

THE CONCEPTION-BAY MAN.

SELECT POETRY.

LOOK NOT MOURNFULLY INTO THE PAST.

Smile again!—oh! smile again!
Though thine eye be dimm'd with tears,
Though thy path be one of pain,
Overspread with darkening fears.
Gleams of joy yet unreveal'd
Still the future may possess—
Flowers, amid the gloom conceal'd,
To cheer the spirit's wilderness.

Hope again!—yes, hope again!
Bid the shadowy past depart;
Listen to her siren strain,
Let her music woo thy heart.
Trust her though thou be deceived
Though thy faith in her be gone;
Happier far than if bereaved
Of each hope that lured thee on.

What though she may mock thy grief,
In thy anguish take no heed;
Can'st thou not find some relief
For the present hour of need?
Though she cheat thee with her smile,
Still that smile may cheer and bless,
Soothe thy spirit for awhile,
In a time of deep distress.

Love again!—yes love again!
Though love's fairest flowers be dead,
Still some blossom may remain,
That will yet a perfume shed—
Hidden germs to burst as fair,
Buds that have outlived the storm—
That only need thy fostering care,
And gentle love to bring them on.

What though friends have left thy side,
What though vows in sand were traced,
And each wave of sorrow's tide
Fresh memorials has effaced?
Yet that wave may also bring,
From some deep unfathom'd mine,
Treasures at thy feet to fling,
Which had never else been thine.

Mourn ye not, though friendship lies
Withering when the sun declines;
Weep not, though affection flies,
Like a bird, to brighter climes;
Cherish that which may remain
When life's path shall saddest be;
Grateful give thy love again,
Cling to those who cling to thee.

Fortune's frowns, all uncontroll'd,
Future days may shroud in night;
Yet the darkest hour we're told,
Comes before the morning light,
Doubting heart, be still, be still!
Cowardly forbodings hence!
Trust, in every good or ill,
Thy future to Omnipotence.

E. C. B.

MISCELLANEOUS.

THE MURMUR OF THE SEA.

Over the wide and sparkling seas proudly
bounded the good ship *Antoinette*, with her pre-
cious freight from Calcutta. Joy was in the
hearts, joy in the eyes of many a sunburnt
mariner, as he trimmed the sails which were
drawing him with mighty force towards his
native land. The homeward waves always look
brightest; the homeward breeze has always a
breath of balm and kiss of love; and the thoughts
of many a dear one on the distant shore of lib-
erty made their manly pulses thrill with delight.
How clearly the images of the loved at home
became now defined in their fond and yearning
memories, and how they blessed the kindly
waters which, though still they separated them,
were lessening the yielding space!

There was on board a family by the name
of Strafford—father mother, and their only two
children, Marcus and Ellena, who had just ar-
rived at the years of manhood and woman-
hood—and as they stood together upon the deck,
conversing with the captain, the latter remarked
a troubled look upon the face of the elder Strafford,
though the visages of his family were full
of hope and cheerfulness.

"What's the matter, friend Strafford?" in-
quired Captain Thurston. "Here you have
been reaping a fortune for years in the East,
surrounded by the blessings of a happy family
and the smiles of good luck, and disease has
never crossed your threshold, and reverse in
business has not once befallen you. Returning
with every prospect of a fair voyage, to the na-
tive land for which so long you have yearned,
and while your wife and children are overjoyed
at the thought, you alone seem sad. I have
noticed it ever since we left port; and now tell
me, if the inquiry be not intrusive, what is the
reason?"

"You will laugh at me when I tell you," re-
plied Mr. Strafford, "even as my family did when
I first thought superstitiously of a strange cir-
cumstance which happened to us all, at least a
month before we sailed."

"And pray what could that be, that leaves

them buoyant and yourself mournful?" asked
the captain.

"First, let me ask you, are you at all super-
stitious?" said Mr. Strafford.

