EASTON GAZETTE.

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Religion purifies the Heart and teaches us our Duty—Morality refines the Manners—Agriculture makes us rich—and Politics provides for the enjoyment of all.

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THE SMUGGLER'S DAUGHTER.

A few weeks since business caused my attendance at the Admiralty. While waiting in one of the anti-rooms, I heard myself accosted by name by a tall and elegant looking man standing near me. My eye rested on his figure, but memory refusing recognition in the gaze, I inquired his identity. My surprise was great at finding he was one of my dearest, and earliest friends; and the start of astonishment, almost of pain, which his revelation elicited from me, must I fear have communicated to him the knowledge of the withering havoc which sorrow had made on his person. Only five years had elapsed since our last meeting, and that period, when unmarked by mental suffering or sickness, may pass over man while in his prime—and Capt. Tancred was now only thirty-five—without leaving a record of its flight.

I had known him in boyhood: he had been the wildest, but the truest and most generous of my school companions. His presence had ever been the signal for some thoughtless freak or hazardous adventure. With a spirit fresh and buoyant as mountain air, exuberant health, and exhaustless vivacity, he was formed to be the idol of his associates. He seemed destined for happiness; he had every element of it in himself; and, utterly exempt from that contracting selfishness which binds up the sympathies of too many natures, he revelled in the joy of dispensing it to others.—Left to the choice of a profession, he selected that of the sea: it assimilated best with his taste, for it afforded indulgence to his peculiar temperament, which, always seeking after strong excitements, would even court danger in all its varieties. The very character of the element had charms for him: he loved its false unsubstantial surface, its engulphing depths, its perilous quicksands, the warfare of its waves, whose wild hoarse murmurs, seem to warn man from their territories; they had terror in their sound, and that sound was music to his ears. Often, when the tempest from above had lashed the ocean into fury, and it boiled forth its wrath in billows which threatened destruction to aught of human power that dared its ire, I have known him singly embark in a little boat, in assertion, as he would say, of man's prerogatives, and to trample on the enemy which seemed to oppose his free agency over nature and her works.

At the termination of our maritime struggles, finding his very soul enervated at the prospect of indolent peace, he obtained the command of a revenue cutter, and I parted with him in the full glow of health, on his departure for the coast of Norfolk to enter on his new service. Engaged in active pursuits, I had little opportunity for correspondence; but my heart often held communion with him, who was the dearest friend it had ever known. An interval of leisure having occurred in my occupation, I had resolved on visiting him a few days subsequently to the period when chance again united us. And was it—could it be Tancred, the gay, the handsome, the volatile Tancred, who stood before me? His very voice seemed changed; its accents had now a mournful and dreary cadence, like the responses of a rifled cavern, and they were the echoes of a bare and shivered heart. There was still about him the exquisite polish of demeanour so often instinctive with high birth—for Tancred was nobly connected—which had always distinguished him; but the lofty bearing, the unquailing eye, the sunny smile, were gone forever! At an interview which I afterwards had with him, he disclosed to me the events which had produced such a metamorphosis in his aspect and manner. The substance was as follows:—

The signal station which Captain Tancred commanded was situated, as I have said, on the coast of Norfolk. It was near a remote hamlet, and partook in an eminent degree of that dulness and insipidity which so often distinguish a country village. The localities exhibited no peculiar points of interest. The scenery was not of that elevated and picturesque character which, in many parts of England, rivalling in loveliness and grandeur the landscapes of Italy or Switzerland, might well content a people less migratory than ourselves with the native samples it displays of nature's power. W —— had none of this: the painter or the poet might have looked on it without the faintest glow of that kindling enthusiasm which rushes from the heart and thrills through the frame, at the sight of beauty in whatever guise displayed, uninstructed, unaltered, by the sophistications of art—fresh, luxuriant, and perfect, the visible and tangible evidence of that unerring system of harmony and arrangement by which the Divine Ruler conducts the universe. The inhabitants, too, of W —— were generally uncultivated and illiterate. Education had there been tardy in its civilizing influence; and there was amongst the lower classes—the mass of the population—little of that amenity of feeling and manner which may in some measure atone for the absence of the higher mental qualities.—The service in which Captain Tancred was engaged drew an almost entire line of demarcation between himself and his neighbours. He met them, and perchance the bow and courtesy of compelled deference were accorded; but there was neither glance nor tone, nor word of sympathy exchanged. He was looked upon, by those even who stood unconnected with the illicit traffic which it devolved on him to oppose, with distrust and suspicion. He was one of those men, however, whose activity and healthiness of temperament supply to themselves the deficiencies of place or people. Still there were moments when his customary employments failed of amusement; when even his own beloved element was gazed upon with the eye of listlessness and dissatisfaction; when he would more gladly have enjoyed communion with living than inanimate nature. In one of these moods he wandered forth on the beach. It was at that hour when

