



HUMANITY, TEMPERANCE, PROGRESS.

THE SEA-SHELL'S WHISPERING

BY WM. J. SHERLOCK.

What are the sea-shells whispering.
Like infant lips in sleep?
Of gems and gold that are guttering
Far down in the briny deep?
Of coral rocks or of amber beds,
Where the shadowy sea grass waves,
Though the dew of high heaven never sheds
One tear on its spiral leaves?

Of the waves that the morning decks in gold,
When she riseth to hail the sun!
Of their silvery tint when, his course being told,
They are lit by the yellow moon!
Of the treasures which lie in the azure deep,
Where man's foot ne'er can tread,
Or the flowers, that blossoming there o'ercreep
The face of the silent dead!

Of joyers that rest 'neath the heaving wave,
In silence and solitude drear!
Of the skeleton forms of the bold and brave,
Whose bones are whitening there!
Why do they, with an unceasing voice,
These spirit-brilliant things keep?
What are the sea shells whispering,
Like infant lips in sleep!

THE TERROR OF TROPICAL SNAKES.

In the year of 1772, war of the most desolating kind broke out between the French troops to combat against the Indians; but in their perilous marches through the great thick there encumbered the soil, also against fierce and beasts, that howled in every bush, noted in every swamp, and in every green tree.

A column of Major Rodchank was composed of 800 colonial and 500 black cavalry, furnished by different plantations; the latter body being commanded by a black, named Cusixty slaves accompanied this battalion; they carried the land rations, the ammunition of the troops, hatchets, and implements for establishing the camp—this part of being utterly impracticable for carriages and beasts of four in the evening. The whites found themselves besieged from the island occupied by Zam-zam, chief of the negroes. The forest was becoming thicker and still at length they found no passage. The trees, immense in height, formed a dome impenetrable to the day; great lanas from tree to tree, or now on the ground, crossed themselves in nets so dense and inextricable, that two armed with hatchets, forced with difficulty a route for any which followed. One of the rebels, who had volunteered his submission, conducted the Europeans through the vegetable wall which barred their passage. The silence of the forest was unbroken, save by the noises of the hatchets and bills of the stars. Many of come by heat and fatigue, stopped to repose against branches of the trees, or the strong frictions of the gained vigor by their temporary rest, they again summoned forces, and recommenced their painful labors—men, wishing to clear the way by moving the most carob-tree, used the end of his axe as a lever with him it over on itself. The only vesture of the slave of linen drawers and a blue shirt. Scarcely had he laid the tree, when a serpent, of a bright luminous orange-small bask, and about three feet in length, launched the tree, over which the slave was bent, struck into his shirt, and buried its fangs in his heart. He uttered a terrible shriek, crying, "A way-pay!—I could not carry his hand to his chest, before the accident, glided like a flame into the jungle, and nothing was left of the green bushes, but a small sparkling portion of red shimmers. The negro fell. His black head being of age, his eyes started from their sockets, he lay with a convulsive trembling—his limbs quivered with agony. The title of this serpent was mortal.

"Beware, beware!" cried Cupidon; "the way-pay is to the great anaconda what the pilot is to the vessel; hereabouts, be sure, lurks an anaconda."

The black had hardly uttered the words, when by a movement more rapid than thought, he seized his gun which he had laid beside him, gazed in the direction of the trunk of the carob-tree upon an object which he saw and fired. In half a minute the negroes were enveloped in a kind of whirlwind of leaves, of broken branches, mixed together like the fragments of a shattered vase. They heard in the jungle a deafening sound, and so to speak, heavy as that of an immense wave, breaking the enormous branches of trees, and dashing them into a stormy sea.

Twice Cupidon saw the colossal head of the anaconda elevate and lower itself with fury. This part of the reptile's body was of a brown red, further heightened by blazing yellow. At the moment Cupidon recovered from his first emotion, he snatched the fusil of Toukett-Touk, his companion, to kill the monster, which he had certainly wounded. The serpent, as it once, ceased to preserve its threatening attitude; undulating towards the jungle like an enormous wave, it left part of its back exposed below the great green creepers, and then disappeared on the right, without being struck by the second discharge of Cupidon.

"An anaconda!—an anaconda! beware on the right!" cried Toukett-Touk; "look to your arms—he is wounded!"

Reports of guns we now heard on the right, proceeding from the blacks. "He is shot! he is shot!" cried many voices.

And such indeed was the case. Although he had received two balls in the head, he yet gave signs of life, when a number of negroes who had the wit to long lanas round his neck, dragged the monster into the midst of a little cleared track. Covered with huge scales, he was thirty feet in length, and three in circumference; his back of bluish green and fawn, was blotched with large irregular spots, surrounded by black circles, his sides were of a rich brownish yellow, his body of a greyish hue, his head, half slanted by the back, could scarcely be distinguished by reason of the blood which covered it in momentary gushes, and he still feebly opened his jaws, armed with immense teeth.

The blacks and a great number of soldiers, partaking of the same taste, gratified themselves with the hope of supping on the carcass of the monster. A negro holding in one hand the lanas which surrounded the neck of the anaconda, climbed up a carob-tree, thrust his flexible head into a fork formed by a branch of the tree, and then threw the vegetable cord of the lanas to his companion below. Thus suspended by the neck, the reptile still writhed itself into convulsive motions.