"All sailors are, more or less," replied the
captain, in a grave tone, "and I believe all men
are, however much some may try to persuade
themselves to the contrary. I confess that I am
in some things—notions trivial and absurd,
peculiar and perhaps insane—but still they
sometimes rule me, though I might be ridi-
culed should I mention what they are."

"Then I can speak to you without reserve
on the cause of my anxiety," said Mr. Strafford,
"though I did not think it was observable.
Not less than six months ago we had deter-
mined to leave Calcutta for ever, though our life
there had been so pleasant; for you know that
even if a man has been unfortunate in his own
land, and however agreeable may be to him
the blandishments of foreign society, his heart,
untravelling, always has one faithful corner
which almost as powerful as conscience, urges him
back to the soil of his country. Feeling this, we
have long yearned for home; and old scenes and
old friends have been continually in our thoughts
and conversation. With these thoughts, of
course, was connected the immense world of
waters we must pass over before we reach those
scenes and friends; and often have we reflected
upon the chance of death awaiting us, to strip
us of all our possessions, all our hopes, and give
us a bed in the ocean. On me, as the time drew
near, I feel almost ashamed to admit it, this
menacholy thought weighed heavier and heav-
ier, till finally, in my dreams of returning home
I could hear a moaning murmur of the sea,
which filled me with more horror than anything
I have experienced when awake. No words—I
believe no sound of the kind which ever really
happened—can describe it, or could produce
such a nameless dread in my bosom; and fre-
quently, overwhelped by the anguish it caused
I have started from my sleep, and though fully
awake, as much as I am now—hark! there it is,
don't you hear it?" and Mr. Strafford's face,
turned of an ashy paleness as he paused in his
narrative.

"Not I," replied the captain, with wonder.
"There is no sound of the kind—nothing but
the cheerful rush of the waves."

"Don't you hear it wife? Don't you, Marcus
—Ellena?" asked Mr. Strafford, hurriedly.

"I certainly do hear it, but not so plainly
as before we left the land," was their re-
ply.

"It was as distinct to me; and now it fades
away again. Strange that you, too, cannot
hear it," said Mr. Strafford to the captain.

"It is imagination, surely," replied captain
Thurston; "your minds have been so much
occupied with apprehensions of danger."

"It is unaccountable!" sighed Mr. Strafford,
unconvinced. "But where was I? I was, tel-
ling you that, even when awake as I am now, after
starting from my dreams, I have heard it just as
plainly; and this, mark you, was on land. More
than this, at other times, and in the broad day,
and when variously engaged, at meals, in social
chat, we have occasionally heard the same mys-
terious murmur, as if the great ocean had com-
missioned some warning minister to dissuade us
from our voyage."

"But you do not all seem to be equally af-
fected by it," said the captain.

"No," replied Mr. Strafford; "they attribute
the phenomenon, as you do, to our dwelling
too much on the worst chance which could
happen. In truth I was never superstitious
before."

"Rely on it," said the captain, "your fear, if
fear it is, of shipwreck, will prove illusory. We
shall have a safe voyage, and I shall sit with
you at home, and ask if you hear the murmur
still!"

"So we hope," said Mrs. Strafford, smiling;
"and Richard, you must think so, too."

"You may be right," returned Mr. Strafford;
"and God grant that the dismal sigh we heard
echoes only in imagination!"

The captain walked away to his duties, and
the conversation of the family reverted to the
recollection of their native home.

For some weeks before they left Calcutta a
pestilence had swept off many thousands of the
Asiatics, though at the time of their embark-
ation it had mainly disappeared on their westward
tour. None of those on board had been effec-
ted by it, and it was presumed that the clear air
of the ocean would lessen all chance of its pre-
sence among them. But the idea was a vain
one. Two weeks had not elapsed before the
destroyer made himself manifest, and by twos
and threes the hardy crew became his victims.

