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From the Friendship's Offering.

THE TWO LIGHT-HOUSES.*

A TALE OF THE OCEAN.

By the old Sailor.

"There is a Providence that shapes our ends,
Rough hew them as we will."

Morning dawned—a bright and glorious morning; and the sun arose all red and beautiful, as if it had ascended from the coral caverns of the deep. And Annie looked out towards the ruins of the ancient castle in the village, and midway she saw the relentless Jonas approaching, accompanied by two men.

"Father!" called she to her aged parent, as he stood in the gallery, extinguishing the lights; "father, they are coming—they are coming—hasten to escape, or tell me what I can do to save you."

"No, my child," returned the grey-headed sire, as he met the fair girl in the lower apartment, "I will not shrink from the path of duty. A mightier hand than mine hath ordered this, and to its dispensations will I bend. Come hither, Annie, and take an old man's blessing ere we part."

"Oh, say not so, my father," replied the weeping girl, "wherever they may take you, I will follow, and share your lot." She knelt at the old man's feet; he placed his hands upon her head, his lips moved noiselessly, for the voice was in the heart.

The inexorable Jonas entered alone. "What is your decision?" inquired he, with well-assumed calmness.

"Will nothing but the destruction of one or both content you?" said David, as he raised Annie from her humble posture.

"I offer you safety not destruction," returned the other; "if you reject the former the latter is of your own seeking. You know the conditions."

"I do, Jonas, I do, and spurn them," answered David, firmly.

"This old body must soon be laid in the grave, but she has many years to live, and do you think that it would be worth the few days that may be yet spared to me—days of sorrow at the best—do you think they would be worth purchasing by the irretrievable misery, in which she must be plunged through falsifying her vow, and marrying one whom she could never love?"

"This is second childhood," returned Jonas; "you are getting in your dotage to talk of romantic love. But let me hear you, young woman," turning to Annie, "what have you determined on?"

"To follow the counsel of my father," replied she, boldly.

"I put my trust in God; he will deliver us from this evil."

"Fools! rash, headstrong fools!" vociferated Jonas, as he ground his feet upon the floor, while every limb shook with convulsive energy; "you force me to the deed; the officers of justice are waiting a short distance off, and only need my beck to lead one away a prisoner, and make a wretched outcast of the other; they will not tarry long even for me. Speak then, speak quickly, and his earnestness arose to agony—"save yourself, old man—Annie!"

"His voice became tremulous with emotion; "Annie, will you suffer those grey hairs to be exposed upon a scaffold to the gaze of thousands? Will you madly place a rope upon the neck round which your arms have so fondly clung?" He paused, but both, though dreadfully agitated, continued silent. "Fools, mad fools!—know you not that the charge is murder?"

"Ay, is it indeed so?" exclaimed one of the officers, entering and producing a horse pistol, "I suspected there was something more than a matter of smuggling or poaching, though, in his lordship's estimation, I am not quite sure but poaching is worse than murder; howsoever, I was right in my suspicion—and Ned," he added, addressing his comrade, "you see I've listened to some purpose; come, where's the darbies?"

"Great God, this is too horrible!" exclaimed Jonas, covering his eyes with his hand, and speaking audibly to himself, "I did not mean it to go thus far—intimidation was all that I intended; and now—"

"You're caught in your own trap, my man," added the officer, finishing the sentence as he locked the handcuffs upon the wrists of the unresisting David, "Ned hand over t'other pair," the assistant gave him the securities; "and now, Mr. Jonas, you see we happens to know you for all your disguise—just hold out your manleys, for I must put the bracelets upon you both."

"Upon me, fellow!" returned Jonas, haughtily, and prepar-

ing for resistance, "dare to lay a finger upon me, and I'll prosecute you with the utmost rigour of the law."

"Whew!" whistled the man, with the utmost unconcern, "here's pretty waste of a tragedy speech. But come, sir, take it quietly; and don't put me to the unpleasant necessity of being uncivil; you may go to law afterwards, but, take my word for it, I shall secure you now, either dead or alive. You are, perhaps, an *accomplish* in the murder. You know what I mean—so I shall kill two birds with one stone."

Jonas saw, in an instant, the awkward position in which his reckless impatience had placed him, and making a determined spring for the door, he knocked down the officer, but was himself instantly prostrated by a blow from the staff of his assistant, Ned; the handcuffs were clapped upon him, and he was a prisoner. They quitted the light-house, and Annie locking the door, hastened to support the steps of her wretched father. The brothers were kept apart during their walk to the magistrate's, where they underwent a private examination; the result was, the committal of David on a charge of murder, and the detention of Jonas for want of securities to give evidence.

It happened to be within only two days of the assizes for the county, and on the third day from the period of his arrest, David was placed at the bar, to be tried for his life. Jonas had been promised indemnity for himself if he would reveal the truth, and the narrow-minded villain, regardless of consequences to his unhappy relative, saw only the prospect of Annie being thrown into his power, and compelled to a union which she hated. The circumstance of one brother appearing against another for a crime involved in considerable mystery, drew together a crowded court: and when the venerable man held up his horny hand, above a head whitened by the snows of age, a strong feeling of commiseration pervaded every breast, which was not lessened by the deep tone of his voice, as he solemnly pleaded "Not guilty, my lord;" and many a fervent prayer was breathed to heaven that his asseveration might be true.

