EASTON GAZETTE.

WHERE THE PRESS IS FREE—"Literature, well or ill-conducted, is the Great Engine by which all Popular States must ultimately be supported or overthrown."
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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MODERN CHIVALRY.

By the Author of Redwood.

Concluded.

Most fortunately, as Frank thought, the mate directed his steps to the side of the ship opposite Perdita, but making a little circuit in his return, he passed between Frank's hammock and Perdita's birth. At this moment the poor lad's heart, as he afterwards averred, stopped beating. The ship rolled on that side, and the mate catching hold of the birth to save himself from falling, exclaimed, "In heaven's name what lazy devil is here, when every hand is wanted on deck;" and raising his lantern to identify the supposed delinquent sailor, he discovered the beautiful girl. For a moment he was dumb with amazement, but soon recalling the search at Oxford, the whole truth flashed upon him; he turned to Frank, and shaking his fist in his face "Ah, this is you, Stuart!" he said, and enforced his gesture with a horrible oath.

"Yes," retorted Frank, now standing boldly forth, "it is me thank God"—and then drawing a curtain that he had arranged before Perdita's birth, he bade her fear nothing."

'Oh Frank,' she exclaimed, "I cannot fear where you are." This involuntary expression of confidence went to her protector's heart. There is no man so dead to sentiment, as not to be touched by the trust of woman, especially if she be young and beautiful. Frank was at the age when sentiment is absolute, and he was resolved to secure his treasure at every hazard. Perdita's declaration, while it stimulated his zeal, awakened the mean jealousies of the mate.

"And so my pretty miss," he said, "you fear nothing where this fellow is—I can tell you, for all that he may boast, and you may believe, he is neither master nor mate yet, and please the Lord I'll prove as much to him this very night."

"And how will you prove it?" asked Stuart, in a voice which, though as calm as he could make it, resembled the low growl of a bull dog before he springs on his victim.

"I'll prove it, my lad by telling the whole story of your smuggled goods to the captain. A pretty piece of work this, to be carrying under the nose of your officers. It's no better than a mutiny, for I'll warrant it the whole ship's crew are leagued with you.

Stuart reined in his passions, and condescended to expostulate. He represented to the mate that he could gain nothing by giving information to the captain. He described with his simple eloquence, the oppression the poor girl had already suffered; the cruelty of disappointing her present hopes, just as they were on the point of being realized, for the ship was not more than 24 hours sail from Cowes; he appealed to his compassion, his generosity, his manliness, but in vain, he found no assessible point. The mean pride of having discovered the secret, and the pleasure of humbling Stuart, mastered every good feeling of the mate, if indeed he possessed any, and he turned away, saying with a sort of chuckling exultation, "that he should go and do his duty."

"Stop," cried Frank, grasping his arm with a gripe that threatened to crush it. "Stop and hear me—I swear by him that made me, if you dare so much as to hint by word, look or movement, the secret you have discovered here, you shall not cumber the earth another day—day—said I—no, not an hour—I'll send you to the devil as swift as a cannon ball ever went to the mark—Look," he continued, tearing away the curtain he had just drawn before Perdita—"could any thing short of the malice of Satan himself contrive to harm such helpless innocence as that—do you hear me" —he added in a voice that out roared the storm—"in God's name look at me, and see I am in earnest."

The mate had no doubt to satisfy, he trembled like an aspen leaf—in vain he essayed to raise his eyes, the passion that glanced in Frank's face, and dilated his whole figure, affected the trembling wretch like a stroke of the sun. He reeled in Frank's iron grasp, his abject fear changed Stuart's wrath to contempt, and giving him an impulse that sent him quite out of the door, he returned to soothe Perdita with the assurance that they had nothing to fear from the "cowardly dog." She was confounded with terror, but much more frightened by the vehemence of Stuart's passion than by the threats of the mate. She had always seen her protector move like an unobstructed stream along its course, in calm and silent power. Now he was the torrent, that no human force could control or direct.

