

SKETCHES OF NEGRO CHARACTER.

NO. I.—CAPTAIN PETER.

CAPTAIN PETER is the master of a wherry trading between Port Royal and Kingston, conveying both passengers and cargo. The distance is about six miles; his passengers, "bum-boat men and women"; his cargo an odd barrel of flour, a puncheon of rum, or a few turtles. His ship is a noble vessel, about 30 feet in length, and capable of carrying more "human freight" than what the Board of Trade allows many a sea-going steamer. The crew over which he exercises sway numbers three men and a *frail excuse for a boy*.

Peter Dounel, or Captain Peter, as he is called, is perhaps the most striking figure of all the clamorous wherry-men on the itinerary, having withal a hearty naval swagger, his left cheek protruded with a bolus of the leaf that cheers but does not inebriate those who are used to it; the inevitable rings in his ears, and a decided nautical cut to his jib, which, I suppose, might refer to his clothes. He has never been known to wear boots, but rather inclines to a pair of leather soles strapped over his insteps after the manner of ancient sandals. He is often observed sporting a magnificent cane, the gift of a distinguished naval friend of his; his watch, the possession of which makes him greatly envied, is a vast source of pride to himself, and does duty far oftener than necessity calls for.

In stature he is about the middle height, short, burly, and powerful as an ox, capable of sending a barrel of flour or potatoes spinning into the boat, when he condescends to assist his lazy crew. His face is certainly not handsome, it being spoiled by a cross look which knits his features habitually, unless he happens to be among a party of his intimate cronies, or unless he is honored by the presence of a white gentleman who craves passage with him. Then does his face lighten up, losing its set hardness, and he becomes a pleasant, jovial man. His wit, though crude, is original, and, in general, good. His language, poor fellow, smacks not of grammar to any extent, and he even stoops to drag in a stray word of Spanish here and there to give *tone* to his discourse and to demonstrate his acquaintance with what he calls "dem furin langwidge." This generally subdues his crew, who consider him a "larnified man," and vastly superior to themselves. To them he is lord absolute, never permitting himself to be addressed by them without his title "Captain." How they jump to do his bidding, knowing that when required to speak twice about the same item of duty he generally brims to overflowing with true nautical *blue lights*, overwhelming them with many powerful adjectives and slight assistances in the way of ends of ropes, all unpleasant to the ear and to the delicate sense of touch. He is exceedingly jealous of his craft, and truly she sails well. He has been involved in many a "tipperary" to uphold his honor among his fellow "captains" ashore.

Captain Peter is a great theorist, and occurrences which are talked of in his hearing are turned over in his mind and brought with pride to his passengers of the next trip. Once when a comet was the subject of speculation as approaching the earth's orbit somewhat, the captain astonished his friends by propounding the theory that it will certainly *strike* the earth, knocking off a piece, and thus disturbing the equilibrium, haul us into space, the earth itself perhaps becoming a comet. On being asked where it will get its tail, he clinched it by saying, "Dem volcanoes would make quite big enough fire to make a good long tail." Now, this is startling, but not so much so as his theory and belief with regard to the return of departed souls to their old haunts on the earth. He claims to have seen several ghosts during his career, notably one of a naval officer who while in hospital used to occupy a seat in a shady spot in the garden, and who, after death, used regularly to return at his old "siesta" hour and sit and smoke in the same calm reflective manner he was wont to do during his sickness. He furthermore claims that there are naval officers who can corroborate his extraordinary statement.

Peter makes use of the most astonishing phrases during his remarks, one of the most frequent being "and what was the masterpiece" (meaning *consequence*), and this he would lay in at every opportune and inopportune moment. He also uses "I don't consarn wid it," or "I don't business wid it," (I have nothing to do with it.) His mildest and favorite oaths are "My guns" and "My mercy"; his more powerful ones we refrain from placing here. Like the generality of negroes, he lays not by for the rainy day, preferring to let to-morrow take care of itself, being able to procure always his dietary of bread and fish, and not being overburdened with family cares. His coin slips away easily, and he enjoys life in his own fashion, having a never-failing faith in "next v'yage."

COLLEGE NEWS.

THE PRINCIPAL'S RECEPTION.

FRIDAY, January the eleventh, was a great day at Queen's. An energetic committee, appointed by the Alma Mater Society, had completed their arrangements for a grand reception to Principal Grant, and students and trustees were about to present to him addresses of welcome and congratulation. And certainly success crowned their efforts. Never before has such a royal welcome been given by Queen's, and indeed never before has such a royal welcome been merited by anyone. The great question was how best to give vent to the enthusiasm which filled the heart of every student, and after mature deliberation a torch-light procession was decided upon, to take place immediately before the presentation of addresses. Accordingly, at seven o'clock in the evening, over four hundred of the students assembled at the college, and armed with about two hundred