



EXTRAORDINARY MURDER.

We copy the following most atrocious and unparalleled murder, committed near Coimbra, from a late number of the *Reviszt*, as a specimen of depravity under the cloak of religion. It confirmed, it is one of the most powerful examples on record of the dreadful mischief that the want of moral education can produce in the human mind.

At a place thinly inhabited in the vicinity of Coimbra, two individuals lived, man and wife, whose only son (we shall call him Henry in our history) went abroad at an early age in search of fortune, as he could not expect to meet with it under the roof of his parents. Fifteen years had elapsed since his absence, and during this time no ship arrived from Para without bringing a letter from this excellent son, nor one single month passed but the payment of a sum he had settled upon his parents was duly remitted to them, through the Post-office, by his correspondents in Lisbon; this sum, however, was not great. Ferdinand and Isabel (we shall likewise give these names in our history to the old parents) were no longer able to work, old age paralysing their limbs; and as they were suffering from chronic illness, their wants caused them to be deeply in debt. They were sitting one night at the corner of their hut, when the sky suddenly darkened, they could see the lightning thro' the crevices of their hut, and hear the hurricane whistle so hard, that their badly constructed hut was nearly shaken to the ground. They thought in their humble corner, before a miserable light of addressing the Almighty on so horrid a night, with a *Pater* praying for relief for those unfortunate men who were at that moment sailing on the ocean, and another for those who were travelling on that occasion, without being able to find any shelter. After performing this devotion they began to tell their beads in the rosary. Scarcely had they begun their prayers, when they imagined they heard a knock at the door, but the thunder was so very loud that they were not sure they heard right; they continued, and a double knock followed, which they could distinctly hear. Isabel rose from her seat and asked who was there without opening the door. "A strayed traveller," was the answer. "Allow me, good people, to shelter myself from this storm.—I am wet to the skin, and as cold as ice. I beg for an hour's hospitality, and I shall afterwards continue my journey." Isabel looked at Ferdinand with an eye of suspicion; but the old man gave her to understand that he wished her to open the door without delay. The rough wooden bar was removed, and on the door being opened a gentleman presented himself, begging to be allowed to enter. "We have only these two rooms on the ground floor," said the old man, "your horse must share the same accommodation." "May God reward you venerable people," said the gentleman, and walked in, tied his horse to one of the poles and the door was bolted again. The gentleman then taking off his hat and cloak, proved to be a well made, tall, handsome young man. The fuel was already light, and a good fire made to warm the traveller, and to dry his clothes, and the three sat round it; no one could have supposed such gay conversation as ensued, could be consistent with the horrors of so dreadful a night. The young gentleman gave an account of his journey, and how he left Leiria to proceed to Coimbra, where he had never been before. The old pair told him that he was not far from the city, but as it was too late in the night, if he would put up with one night's bad accommodation, and lay upon straw, it would be better for him to depart next morning. The thunder-storm did not abate, and the traveller willingly accepted their offer.—So lively he found the conversation of his venerable hosts, as to continue talking until the cock crew, when they all retired to rest. The candle continued burning; the young gentleman took off his embroidered jacket waistcoat, and a belt which he carried round his waist, and throwing himself upon a *bundle of straw*, he fell asleep immediately, overcome with fatigue. Isabel gazed upon him a long while in silence, but what could