The moon was up, and yet it was not bright,

The sun was still in the sky, and the ocean blushed in the gorgeous beams which crimsoned the west. A thousand clouds floated around the throne of his expiring glory, as though they were anxious to bear away to some favourite and distant clime a trace of his splendour. A few stars were out to mark and guard the orbit of the timid moon, which, pale and more beautiful than all, seemed the type of that blissful world of peace and rest, from which she had just emerged. Tancred felt in its full force the might and majesty of the scene around him. Who can look on the boundless deep, the uncircumscribed firmament, the 'stars, which are the poetry of heaven,' & not feel his own insignificance in the scale of creation? Who can think of the world its empty distinctions its feverish passions, its trivial pursuits, while gazing on the immensity of nature? The heart must be dead to every finer impulse, the mind destitute of every noble desire, which can restrict its views and wishes to mortality, while contemplating the symbols of immortality!

Immersed in his own reflections, the hours glided imperceptibly on, and Tancred started on finding the waves were 'winning their way to the golden shore.'—He was about to retreat hastily, when a form at a distance met his observation.—Perhaps it might be humanity to warn the individual of the danger of her situation, or curiosity to discover who was the lonely wanderer—or gallantry, as that wanderer bore the outline of a female, which led him hastily forward to offer protection. It was declined by the young and lovely girl to whom it was proffered, with such bewitching yet shrinking timidity, such trembling apprehensiveness, that his interest was far more powerfully awakened by her refusal than if she had acceded to his request.—Casual and slight, however, as this introduction to each other may seem, it formed the basis of a permanent acquaintance. It is unnecessary for me to trace its progress, or to follow it through all its gradations, while germinating into friendship, till it arrived at the maturity of love. The developement of a passion, which involves the whole sum of earthly happiness of two individuals—which embraces in its issue anguish or bliss to them, here and hereafter, may yet be too deficient in striking peculiarity of incident to engage the sympathies of others. To a certain point this was the case in the attachment of Captain Tancred and Helen, for so was his idol called. There was a mystery about her which she seemed most unwilling to account for or unravel. Beyond the name of Helen, he was even ignorant how the object of his worship was designated. 'A rose by any other name will smell as sweet;' and, while gazing on the exquisite being before him, he often thought how little accessory were name, birth, or situation, to the possession of beauty, grace, and dignity. She was eighteen yet looked even childishly young for that brief date of years. Her form was bounding and light, and there was a freedom and elasticity in her step, which her natural quietness of spirit and demeanour at times could scarcely control. There were moments when a dark and melancholy shade of sadness would steal across a brow pure and clear as the fair and stainless snows of heaven; and the small rosy mouth, which seemed blushing for the peril its matchless beauty exposed others to, would compress and almost quiver with internal agony.—The eye, too, so blue and bright, would sometimes lose its look of boundless radiance; while a glance of deep, mournful, and passionate feeling, would beam from its azure depths, and the dark silken fringe which shrouded its glory become gemmed with the tears of silent sorrow.

