer, came away from vast meadows, or savannahs, and dark forests and rushing streams, to be cooped up in the hold of a vessel and thus sent, either to work or to sicken in a strange land. But the overseer, who, though a morose, was a godly man, told me that it was all right, and that they were only executing the curse of Ham. I never thought that, like the little negro lad, I should have an experience of rushing streams and dusky woods. Of my mother I had no knowledge. They say that a sailor has a wife in every port; and I have had reason to believe, from inquiries made in after life, that my mother was one of several such wives of my father's. It is not a pleasant reflection certainly; but a great many people have to swallow unpleasant reflections. My father had been mate on this slaver; but he died before even the bad character of the slaver was exchanged for something worse. I do not say that I had spent the whole of my life on board ship; for I remember going into port after port, and being in strange places, and even going up a bit into strange countries. But, generally speaking, even when in port I was the cabin-boy, who had to stop on board and do the ship's dirty work. Only I had one companion, the faithfullest of all companions, my dog Fido, the wagging of whose tail was the kindest salutation which I had received for many a long day; and I daresay that the angel who sits up aloft to take care of poor Jack has a kindly glance for poor Jack's dog, who is often quite as good as poor Jack himself.

How it was that our slaver became a buccaneer I do not know. Only I suppose that there is a natural tendency of bad things to go on to worse. That slaving business was cruel and bad; indeed, I do not know that piracy itself could be much worse. Captain Lacy was as hardened and bad a pirate as ever hoisted the black flag on the high seas. And many comical and many woeful adventures were those which we had in those days. One day we overtook a merchant ship, whose crew consisted entirely of Quakers, their families, and dependents. They were on their way to some outlandish colony in the northern part of America, where one, William Penn, the chief of that sect, had a powerful lot of land, now called for him, as I have heard tell, Pennsylvania. Certainly there never was such a peaceable sort of gentry. The worst weapon on board was the captain's umbrella. There was neither dirk nor pistol, gun nor cutlass in the whole ship. They threw open all their chests in the most obliging way; and if we gave them an occasional kick they appeared to like it rather than otherwise. We put them all in a long boat, with a compass and plenty of bread and water; and I think their course was a pretty straight one, and they would get at last to the mainland.

Once we met a ship with a fair cargo and some passengers, and among them was a man whom they called a reverend and a clergyman. Capt. Lacy was hugely pleased to make his acquaintance. Indeed, so mad a humour seized him that nothing would satisfy him but he would keep this person on board ship as his domestic chaplain. He explained to the reverend gentleman that he would only have to read prayers to the ship's company on a Sunday morning and mix the punch for the crew every night. This was the first time that I ever heard such queer words as "prayers" and "Sunday," which to my young and depraved mind conveyed no idea whatever. But the parson had a prejudice against the profession of piracy, and refused to have anything to do with such a godless lot. This was another new and unmeaning word to me. Captain Lacy was very angry, and declared that he should walk the plank; but the chaplain that was to have been said, that of the two he would much prefer that. Whether it was the boldness of the man or a sort of superstition with Captain Lacy I know not, but, like the Quakers, the reverend gentleman, with some others, was allowed to make his escape, if only the winds and the waves would permit him. Once or twice I have seen the ceremony performed of making people walk the plank. And, O, miserable wretch that I was, I used to laugh at the people who had to do so. At first I thought it the greatest fun imaginable. They brought out a long plank and put it over the side of the ship. Then the poor wretch walked along the plank, and had to keep on walking until he walked himself into the sea. If he walked slowly—and some of them certainly took it leisurely—we touched them up behind with a marling-spike. But one day I saw a white face in the water, and the arms thrown up with a shriek. I used to wake at night, seeing that ghastly upturned face. Captain Lacy said that it was all nonsense; all men were our enemies, and we were enemies to all; what was their lot to-day might be ours to-morrow; that a brave man could only die once; that it was a just battle between rich and poor, which was going on all the world over; that the

conquered went to the wall or into the salt water, which came to the same thing, and it was quite fair and right that they should. I thank God that I have now been taught something better than this, and that if men must needs fight, after we have fought it is our duty to tend and succour the wounded.

