

OUR TABLE.

THE TRUCE; OR, ON AND OFF SOUNDINGS: A TALE
OF THE COAST OF MAINE; BY J. H. INGRAM.

INGRAM is certainly the most voluminous novel writer of the present day, or perhaps, of any other day; but he has written too much and too carelessly to be the best. Unfortunately, too, he has subjected himself to the imputation of having, in more than one instance, been guilty of plagiarism. This, however, is a crime—if we may so designate it—the more venial, inasmuch as he has only copied from himself. Of this, as we shall show anon, the work before us is a striking instance. It is also a melancholy proof that such voluminous authors are very apt to write themselves “out.”

The great Wizard of the North, Sir Walter Scott himself, could hardly help pleading guilty to the charge. “Morna of the Fitful Head” is but another name for “Meg Merrilies,” or of—we forget the name—another female character, of a similar description, in another work.

This can hardly be a matter of wonder to the reader, when he is informed, of what he is already, perhaps, aware, that more than forty tales, equivalent to at least twice that number of ordinary volumes, have already emanated from the prolific pen of the author now before us: enough, one would almost think, to occupy half a life even to copy.

Under such circumstances, we should certainly feel disposed to treat the fault we have found with some of his works with the greatest leniency, and extend to him—aye, and stretch a point in doing so—the most ample indulgence.

In making this confession, however, we beg leave to state, that there is a limit to our mercy—a boundary to our forbearance, which we must not, and cannot pass.

“The Truce; or, On and Off Soundings,” is, we believe, one of our author’s latest works, and is nearly a transcript of another, “Captain Kyd,” written about four years ago.

In the former, the scene is laid on the Coast of Maine, in the United States, during the truce which was entered into between the two belligerent powers—England and the United States—ere the conclusion of the war.

This truce, however, is so casually referred to, as to excite our surprise at its being placed in so prominent a position in the title of the Tale.

All that is said about it does not occupy much more than a dozen lines. Not that this is of much consequence; it is only a passing remark, suggested by the slight analysis of the work, necessarily entered into, for the purpose of comparing it with Captain Kyd.

In each, the hero of the story is a young man of great expectations, as to fortune and station in life.

They each fall in love with a young lady, the heroine of the respective tales.

They meet with some reverses of fortune, and become pirates.

These lovers have, each, a rival in a young and successful naval officer, with whom they, of course, come into collision, on the high seas.

Each pirate makes a daring attempt to get his “lady love” into his possession, and in both cases, the poor girls have a very narrow escape. This is brought about, principally, through the instrumentality of the rival lovers, the naval officers. In both cases, we are treated with a fearful and bloody fight between the parties, in which the latter are, of course, successful, while the former are taken and executed.

They were tried, of course; but whether before or after they were hung, the tale does not tell us.

The scene of the piracies of both is on the American coast.

These incidents constitute the principal and most prominent features of the two works.

In the minor characters there is, of course, a mighty difference, as well as in the circumstances in which they play their several parts.

In the principal characters, too, there is some variety.

In one tale, the rival officer belongs to the Navy of Great Britain; in the other, to that of the United States.

In both cases—but we need not pursue the matter further. We have said enough to establish our position, and satisfy our readers, that Mr. J. H. Ingram has written enough, and one tale too much, unless, in the versatility of his