her arched eye-brows and the contracted muscles of her face mean? Who can tell? most likely some hideous thought running across the mind. She came nearer to Ferdinand, and muttered these words in a low tone, "we are poor, and very much in debt." "True," answered the old man, "we shall be forced to pay six moidores within the following three days, and we have no other resource but selling our hut." "How lucky some men are! this lad carries a belt full of gold. If we possessed so large a sum we might live in peace all the rest of our life," said the wife. "You are right," was the answer, "but it is late, go and lay down." "I am not sleepy," said she, and a profound silence followed, which the old woman interrupted, continuing thus, "do you not hear him snore? Your spade is not far off, and if—" "Hold your tongue, wretch," said Ferdinand, putting his hand to her mouth, "lay down, and go to sleep." "Very well, I shall lay down," was the answer.—She did so, and in about half an hour afterwards listened, and found both her husband and guest were fast asleep. She rose, removed the candle to the inner room, and stuck it against the wall. Again she gazed both at the belt and the traveller, and afterwards ran for the spade, and so dexterously levelled two blows on the head of the guest as to kill him without being able to speak a word, but died, uttering a groan. At this noise Ferdinand awoke, and ran full of fright to witness the horrible scene. It exhibited to the old man the youth murdered by the old woman, the straw saturated with blood, and gold money falling from the belt. To describe the agitation of the old man would be impossible, but the mischief was done, and the only remedy they had left was to hide his body. They both proceeded to a neighbouring field, buried the unfortunate victim, and returned to the hut to burn the straw, in order to do away with any object which could lead to the discovery of this horrible crime. No one saw the traveller go into the house, consequently there could be no fear of his being missed. However, after ten days having elapsed, another stranger knocked at the door of their hut, inquiring after Henry. They answered him that he was in the Brazils. The stranger replied that he had returned with him from Para a fortnight before, and parted at Leiria, where Henry would not stop a day, as he was eager to go and embrace his parents, whose dwelling he was informed was there. Ferdinand fell senseless to the ground; the stranger, suspecting that something was wrong, sent to the magistrate, who was conducted by Ferdinand to the very grave in which he had buried a son MURDERED BY HIS OWN MOTHER!

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DUNCAN AND HIS VICTORY.

It was on Monday, the 9th October, 1797, than an affair of business called me to Yarmouth, in the county of Norfolk, and about four o'clock of a most brilliant afternoon I first caught sight of the Roads. I have not forgotten, and I never shall forget the thrill with which I unexpectedly beheld a noble fleet of men of war under weigh, and sailing majestically out from their anchorage.—It was that of Admiral Duncan, who, as I afterwards learned, had received information that De Winter had left the Texel, and was going forth to contend with him for the empire of the sea. I gazed with a glow of exultation which youth only can know, and almost identified the thoughts, action, and being of the Commander. To have been that man, I would have dared death in any or in all forms. To direct the thunders of that squadron seemed to me the most inspiring, the most glorious of all conditions.

The fleet sailed on, and I gazed till darkness shut it out from my ken. The squadron met and fought, and Duncan was victorious. He returned to Yarmouth Roads, and I hastened back to the coast to renew my novel sensations, or as I anticipated, to exult them. O! what a change.

Covering almost identically the same tract of ocean, there lay at anchor the conqu-

rors and the conquered; the first ship (that met my sight, was (as I afterwards learned,) the Ardent, her masts reduced to stumps—her sides perceptibly, even from the shore, pierced with shot like a cullender. The other vessels, at near or remote intervals, all partook of the same character of destruction—motionless, except for the dull monotonous heaving of the swell—silent—mournfully inactive; the rigging hanging in disorder, the masts sticks, the decks bare. I expected triumph, without having defined, even to myself, what that triumph was to be. I found a scene of desolation that, like the "thick darkness" of the Egyptians, was felt but could not be described. It was a dull cold day; the wind moaned rather than blew. I became feelingly persuaded that even victory is but vanity.

When I entered the town, all was mourning. A considerable number of seamen belonging to the port had sailed in the fleet, and in that day of slaughter not a few were killed and wounded. Nor could the spectacle of landing several hundreds of these poor fellows, with the sadly accompanying preparations for their burials or their attendance, be, without diffusing a melancholy over every face one met.

Twelve months after this happened the Battle of Nile, and it was celebrated by Admiral Duncan, and the officers of the English and Russian fleets, which then lay in Yarmouth Roads, on the 11th of October, the anniversary of Lord Duncan's engagement. The town of Yarmouth was illuminated, and the party dined together at one of the hotels. Chance led me there, and the Mayor took me with him to the dinner; where it happened that, there being no other person in plain clothes in the room, I was placed at the left hand of the Admiral. He was, without exception, the finest man in his person I ever beheld, and the lines of the song written to describe the battle—

"The Venerable was the ship that bore his flag to fame,
And venerable ever be the veteran Duncan's name!"

did not exaggerate the reverential respect his noble features and majestic stature awakened in the mind. Venerable he surely was; nor can there be found a phrase that more perfectly responds to the feelings which arose in the mind from his figure, deportment, and conversation. Imagine a man upwards of six feet two inches in height (I think he was six feet four,) with limbs of proportionate frame and strength. His features were nobly beautiful, his forehead high and fair, and his hair as white as snow. His movements were all stately, but unaffected, and his manner easy, though dignified. I scarcely ever experienced so deep a sense of personal insignificance, as when presented to this magnificent specimen of human nature. I was a slim youth, though rather above the middle stature, and deficient neither in strength nor activity in the ordinary acceptation of the phrase; but when he took my hand between his, which reached to my elbow, and bent over me, I felt perfectly awed and overshadowed by the majesty of his proportions—and that if he was only a man, I could be but a much lower creature, though permitted to bear the same generic appellation.