Tancred often interrogated her as to the cause of her unavowed grief. To imagine it the result of personal misconduct was incompatible with the angelic purity which so peculiarly distinguished her, and which even more perhaps than her extreme loveliness, captivated his imagination, and enthralled his heart. Of her relations and friends she spoke little. She talked indeed of her father, but it was evident that fear and awe were blendid with filial love and duty. That she moved in the lower walks of life her appearance indicated, though in her conversation, and in the soft and gentle repose of her manner, there was not discoverable the slightest taint of vulgarity. They met but seldom, and each time with the resolve on Helen's lips of parting forever! But who shall tell the struggle it requires voluntarily to separate from the being most dear to us? Policy, prudence—worldly wisdom may bid us burst the fetters which enchain our souls, but when those fetters are, at the same time, the only connecting links between us and happiness—when the snapping of them rives asunder, too, the ties of confidence, sympathy, and affection—oh! who shall marvel that we hug the chain closer and closer, till the meshes become so woven and entangled with our very heart's strings, that the breaking of the one may shiver the other's too!

Tancred, convinced that the destiny of his future life depended for light or darkness on his beloved Helen, offered his hand, though literally ignorant of the very name of her to whom he tendered it. His proposal was received in silence and tears; still it was not rejected; indeed a faint smile illumined her countenance, and a slight pressure of the hand was his when he talked of the ensuing week for their nuptials. This was superstructure enough for Tancred to build a fairy castle of hope upon, and he anticipated, with boundless joy, the near prospect of calling Helen, the fair, the delicate Helen, his own for ever!

But now to deviate from the order of my narrative.

In a rugged and rarely-trodden path which led to the beach, stood a mean and lonely hut. It was of that coarse and rude description which the mind involuntarily associates with the idea of even squalid poverty, and from which the eye retreats, while the bosom yields a sigh of pity for those condemned to inhabit it. It wore a cheerless aspect, an air of negligence and gloomy desolateness, which seemed as though it were wilfully indulged, and even prided in. The inmates of this hut consisted of an old man and his daughter—little was known of them. The ascetic and uncompromising sternness of the father operated so powerfully against the daughter, that her meek demeanor and singular loveliness could hardly subdue the general feeling of dislike which was entertained for them. Of their former occupation, or even of the precise nature of their present employment, none were aware. Some imagined that the father labored under a partial alienation of reason; for there was at times a savage moodiness about him which approximated to insanity. He seldom was met in the hamlet, and neither visited nor received his neighbors, by many of whom, as he had been more than once surprised in the exercise of fire arms, and in the arrangement of sea tackle, it was suspected that he followed the dark, desperate, and unlicensed trade of smuggling. The unavowed exercise, too, of any other occupation, rendered the belief prevalent and strong. Nor was suspicion false. Old Denham, which was the appellation of Helen's father, was a smuggler by vocation and choice, it might be almost said by nature. In early life he had filled a subaltern situation in the navy; but the moroseness of his temper led to a quarrel with his captain, and he quitted an honorable service to engage in dishonorable traffic. He had fancied himself wronged, though he himself was his only enemy. The conviction, however, of having been injured, combined with the loss of a wife, who, though he tyrannized over while living, he bewailed ceaselessly when dead, and the accidental death of an only son, soured his disposition to absolute malignity. The constant poverty which he struggled with, his exclusion from all society, and even the beauty of Helen, which might render her so accessible to design and danger—all lent their aid in making Denham an object of restless misery to himself, of anxiety to his child, and detestation to his neighbors.

It has been stated, that, in ignorance of her condition in life, in ignorance that he had proffered his hand to one whose father would have had little compunction in stabbing him to the heart, Captain Tancred had fixed the following week for uniting himself to the smuggler's daughter.—For several nights a vessel had been observed floating on the dark waters, which had aroused the suspicions of Captain Tancred. On the Saturday night preceding the week in which he fondly hoped to realize his heart's dearest wish. It was again descried. On that evening a seaman, who had recently been added to the detachment was on watch for the first time. By the moon's light he recognised in the commander of the little vessel, a notorious smuggler who had long infested the coast of Kent, where he had previously served, but had always eluded pursuit, and had for some months disappeared from the neighborhood. The intelligence was communicated to Captain Tancred, who, with a party of men, put off in a boat in chase. It was a wild and stormy night; the moon at intervals only broke through the huge masses of cloud which drifted along the sky, the darkness of which received frequent illumination from the lightnings blue glare. The wind howled around, and

From peak to peak the rattling crags among,
Leap'd the live thunder.