She saw before her calamities far worse than any she had endured. She believed that the mate, as soon as he was recovered from his paroxysm of terror, would communicate his discovery. She apprehended the most fatal issue from Frank's threats and determined resolution, and the possibility that his generous zeal for her might involve him in crime, was intolerable to her. Such thoughts do not become less terrible by solitary meditation—in the solemnity of night, and amidst the howling of a storm. Every blast spoke reproach and warning to Perdita; and tortured by those harpies remorse and fear, she took a sudden resolution to reveal herself to the captain, feeling at the moment that if she warded off evil from her protector, she could patiently bide the worst consequences to herself. She sprang from her birth, as if afraid of being checked by a second thought, and rushed from the steerage to the cabin. All was perfect stillness there—the passengers had retired to their beds. The captain was sitting by the table; he had been reading, but his book had fallen to the floor, his head had sunk on his breast, and he was in a profound sleep. The light shone full on his weather-beaten face—on large uncouth features—on lines deepened to furrows—and muscles stiffened by time. Never was there an aspect more discouraging to one who needed mercy, and poor Perdita stood trembling before him, and close to him, and dared not, could not, speak. She heard a footstep approaching, and still her tongue was glued to the roof of her mouth. Then she heard her name pronounced in a low whisper at the cabin door, and turning, she saw Stuart there beckoning most earnestly to her. She shook her head, signed to him to withdraw, and laid her hand on the captain's shoulder. There was but one way to thwart her intentions, and Frank's was not a hesitating spirit, he sprang forward, caught her in his arms, and before the old man had rubbed his eyes fairly open, Perdita was again safe in the steerage.

Stuart's threats produced the intended effect on the mate; he was completely intimidated. He scarcely ventured out of Frank's sight lest he should incur his dangerous suspicions, and the next day the vessel, accelerated by the gale of the preceding evening, arrived at Cowes. The captain & mate immediately landed, and Stuart, no longer embarrassed by their presence, was able to take the necessary measures for Perdita. She assured him that if once conveyed to the main land, to Portsmouth or Southampton, she could herself take the coach for London, and there, she said, happiness or misery awaited her, which her noble protector could neither promote nor avert.

A wherry was procured. Before Perdita was transferred to it, she took leave of all the sailors, shook hands with each of them, and expressed to them individually, her gratitude and good wishes. Her words conveyed nothing but a sense of obligation, but there was something of condescension in her manner, and much of the grace of high station, that contrasted strikingly with the abased, fearful and shrinking air of the girl who had, till then, only been seen gliding like a spectre along the deck, attended by Stuart, and veiled by the shadows of night. As the wherry parted from the ship, she bowed her head waved her handkerchief to Frank's shipmates, and they returned her salutation with three loud cheers.

Stuart attended her to an Inn at Portsmouth, engaged her a seat in the London coach, and then followed her to a private apartment, which he had secured, to bid her farewell.

Perdita, from the moment she had felt her emancipation from a degrading condition, and the joy of setting her foot again on her native land, had manifested, perhaps, an undue elation of spirits, an elation so opposite to Frank's feelings, that to him it was a grating discord; but when she saw him for the last time, every other emotion gave place to unfeigned sorrow and inexpressible gratitude.

Stuart laid a purse on the table beside her. "My shipmates," he said, "receive their wages to-morrow, so they have been right glad to make their pockets clear of the little trash that was in them which may be of service to you, though it is of no use to them."

"Oh Frank! she exclaimed, "if I should ever have any thing in my gift—if I could but reward you for all you have done for me!"

All the blood in Frank's heart rushed to his face, and said in a voice almost inarticulate with offended pride, "there are services that money cannot buy, and thank God, there are feelings in a poor man's breast worth more than all the gold in the king's coffers.

"Oh what have I said," exclaimed Perdita, 'I would rather die—rather return to the depth of misery from which you rescued me—yes, ten times told, than to speak one word that should offend you to whom I owe every thing—my life—and more than life. I did not say—I did not think, that money could reward you.'

'Do not speak that word again,' said Frank, half ashamed of his pride, and half glorying in it. 'Reward! I want none but your safety and the blessed memory of having done my duty. Money—ho! I care no more for it, than for the dust I tread upon.

'I know it—I am sure of it,' cried Perdita, humbled for the moment by a sense of an elevation of soul in Frank, that exalted him far above any accidents of birth or education. 'Frank, you are rich in every thing that is good and noble—and what am I, to talk of reward—poor—poor in every thing but gratitude to you, Frank—I am not poor in that—you must not then despise me, and you will not forget me—and you will keep this ring for my sake.'

Frank took the ring, and the lily hand she extended to him—his tears fell fast upon it—he struggled for a moment with his feelings, then dashed away his tears, and half-articulating 'God bless you!' he hurried out of the apartment. Thus separating himself from the beautiful young creature for whom he had performed a most difficult service with religious fidelity; and of whose name even, he was forever to remain in ignorance.

The enterprising talent of Stuart ensured its appropriate reward. In one year from the memorable voyage before related, he commanded a vessel, and on the breaking out of the revolutionary war, he devoted himself to his country's cause, with the fervent zeal which characterised and consecrated that cause which made the common interest a matter of feeling—a family affair to each individual.