Then things were very ill for me. How should they not be ill? Ignorant, beaten, ill-treated, half-starved at times, without conscience, without example,—I tremble to think how near human nature came to the bestial. The men about me were like wild beasts, and I was like a wild beast myself. How I ever came to know my letters I do not understand, but somehow or other I pieced them together, for both a horn-book and a song-book were found among the men. Also I knew how to navigate the ship, and I knew all the principal stars in the heavens, if I might so speak, and many of the strange, precious, beautiful things of the sea and shore, so that if there was a window left open in my darkened soul it was from Nature herself that I received the little light of which my soul was capable.

And one day there came upon me the vision of an angel from heaven.

We had been in chase of a merchant-man, which, indeed, had given us no little trouble. It was a long, dark, low-lying ship, and, as we understood to our cost, it was a rakish craft and carried a carronade. When we hoisted the black flag it sent some shots, which whistled through our sails, and the next discharge knocked over our boatswain. Then there was the usual and more than usual dreadful fight. The pirates boarded the merchant-man, and there was a deadly fight with pistols and cutlasses, in which, as usual, we proved victorious. There would have been a massacre of all on board the captured craft, but at the last victorious onset Captain Lacy fell down wounded, and, as we all thought, mortally. Then, when at last the struggle was over, and it was about time to make the captured crew walk the plank, except some few tall lusty fellows whom we would receive into our company if they would be content to come, one dark, grave-looking man stepped forth and said that he thought he could heal our captain and some others who were grievously hurt. And let me here say, before I go on with this strange recital, that he did attend our captain with extraordinary zeal and devotion until he made him right, at least for that season. The only wonder is that, having such a villain and scourge of the seas in his power, he did not use the chance and put the lancet into his side, or give him some opiate so strong that he would never wake from the sleep again; for the world would well be rid of a ruffian for whom there would be no place among men who live by toil. But it is for the precious life that we have to watch, the mystic lamp of the body, and, irrespective of all other considerations, to do as much for the sinner as for the saint.

I had pressed forward into the cabin of the prize, and, in a retiring cabin beyond the cabin, there arose before me, as it were, the embodied dream of a celestial glory. Hitherto I had only seen swarthy men and dusky negroes, and very rarely on shore a few strange rough-looking women such as these. But here was a tall fair child of about fourteen, with face white and red, and soft eyes like stars, and golden hair flowing down to her waist. And it seemed to me that I saw a heavenly apparition, such as the picture of the Madonna, which I had often seen, but never so young and fair as this. I was struck breathless, and dared not so much as lift up my eyes to this splendid vision. But I grovelled at her feet in darkness and kissed the hem of her white raiment. But when the men came down with loud oaths and fierce eyes, then I drew dirk and pistol, and, as they knew that, desperadoes though they were, there was none more desperate than I, I took her by the hand and led her forth into the open air on deck.

It seemed that she was the daughter of the doctor, our prisoner. And this was a good thing both for her and for him; for the only man among us who had any knowledge in the healing of wounds and the use of medicaments was killed in that fire of the hostile carronade of which I spoke, and this doctor saved several of our lives, besides Captain Lacy's. And I do believe that Lacy had some little touch of gratefulness, though little enough, as will be seen. But some of the men were very fond of the doctor, who did them much good, and took care of his meat and drink, and he and his daughter were allowed to sit quiet and apart. And as for me, it was as when, upon a very dark night in these southern skies, there comes some lustrous star, or the moon herself shines forth in soft gentle light. I was the bond-servant, the slave, the attendant spirit of these two, and the service was my delight. I followed them and watched them as my faithful little dog followed and watched me. And the old bad nature seemed to go out and a new good nature to diffuse itself, and for me there was a new heaven and a new earth. No thought of human love passed my mind, but, like the sailor before the Madonna, I could only wonder and worship.