The black now took a large knife between his teeth, left the tree, assisted himself by a crampion to the body of the serpent, which incessantly writhed and turned round, and pressing him between his limbs and knees, prepared himself to excavate the reptile. Punging his knife into the anaconda's neck, he made a deep incision, before he began to lift up the skin. At this deadly wound, the monster summoned up his expiring strength to make some movements—his dry eye glared through the breach that covered it, twice he opened his jaws and gnashed his teeth one against the other, and made such terrific couings with his head, that the spectators started back in horror. Soon the motion of the anaconda became less energetic—he at last agitated himself very feebly—he expired.

The blacks, perceiving the incision which he had made in the neck, and determined to do so in peeling off and lifting again the skin, in measure, as he proceeded. It was a spectacle at the same time strange and terrible to see, in the last rays of the setting sun, which had scarcely traversed the tops of the trees, that black being, half naked, covered with blood, and clasping between his knees and arms the immense carcass of the reptile.—A Fragment, translated from a French Soldier's Journal, recently reprinted.

June, 1837, attempted to cross the river in a canoe, and was drawn into the current and went over the American Fall. A little boy by the name of White, only five years old, and his sister, a year or two his senior, were playing in a canoe near that part of Goat Island where the bridge crosses the Rapids from the village of Niagara. The canoe floated out into the stream. The mother of the children beheld the scene, rushed into the river and rescued the girl, but the boy was carried over the Fall near the point where Abdo took the frightful plunge. The little fellow was last seen sitting in the bottom of the canoe, holding on with his hands to each side, as if to keep the frail craft steady as it was borne on the perilous way. This was in July, 1848. Neither Murphy's nor White's body was ever found.

It was near this fatal spot that the foolish faces of a Mrs. Miller, of Detroit, was played off a few years ago. It occasioned much speculation at the time, and its results were said to be serious, the father of the person alluded to, a very respectable man, having died broken-hearted in consequence of it. Mrs. Miller, actuated, it was thought, by jealousy, or some freak of the kind, cut her hair into pieces, tied the strips together, and hung them over the bridge leading to Goat Island, intending doubtless to produce the impression that she had committed suicide by letting herself down into the Rapids and going over the American Falls. After occasioning much pain and trouble to her family and friends, she turned up we believe, at Syracuse.

DeVaux, who wrote an interesting work on Niagara, relates that the Indians have a tradition that two human beings yearly will ever be sacrificed to the Great Spirit of those waters. It is a striking fact that almost every year has proved fatal to some visitor of the Falls of Niagara. An obliging guide, Mr. Johnson, to whom we lately had occasion to recur with grateful recollections of his politeness to us while there, tells us in his useful little manual, that "all the wildness of these scenes can be viewed without running the least risk," and no doubt if visitors could always sufficiently command themselves, not allow their fancy or their imagination to get the mastery over their minds while gazing on the bewildering wonders of Niagara, this remark is true.

Our author tells of instances he has seen of a disposition on the part of strangers to try the fearful leap over the brink of the Falls. A young lady, not long ago, he says, was standing on "Table Rock," on the very verge of the precipice, while the wind was blowing very strong from the (Canada) shore behind her. She appeared, Mr. Johnson told us, amazed, bewildered, rapt, as it were, by the seemingly supernatural wildness of the scene. Our guide approached her, and laying his hand upon her arm remonstrated with her in this exposing herself. "Oh!" exclaimed she with a smile, "I feel that I could spring from this rock, and sail away as lightly and gently as a balloon!" And it was not without the greatest persuasion that she could be induced to leave the spot that had for her so powerful a fascination. On being reproved afterwards by her mother, she declared that she did not feel the least fear; but actually felt as if she could fly.

A case that, in its commencement, was not dissimilar to that of Tuesday, but which terminated more fortunately, was that of a man by the name of Allen, who some eight years ago, attempting to cross the Niagara river in a skiff from Chippewa, (some distance above Goat Island), accidentally broke an oar, and found himself at the mercy of the current. He managed, however, to reach the outer island of the group called "The Three Sisters," (which he just off Goat Island), and jumped ashore, while his skiff was dashed down the rapids and over the Horse-shoe Falls. Though saved from the more imminent danger, the man's situation was still perilous, for the hope of rescue was extremely doubtful, and he began to think he should die of starvation. Two nights and a day he remained in that precarious situation. He struck a fire, and two sticks stuck it, wreathing over the tree-tops, indicated to the villagers the peril he was in. The alarm was given, a rope was thrown across from one island to the other, and so on to the third, and an intrepid fellow by the name of Robinson put off in a skiff, holding to the rope, and succeeded in bringing Allen safe through the rapids to the main shore. This same Robinson also reached Chabon, one of the workmen on the bridge from which Allen's fate was witnessed on Tuesday, who being thrown accidentally into the stream, was carried upon the very island, to reach which by swimming Allen is said to have made a desperate effort on being thrown off the raft next to his rescue.

It was just here, too, that a young lady of Buffalo, Miss DeForest, slipped from the hands of a friend who was holding her, in foolish bravado, over the edge of the shore of "Last

CASUALTIES AT THE FALLS.

The New York Express, reminded by the late sad occurrence, notices as follows some of the fatal accidents which have happened in the vicinity of the Cataract:

In 1846, August 31, Charles Smart, of Philadelphia, fell from a rock in the "Cave of the Winds," which is under the American Fall, and of course, was killed instantly. Between the "Badie Staircase" and the entrance to the "Cave," Dr. Huncerted, of West Troy, was killed in May, 1829, by the tail of a person of the rough rock upon him. A boy named Murphy, in