The invisible malady did its appalling work so
speedily, that within a week after the first death
on board but a dozen of the men were left, save
the family of Richard Strafford. The captain
still survived, but the fearful havoc among his
crew had brought him, by sheer anxiety, to the
door of death, while the wan remnant of his
late full complement of men went haggardly
about their increased labours as if the skeleton
Death stood bodily before them, grinning, with
bony hand, to clutch them every instant. All
remedies brought with them had failed, and
now they put no faith in them, each le-

And yet the sky was fair, and the gale propi-
tious, and the bright sun showered his beams
on the laughing sea as gaily as if never a thing
had bounded there, as if never a mortal had
been borne upon its breast but had been strong
with life, and free from sorrow. Yet woe was
in the ship. The very beauty of the scene
made desolation more terrible; and as one
after another went feet foremost over the fly-
ing vessel's side, link after link was torn away
from that chain of hope which bound the sad
survivors to the thoughts of lengthened life.
The great, glassy main closed over them with
his voluminous mantle, and the forms of faith-
ful seamen sank to eternal rest.

It was at this time that, standing with the
family one day, Captain Thurston remarked,
"Mr. Strafford, though I am not yet a believer
in anything like a premonition, such as your
murmur of the waves, still I fear I shall not live
to see the port to which we are bound. The
dead who have left us tell the story. Their
late almost convinces me. Even should the
plague assail us no more, we are so short-handed
that a storm would prove too much for us. I
will make for the nearest port, at any rate, and—"
His jaw became convulsed as he
spoke, and Mr. Strafford and his son bore him
below. The plague pain was upon him; and
while he lay in agony he cried, "I too, now
hear it—distinctly hear it, as ever I heard the
moaning of coming hurricane. It is horrible,
and yet it cannot be real. The day is fair. And
now I hear it louder—it grows dark—and now
the roar of breakers. Strafford, Strafford, you
were right—I die—but Heaven spare you and
my poor men!"

Within a few hours the captain was a corpse
and when the survivors committed his manly
figure to the sea, unmitigated despair settled
upon every soul. One of the men, who had
sailed with him on many a voyage, would have
plunged into the waves after him, but was re-
strained by his mates; yet they might have
spared their kindness, for within an hour the
pestilence had placed its virulent finger upon his
heart, and grief and life went out together.

Day waned, and flushed with a glorious smile
the broad blue face of ocean, where now but a
few scarce perceptible swells denoted the sub-
sided breeze. Night mounted with her stars,
and their calm gaze watched the sleep of the
watery world with the same immutable lustre as
if affliction formed no part of God's great plan
and all beneath their light were as happy as all
beyond it. How their changeless loveliness and
eternal round of duty mock the pride of crum-
bling man! They shone and our world moved
round, and morning streaked the placid waste,
and the beraved ship stood almost still, as if
pausing to mourn over those she had left behind.
But more were to follow them. Some slumber-
ers of that peaceful night awoke—but there
were only four! The family of Straffords em-
erged from their berths, to find that theirs alone
had been the sleep of life. Of the crew who,
when they went to rest—if rest it could be called—
were warm and breathing men, some they
saw lying upon the deck with wild, distorted
features, dead, as they had fallen in the still
watches of the night, none but brother suffers
to hear their dying groans, or breathe a brief word
of sympathetic prayer; while others were found
in the cabin floor, where they had rolled in their
agony, as if greater space than a berth could af-
ford had been sought by them to give them a
better chance to wrestle with death.

"They are all gone!" said Mr. Strafford
"Moira, Marcus, Ellena, before we perform,
as well we can, their burial rites, let us talk with
God. Kneel, kneel, my loved ones."

The morning light, in all its coursing, never
fell upon a holier or more touching spectacle
than that family of four presented, as they knelt
together in a circle on the deck of the death-ship,
feeling every moment that the unseen minister
stood ready to strike them, while with folded
hands they lifted up their soul to the hearing of
their Maker.