Many a heart might have blenched from daring man's and heaven's wrath on such a night as this; but Tancred and his companions were fearless; duty incited them, and they sped onwards dauntlessly. The vessels met, and a short but determined rencontre ensued. The numerical strength of the smugglers was trifling in comparison with their opponents; but despair lent them gigantic energy, and they fought as though this world and the next had been staked on the issue of the engagement. After a 'brief space,' however, the scuffle terminated in the defeat and capture of the smugglers. Yet there was one amongst them who stood unharmed, unyielding, undismayed.—Throughout the combat a savage desperateness & ferocity of conduct had distinguished him from his comrades. His arm brandished a huge cutlass, which he raised to strike at the head of Captain Tancred, who, at the same moment discharged his blunderbuss. One ball entered the heart of the smuggler, and a gurgling splash of blood welled from his side. One deep short groan, and the heart stopped its pulsations, and he fell a heavy corpse at the feet of Tancred.

But the smuggler was not alone in his death—not a single victim to Tancred's fatal weapon; 'its scattered shot destruction dealt around.' In the commencement of the affray, a slight figure, masked, and enveloped in a large cloak, had escaped observation by crouching in the corner of the vessel. As the danger thickened, however, that form sprang from concealment, and was about to interpose between the combatants, when the fatal trigger was pulled and a random bullet entered a bosom heaving with love for its murderer. The brave and the weak the stern and the delicate, alike had been annihilated by Tancred's arm and lay prostrate before him! The vessel steered hastily back to shore, and then was the discovery made, which stamped with unalloyed and unmitigable grief the future life of Tancred. The bodies of the smuggler and his comrades were removed from the boat. There was no mask to hide the features of old Denham, and his ascertained identity created little sympathy. But the tearing off the mask, the removal of the fatal disguise from the figure of his youthful adherent, awakened a thrill of horror, and interest, and pity, in many a rugged breast, and overwhelmed one with a tide of misery that never ebbed. Perception at first refused to yield credence to the reality of the appearance presented to it. Horror without limit, despair without hope, were in the conviction; but conviction did come, and the mind sickens with the contemplation of the matchless agony of the moment. Yes! it was the corpse of Helen that lay before him, killed, too, by his own hand! the fair, the fond, the beautiful being whom he had worshipped with the idolatry of devoted love; who had lain on his bosom in the sweet confidence of pure affection, and to whom he had been the whole earthly sum of weal and woe! He put aside the soft golden hair, which was now clotted with gore and kissed the marble cheek, whose whiteness was stained with blood. Her eyes were closed, yet on the lids still lay a few glimmering tears, the latest mementos of human suffering. The little flower which he had that very evening presented to her was yet hidden in her bosom. It was crushed and faded; but worthless as it appeared to some, to him the world's riches would have seemed poor for the purchase of the holy relic. On inquiry it was proved that Denham, in his wayward moods, would often take his daughter to be his companion in his unlawful and dangerous enterprises. No reasonable motive could be assigned for such proceeding by others; it could only be traced to the natural tyranny of his disposition, or might find solution in the fears that he sometimes expressed, lest his daughter's state of unprotected loveliness might be invaded by insult. There was no ostentatious parade of grief about Tancred; not a single tear did he shed over the grave, when it opened to receive his life's essence. But the blight had struck at his heart, withered up every blossom of joy, and blasted, as with volcanic influence, the soft verdure of hope that had grown there. No amusement beguiled him of his woe, no occupation robbed him of one pang of recollection. "Memory ceaselessly plied the work of pain," and at the age of thirty-five he appeared before me bankrupt of joy, with a shattered frame, haggard looks, and a wasted and decrepid heart!

