

was with whom I had been thrown into this unexpected interview. He was dressed in "navy blue," with the broad shirt collar falling over that of his jacket, and was of course a seaman belonging to one of the ships of the Royal Navy of which there were then several in Halifax harbor. He was physically a fine specimen of his class—stalwart, handsome, and one would have said still in the prime of life were it not that, his blue cloth bonnet—on the band of which appeared the name of his ship—being pushed back from his forehead showed that the hair about his temples was grizzled almost to whiteness.

During this my momentary survey, the fierce expression I have mentioned and which was probably only the result of a sudden start, quite vanished from his countenance. He was the first to break silence. Politely saluting after the manner of sailors by a jerk of the forefinger towards the brim of his cap, he said, with something of scorn in his tone: "Why you're not going to shoot me, are you, sir?"

"Oh, no, Jack," replied I, feeling a little ashamed at having been almost surprised into an offensive attitude. "I do not wish to hurt you. But you have wandered far by yourself."

"Oh, I'm no deserter," said he, as if divining what I must admit was my momentary suspicion; but he said it in a tone which seemed to indicate that it was none of my business whether he was, or not,—as, of course, it was not. I glanced around the vicinity, with no very keen curiosity, but still to see if he had not companions near. Again he seemed to read my thought.

"I do n't belong to any broomin' party, either," said he. It seems that ships of war are, or used to be, in the habit of sending parties of men ashore on the east side of the Basin, to cut brush from the dwarf trees and shrubs growing there, from which to make coarse besoms used on board ship.

"It is all one to me, my good man," replied I, seeing no object in prolonging the interview; and my eyes again sought the ruined house. Again, as I gazed, I coned over to myself the above quoted lines of Hood's inadvertently uttering aloud the last verse:—

"The place is haunted!"

"Ay! and well it may be!" said my new acquaintance, who had drawn quite near to me since our interview commenced.

"Why, do you know anything about the place?" I asked.

"Ay!" replied he curtly, but in a tone which sounded as much like a groan as a reply to my question. His eyes became riveted, with a sort of troubled stare upon the old building.

"I should very much like to hear the history. Will you not tell it me?"

No reply. The deep-set eyes continued fixed as if gazing upon some clearly discerned object which was yet quite invisible to me. I repeated my request more than once. At length my mariner acquaintance seemed to arouse himself to a recollection of my presence and said:—

"Ay, haunted, indeed! Desolation—ruins—ruins like all the rest of us. You would like to hear the story, sir? And you a stranger, too. I feel as if it would relieve me here"—pressing his clenched hands, with a sort of convulsive movement, over the region of the heart—"to tell it, although I never did before. Yes, I will tell it all!"

(To be continued.)

NOTES AND QUERIES.

[Under this heading a portion of our space is at the disposal of contributors, for the elicitation and elucidation of facts, archaeological, biographical, and historical, with more especial reference to the history of Canada—local as well as general.]

WRECK OF "LA TRIBUNE" FRIGATE.—A writer upon "Halifax Antiquities," in a Halifax evening journal, whilst giving an account of the wreck of the "Tribune," can scarcely have failed to revive, even in most persons who were previously familiar with the sad tale, a certain degree of wonder at the magnitude of that disaster, so far as the loss of human life is to be considered. That on a wild Autumn night the ship in question should have been driven upon the iron-bound shore near Herring Cove, after having been all day rolling upon Thrum Cap Shoal, within sight and hearing of Halifax; and that in consequence no less than 235 lives, of the 246 souls on board at the time, should be lost, seems almost inexplicable in the light of any facts which have yet been published to the world.

I will mention one incident which, if it really is a fact—and I have every reason to believe it reliable—may, in some degree, explain this wonder. I had it from the lips of a gentleman, long since deceased—a

gentleman of unquestionable veracity and high social standing, and himself a native of Halifax although he spent the greater part of his life elsewhere. He had the story from his father, who was, I think, an employe in the Naval Yard at the time, and was familiar with the whole circumstances. The account was to the following effect:

On the night of the 23rd of November 1787, there was a ball,—I believe what is called a "Public Ball"—in Halifax—I do not know where, but probably at the old "Pontac," which was for so long a time the head-quarters of such festivities. Halifax was but a small place ninety years ago, and the line of demarcation between social ranks was much more sharply defined than it is now. This ball would be an event. The officers of the military and naval services then at Halifax, mustered at it in all their available strength; and we may rest assured that "everybody who was anybody" among the civilians was there. It was known, during the day, that there was a ship aground on Thrum Cap; but people's minds were somewhat pre-occupied with the coming event of the evening, and the ship seemed to be taking it easy. But when night came—all through the evening, the minute guns from the doomed ship could be heard, and were heard, as well by the dancers as by the commonalty of the town outside. Doubtless the revellers made themselves believe and strengthened each other in the belief, that the peril to which some hundreds of fellow creatures were being exposed in this vicinity was not so great as might be imagined, or that the emergency would keep until morning; or they felt and some other excuse satisfactory to themselves for not leaving the gay ball-room to go out into the dark storm upon a toilsome and dangerous duty. At all events the word with them was:—

"On with the dance! let joy be unconfined;—
In the morning, we know the appalling news which met their ears; and we can imagine their horror. This incident was, at the time, much and severely commented on, especially in the lower strata of Halifax society. But there was no free press in Halifax then; popular clamour was held as of small account, and those who gave tone to the place, were so generally implicated in the blame and, doubtless, so much ashamed of it, that the matter was hushed up. This account is not flattering to the memory of the Halifaxians—permanent and transient—of the period; but that is no reason why the truth should not be known.

II.

LOCAL QUERIES.—Doubtless there are many persons who can, and I beg that some of them will, inform me—and many others who are equally ignorant and curious—when, why, and by whom, were those old stone walls built that one sees traversing Tower Woods in various directions, and parts of which have recently been broken up to underlay the new roads through the woods.

PARK.