Well, the repast proceeded much like other entertainments. There was, however, I thought, a marked difference in the heartiness (not of appetite, but of manner) which peculiarly appertained to the participants.—While all was enjoyment, there yet seemed a total abandonment of self to the general gaiety. The cloth drawn, the Admiral gave "the King" with the same heartiness. Any stranger to our national customs would have caught the spirit of attachment that seemed to rise with the name. Loyalty is a common and I fear, a cant word; but this was a true and heartfelt inspiration of all that a sailor loves and looks up in the Royal Sovereign, his master—the father and friend of his people, as well as the majestic political fiction of the wearer of the crown. They did not drink the health in ordinary phrase "with enthusiasm," but with the steady resolution they would have cheered one going into action—it was a cheer to denote the devotion

in life and in death. From that moment the joyousness of the company was up, and every man filled his glass and repeated the toast and the hurrah like one whose whole heart was cheerfully engaged, and who had no concern beyond that of the moment. One of the most delightful traits of the nature of the gallant old man was, that he took the earliest opportunity to turn towards his home and his affections. "Gentlemen," said he, "I'll give you the best woman in the world; I'll give you my own wife—Lady Duncan." The roof of the room shook with the cheers, and I saw the veteran's eyes become moist with the tears of fond recollection. He then gave "Lady Anne Hope" (the wife of the Captain of the fleet, his Vice-President,) "who," he said, "was as good a woman as Lady Duncan;" not forgetting to repeat, however, that she "was the best woman in the world." So purely natural were the thoughts and manners of this good old seaman.

I used the opportunity his affability afforded me, to inquire some particulars of his state of feeling before and after the action.—He said he went upon deck about six o'clock having had as sound a night's rest as he had ever enjoyed in the whole course of his life. The morning was brilliant with a brisk gale; and he added that he never remembered to have been exalted by so exhilarating a sensation, as the sight of the two fleets afforded him. He said, however, that the cares of his duties were too onerous to allow him to think of himself; his whole mind was absorbed in observing, and meeting the occasion by orders—all other feelings were lost in the necessity of action. The night after the battle he never closed his eyes—his thoughts were still tossing in the turmoil through which he had passed; but his most constant reflection was a profound thankfulness to God for the event of the engagement. All this was said in so perfectly natural a tone, and with a manner so simple, that its truth was impressed at once, together with veneration for a man who could regard thus humbly an event in which so much of human life had been sacrificed, so much of personal honour, and so much of national glory and advantage attained. So few words never filled me with such perfect esteem and respect.

When the moment arrived for the departure of Lord Duncan, the scene became so silently impressive as the former part of the evening had been tumultuously joyous.—The old man rose slowly from his seat, drew himself up to the full height, and in a few simple words announced that he must take his leave. A dead silence ensued. He turned to the Russian Admiral, and folding his vast arms around him, expressed his farewell in this solemn embrace. It was then that the voices of his companions in arms broke forth, and he was saluted with three such cheers, so hearty, so regular, so true, that they vibrated through every fibre of my frame. The sensation is even now revived as I write, though the best part of forty years have since passed to cool remembrance. The venerable man bent his head upon his breast for a moment, and seemed deeply impressed; he then bowed low and majestically—tucked his triangular gold laced hat under his huge arm, and walked gravely down the room to the door amidst a silence so intense, that his measured tread sounded like minute-drops. He stopped—he turned; he again reared himself to his noble height, took his hat from under his arm, waved it over his head, gave three loud, articulate, and distinct hurrahs—in return for the former salutation—placed it upon his noble brow, and closed the door. It was the last time I ever beheld that glorious imperator of all that is brave, and generous, and good,—but the vision still remains with me.

DELICACY IN CONVERSATION.—There is speaking well, speaking easily, speaking justly, and speaking seasonably. It is offending against the last to speak of entertainments before the indigent; of sound limbs and health before the infirm; of houses and lands before one who has not so much as a dwelling; in a word to speak of your prosperity before the miserable.