A death-like stillness prevailed when the council for the crown opened the charge; breathless attention sat on every countenance as he proceeded, and when he closed his address to the jury, a look of sickly apprehension was manifest among the crowd, and every eye seemed as if trying to catch a neighbour's thoughts.

From this speech, which it is unnecessary to repeat, the court became aware that "the prisoner was indicted for having, on a certain day, about eighteen years previous, murdered an unfortunate stranger who had been cast ashore from a wreck at the same time with an infant child—that he had possessed himself of valuable property belonging by right of law to the lord of the manor; and that the girl named Annie Bligh was the child thus saved."

The first witness called was Jonas Bligh, who gave the following evidence:

On the night in question he was engaged with a gang of smugglers running a cargo across the beach into the haven, and went to the lower light-house to obtain his brother's assistance. There had been a heavy gale of wind, and it still blew fresh from the eastward, with a full sea running into the bay. He had found David on the point, dragging ashore a large piece of wreck that almost mastered him, but with the help of witness, they succeeded in getting it up; it seemed to be part of a vessel's bows with the fore-castle still remaining, and, lashed to the timbers, was the body of a man, a small chest, and other luggage, and loose upon the shattered piece of deck, a noble Newfoundland dog. They attempted to remove the articles, but the dog would not allow them to be touched; they laid the body on the beach and life was not extinct; the heart beat, for he held his hand upon it, and there was pulsation at the wrist. As the tide was flowing it was necessary to keep hauling the wreck in shore to prevent its being carried away; but their united strength was not sufficient to effect this, and Jonas quitted his brother to procure the aid of one of the gang. But Jonas had been drinking, and the liquor had overpowered him; so that some time elapsed before his return, and then he found the wreck had drifted away. David was in the light-house, and his wife chafing the limbs of an infant, apparently about nine months old. He stated, that finding he could not hold on, at the risk of his life he had cut the chest adrift, and got it ashore. Without waiting for any one to arrive, he had, in the presence of his wife, broke open the lid, and found the infant then under process of resuscitation. Astonished at the occurrence, he remained a short time, and then hurried to where he left the body, but wreck, and dog, and man

were gone! "This," continued the witness, "was all that I could get out of him; he swore that he had obtained no plunder: but from that time his condition was bettered and he became an altered man."

"What further testimony can you give?" inquired the counsel; "remember the solemn obligation of your oath, and conceal nothing. Where did you first go to when you returned with your companion?"

"To the spot upon the point, where I had left the prisoner," replied the witness.

"And did you perceive nothing extraordinary?" asked the counsel.

"I was groping about the shingle where the body had lain and fell," returned the witness, "that is, slipped down."

"Well, and what then?" continued the counsel, evidently aiming at some particular point.

"On getting up I observed a dark patch upon my frock," reluctantly replied Jonas, "and it was wet."

"Was the night light or gloomy?" interrupted the judge.

"Dark, very dark, my lord," replied the man under examination, "there was not a star to be seen."

"And do you pretend that you could distinguish a stain, for that is, I suppose what is meant? do you pretend to tell the jury that, on so dark a night, and yourself not sober, you could see a mark on your frock?" interrogated the judge, with some asperity.

A murmur of approbation was for an instant bezzed among the crowd—hearts beat quicker, and more joyous—hope, for a moment, irradiated many a face, but all was heavily crushed when the witness answered, "The light-house, my lord; we were full in its brightest glare."

The judge was silenced, and the counsel proceeded.

"Now, tell his lordship and the jury what were those marks that appeared upon your frock?"

The answer was anticipated by the court—judge, jury, and spectators knew there could be no other; yet, when the witness solemnly answered, "Blood," a thrill of horror went through every soul, and all eyes were bent upon the hoary-headed prisoner.

"That is all I have to ask him for the present, my lord," said the counsel for the prosecution, addressing the bench.

"Is the prisoner defended?" inquired the judge; and the simple but important monosyllable "No!" was returned.

"Then, prisoner, it is my duty to ask you whether you have any questions to put to the witness?"

Deep attention was drawn to the aged man, and expectation was alive that something would be elicited in cross-examination, but this was changed to grievous disappointment when David calmly replied, "None, my lord, he has spoken the truth."

The next witness was called—the smuggler who had accompanied Jonas to the point. He deposed to that fact, and corroborated the evidence of his predecessor relative to the marks of blood, as in raising up his comrade, a portion of the stains had been imparted to himself; moreover, he had found a large clasp knife; (a thrilling shudder went through the crowd) "and it lay right in a pool of blood."

"What became of that knife?" inquired the prosecuting counsel.

"I buried it," returned the man, "but may I proceed in my own way—there is something to be told before I come to that."

"Proceed," said the judge, "but do not wander from the point—tell us where you buried the knife."

"I will, my lord," answered the witness, and then continued, "I left Jonas Bligh at the light-house, and returned to the gang, and when we had worked the crop—"

What do you mean by working the crop?" inquired the judge, "speak plainly, man."

"My lord," said the council, modestly, "I presume he means that they had carried off and secured their illicit cargo—is it not so, witness?"

"Yes, sir," replied the smuggler, "and when we had worked the crop, I returned to the Low Light determined to watch what David would do. Jonas was gone, and in about an hour, I saw the prisoner come stealthily out, and he went some distance above high-water mark, and raised a dead body on his shoulder." A half suppressed groan was uttered by the audience, and every look was bent upon the old man to see what effect this testimony would produce. To the surprise of all, there was a smile upon

* Concluded from our last.