Then when we had sailed the seas for some time—and it had so happened without either a fight or a storm—the captain made certain proposals to the doctor that he should cast in his lot with them, and he would give him the best share in the ship, only second to his own. "And when your Euphemia grows up into a woman," he said, for such was the angel's name, "I will marry her, and it need not be so very long." At which I could have plunged my dirk into his heart, but had only to shake and tremble. And

when the doctor solemnly abjured all the bloody business of a pirate ship, and said that he and his daughter would rather die, the captain swore back that die he might, and his girl, too, as many others had before them perished at his hands; which evil thing, indeed, he would have wrought if he had had his own wicked will. But the men gathered round, and would not suffer him, though he had been ten times captain, to murder his benefactors and theirs. For aboard a pirate ship a captain is not more than first among equals, except when he shows himself more strong and skillful of hand and brain, and is chiefly chosen captain because no society, even the very vilest, can hold together and be a society at all unless there is some principle of order and coherence. But the captain well knew what it was within his power to do according to all the rules of pirate law. He could not tell him to walk the plank, but he could tell him to walk into a boat with two or three others of the conquered crew, now recovered from their wounds. And he might just as well have told them to walk the plank, for the wind was rising and the waves were getting bigger, and there was a whisper among us, who knew the look of the sky, that there would be a hurricane that night. And O, how I longed to get into that boat myself, though it might sail away into death and darkness; and I stored the boat privately with everything of my own, everything I could find that might be of help to them—water, bread, wine, my precious knife, and my song-book. And at the very last moment I would have leaped into the boat after them, but cruel Lacy held me back with an iron grip, and dashed me senseless on the deck.

When I was roused there were sea-horses out—that is, the white waves were everywhere cresting with foam. I strained my eyes against the darkness, but there was no sign of the boat tossing in the trough of the waters. And all that night the wind rose and rose, and in the morning it was a perfect hurricane. And there was no doubt in our minds that so frail a craft could never live in so fierce a sea. And the vengeance of the Lord fell upon Captain Lacy very soon after that cruel deed. Though he had escaped the effects of that dangerous wound, yet he was suffered not to live; for somehow we lost our reckoning, and the same storm urge us onwards to our destruction. Then the "y" came "Breakers ahead!" and presently we heard the sharp, sudden crashing sound that told us that we were upon rocks. The ship was taken up and bumped again and again, and breaking its back in many places, soon became an utter wreck. The rocks were very close to the mainland, and such of us as were good swimmers and also had good luck were able to get ashore. Among these was Captain Lacy himself, but with arms and legs broken through being beaten upon the rocks, and, as was feared, with internal injuries as well, for he died, making no sign, and without hope either for this world or for any other. And so he passed away, having as far as in him lay committed murder on the last day of his life.

A few of us who were left found ourselves on the borders of a great river falling into the mighty ocean. And there was abundant fish in the stream and also deer in the forests; likewise in those forests there were wild beasts like unto tigers and leopards. For a long time it was only by keeping watch-fires and taking it in turn to keep guard that we were delivered from the fear and peril of the wild beasts. The country was most beautiful; we walked, as it were, through endless colonnades of pillared trees, and there were birds of marvellous plumage; and as for flowers, the world seemed one vast garden-house, or conservatory, as the fashionable word now is. But the country lying low and by the river mouth, there was much bad air, whereby first one and then another of our scanty fellowship sickened and died. And, indeed, one of them lost his life in a very piteous way. For he had gone out hunting, and he came not back within a day or two, at which we did not wonder, for at such times the hunter will make a hut in the forest for the convenience of securing venison. And we found him at the end of a week, nearly naked, and with all his food exhausted, hardly to be known by us, being covered with millions of insects who were hastening his death of starvation. Having travelled far by the banks of the river, we hastened forward to some mountains that were before us that we might have better air and greater security. And being come hither we saw still greater mountains before and around, and one conspicuous great peak that cut into the heavens as though it had been a saw. And here we met some friendly Indians of mild eyes and voices, who were willing to be kind. They were not the same as the negroes, of whom I had seen so much in early years on the slaver, but the old familiarity with these negroes helped me to understand the friendly Indians. They gave us to know that if for five days we followed a path that led among the ascending hills, we should come to men who were of the like colour as ourselves, and who spoke as we did. These words rejoiced us greatly, and in all good faith we followed the path shown to us. But that journey proved most wearisome and adventurous. Both game and water failed entirely, and but for some dried grain and a little occasional fruit, which we tasted with much trembling, lest it should be poisonous, we had failed. Indeed one of our company turned back to join himself to the retreating Indians, and I saw him no more.

One day, it was the last of them, a great sorrow and faintness of heart came over me. Johanne, the last of my companions, had fallen