Illustrious Houses—At a recent public dinner in England, numerous healths of noble persons were drunk—'Lord John Russell and the House of Russell'—'Lord Howick and the House of Gray'—'The Duke of Devonshire and the House of Cavendish'—and many more, until an attorney, who was at table, being called upon for a toast, gave with perfect simplicity, 'The health of Mrs. Jones, and the House of Industry.'

THE DIVINING ROD.

It has been supposed, during many years, that a forked branch from any tree of the forest, the orchard or garden, having smooth bark and elastic fibres, in the hands of some favored individuals, had the power of indicating the beds of ores or the springs of water, flowing beneath the surface of the earth. Many who have witnessed the action of the rod when held by the water-finders, and seen it crawling down and pointing to some spot otherwise indistinguishable from the surrounding field, where the fountain gushed out on digging, have been convinced of the reality of the art, and fallen into great doubt of the laws by which it is regulated. Were there no evidence from our own senses of the existence of the attraction supposed to affect the twigs when managed by the skilful, we should still be satisfied by the declarations of men in all stations of society, of irreproachable integrity, sound judgment and quick penetration; those whose words we could believe as firmly as our own knowledge, and to whose uprightness we could safely trust uncounted treasures. When such persons confidently assert that they possess the art of discovering hidden waters, and when we know that the fluid is actually found beneath the place pointed out, we may believe that they have deceived themselves, but never that they could impose on the credulity of others. The motives to fraud are few; the possessors of the skill have seldom exerted it for more than a trifling pecuniary reward. It has never been made the means of extortion or excessive gain, by any of its professors. Reputation, there is little given to those holding the mysterious wand.

A writer in the last Journal of Arts, probably its learned editor, Professor Silliman, has thrown the most satisfactory light on this subject of doubt and difficulty.—The length of this article renders it necessary to present a brief abstract of the interesting contents of an ingenious paper.

In the New England states, springs, streams and ores are so abundant, that the earth cannot be penetrated in any spot indicated by a stick, without finding water at a greater or less distance from the surface. In the Western and Southern territories, where they are not so copious, the search is attended with difficulty, and the use of the divining rod is common. The writer had an opportunity of making his experiments on the art where its operations had been considered most triumphant. The course of a stream had been pointed out by an aged adept, near the spot where a well had been sunk. A youth professing skill was taken, and, with the rod, he followed the exact direction indicated by the older professor, which was after marked on the sod with a slight furrow. He was then blindfolded so that he could see nothing, and led to a little distance.

On returning with measured steps, the rod turned down exactly on arriving to the furrow. This seemed a most satisfactory result, and an entire confirmation of the certainty in the process. But on leading the lad to the next furrow the rod missed it, and, continuing the experiment, it pointed in other places. Wherever the fountain was discovered, the turf was torn off, and springs were said to be every where. On the termination of the operation, the whole surface was marked with the black spots, and waters made to run with the eyes closed, where it had been decided by the sight that none flowed.

The writer having satisfied himself that delusion was practised on the senses of the operator, next sought for the method by which it was effected. The rod would not move in his hands. He watched closely the mode of holding the instrument by the skilful, and noticed that it was grasped in a peculiar lively manner. Hoping to catch this, he again took the rod, as he stood by the bank of the rivulet, and grasped it with the same spirit he had noticed. He moved neither hand nor foot but the rod was in action, and his utmost efforts could not restrain it. The limbs crawled round and the point turned down, in spite of every effort of the clenched hands to prevent its motion. The more vigorous the pressure the more active was the motion, until the bark was wrung off in the contest.

Here the whole mystery was explained. The muscular power of the clenched hand acting on the elastic fibres of the twigs, sets the rod in motion, without the connivance of the diviner, and the more firm his faith in its truth and veracity, with the more certainty is the impulse unconsciously given. The more powerful are his effects to restrain it, the more powerful is its efforts to move. The natural position of the hands, impels it forward rather than backward, and the necessary pressure of the muscles produces that effect which has been taken to be the invisible attraction of unseen fluids, acting through a thick and heavy mass of earthy matter.

Nat. Ægis.

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