Mr. Strafford had just passed the meridian of
life, and the grey streaks mingling with the dark-
ness of his hair made more impressive the manly
look which beamed from every limament. He
was a man of time and care; his face seemed to
symbolise the nobility of that nature which had
fought the battle of life with honor, and which
now summoned to resign it on the very edge of
eternity, sent up its last appeal. His wife Moira,
the Bride of his youth, knelt beside him, even as
she had knelt at the altar, and her frail figure,
still comely, and her purely feminine counte-
nance which had captivated him of old, contrasted
strongly yet appropriately with those of her
husband, with whom and with her children she
now momentarily expected to go before the
throne which he addressed, Marcus and Ellena,
facing them, side by side, blending their looks,
the looks of both in each, knelt there, the mourn-
ful representatives of man's and woman's
Her mother's shining curls were
luxuriant; and in her
dropped upon her
as if they were
rested the

death tear so fair a group from earth? How
could fate doom so fair a group to death, thus
cruelly robbing them of their long-cherished
hope? They rose from their knees and per-
formed the burial of their unfortunate compan-
ions, and now awaited each other's passage, not
to a home on earth.

"There is little breeze and no hope," said Mr.
Strafford; "but, Marcus, let the ship keep her
course before the wind, while we hold com-
munion with our own souls. Are there no ties,
my children, which make you unresigned, which
make you reluctant to yield your lives to Him
who bestowed them? If so, take heed, and be
well prepared for the approaching hour. The
murmur of the sea forewarned us of it; and
whether by plague, or tempest it will soon be
upon us."

"Father," said his son, "I believe I never
feared death, but to tell the truth I do shun it,
for Ellena and I are young, and both have long
looked forward to a union with hearts that love
us. The girl I love is at home, and even now
I know that she is waiting for the tidings of our
arrival. I cannot be reconciled to a death like
this, which tears me for ever from my long-
nourished hopes. And Ellena—think of her, and
of him who so eagerly awaits her coming."

"Dear father, dear mother," said the daughter,
bowing her golden head upon her mother's
christening heart, while her tears fell fast, "don't
let us think we are to die thus. Some vessel
may approach and take us off. We may not
die. God will not be so hard with us. Let us
not dwell upon death. Let us think of those
we would all see at home."

A storm was darkening in the horizon. While
the parents and brother in vain attempted to
allay the wild anguish of Ellena, a black and
rising tempest flung its scowl of wrath upon all
before it and beneath it, and scaled the heavens
as if to hide from their rebuke the mischief that
it meditated. Swift as the wings of *Eolus*, and
driving ahead the dreadful *avant couriers* of
the wind and hissing waves, on came the spread-
ing monster towards the ship, and the ocean
moaned at his unwilling co-operation.

"The murmur of the sea! the murmur of the
sea!" said Mr. Strafford. "This is the murmur
of the sea we so long have heard—the very
sound, the very aspect of the heavens and the
waters in my dreams. There is no fantasy
about this. Cling closer to me, wife—my chil-
dren! The hour is come! This is the death
song of the sea!"

They clung together, convinced of their fate.
The ship flew, bounded, rushed along. Her
every sail was set as it had been left by the sailors
in the calm of the evening before; and straight
before the hurrying storm she fled, dashing the
flying waves aside in the giant madness of des-
pair. And still the family clung together.
Love was in their hearts, and defied the elements
to sunder them. First was human love. But
the love of God was with them too. He led
the ship. He stayed the waves from washing
them away. He raised, he guided, burst the
tempest and He quelled it—for the stately
ship rode on securely. As sudden as its birth
the hurricane expired. The heaving billows in
its track still bore the gallant vessel, still held
the family alive, secure, and seemed to fawn up-
on the bulwarks as they kissed them.

When this was seen, hope lit upon the vessel,
and chased each lingering doubt away. The
half-paralysed family arose, wondering at their
safety, and went in confidence below. Night
came, and morning. With morning came a
ship. They were recognised; and now the murmur
of the sea was recognised as but a premonition
of calamity to others, not to themselves. Heaven
saw them home in safety; and the land of lib-
erty, when it welcomed them back to her hap-
py shores, gave Marcus Strafford to the girl
whom he adored, and made Ellena a bride.

W. O. E.

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is incomparably superior to every other external
remedy. The Pills, all through Toronto, Quebec,
Montreal, and our other chief towns, have a re-
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