Stuart commanded an armed merchantman, and disputes with the noted Paul Jones the honor of having first struck down the British flag. However this may be, he was distinguished for his skill and intrepidity—and, above all, (and this distinction endures when the most brilliant achievments have become insignificant) for his humanity to those whom the fortune of war cast in his power.

While on a cruise off the West Indies, Stuart intercepted an enemy's ship bound to Antigua. His adversary was far superior to him in men and guns, but as it did not comport with Stuart's bold spirit to make any very nice calculations of an enemy's superiority, he prepared unhesitatingly for action. The contest was a very severe one, and the victory long doubtful; but at last the British captain struck his colours. Though we certainly are disposed to render all honour to the skill of our hero, yet we dare not claim for him the whole merit of his success, but rather solve the mystery of victory at such odds, by quoting the expression of a patriotic English boy, who said on a similar occasion—'Ah, but the Americans would not have beaten, if the Lord had not been on their side.'

After the fight, the English commander requested an interview with captain Stuart; informed him that the wife and mother of the governor of Antigua were on board his vessel, and that they were almost distracted with terror; he entreated, therefore, that they might be received with the humanity which their sex demanded, and the deference always due to high station. Stuart replied, 'that as to high station, he held that all God's creatures, who feared their Creator and did their duty, were on a dead level—and as to the duties of humanity, he trusted no American captain need go further than his own heart, for instructions how to perform them.' The British captain was ignorant of the spirit of the times, and arguing nothing favourable from Stuart's republican reply, he returned with a heavy heart to the ladies to conduct them on board the captor's ship. The elder lady, the mother, was a woman of rank, with all the pride and prejudice of high birth. The Americans she deemed all of that then much despised order—the common people; rebels and robbers were the best names she bestowed on them and in the honesty of her ignorance she sincerely believed that she had fallen into the hands of pirates. The younger lady, though deeply affected by their disastrous situation, endeavoured to calm her mother's apprehensions, and assured her that she had heard there were men of distinguished humanity among the American sailors. The old lady shook her head incredulously. 'Oh heaven help us,' she groaned, 'what can we expect from such horrid fellows, when they know they have lady Strangford and the right honourable Mrs. Liston in their power—and your beauty, Selina! your beauty child! is a fatal treasure to fall among thieves with—depend on't—arrange your veil so that it will hang in thick folds over your face—I will draw my hood close.' The precaution on her part seemed quite superfluous, but the young lady obscured some of heaven's cunningest workmanship with her impervious veil.

The servants were ordered to deliver the ladies baggage to the American captain, with the request that some necessaries might be reserved. Stuart answered that he interfered with no private property, and that all the baggage of the ladies remained at their disposal.

Lady Strangford was somewhat reassured by this generosity, and attended by her captain and followed by her daughter and servants, she proceeded to Stuart's ship. Stuart advanced to meet them and offered her his hand—she proudly declined it and passed silently on. A gust of wind blew back her hood—'Faith!' exclaimed one of the sailors who observed the scrupulosity with which she replaced it, 'the old lady had best show her face, for I'm sure we'll all give a good birth to such an iron bound coast as that.' But as the same breeze blew aside the young lady's veil, there was a general murmur of admiration. She had at the moment graciously accepted the tender of Stuart's hand, in the hope of counteracting the impression of her mother's rudeness, and when her veil was removed he had a full view of her face; conscious that many were gazing on her, she blushed deeply, and hastily readjusted it without raising her eyes. Stuart dropped her hand—smothered an exclamation, and retreated a few paces, leaving her to follow her mother alone.

One of his officers observing his emotion, said, 'How is this captain? you don't wink at a broadside, and yet you start at one flash from a lady's bright face.'

'I got a scratch on my right arm in the engagement,' returned Stuart, evading the raillery, 'and the lady's touch gave me a pang.'

He then retired to his state room, and wrote the following note, which he directed to be delivered to the young lady. 'Capt. Stuart's compliments to the ladies under his protection—he incloses a ring once bestowed on him in acknowledgment of honourable conduct, as a pledge to them that the hand that has worn such a badge shall never be sullied by a bad deed. Captain Stuart will proceed immediately to Antigua conveying the ladies with the least possible delay to their destined port.' Such a communication to prisoners of war, might naturally excite emotion in a generous bosom, but it did not account for the excess of it manifested by the young lady. She became pale and faint, and when her mother alarmed at such a demonstration of feeling, took up the note, she caught it from her and then after a second thought relinquished it to her.

'I see nothing in this, Selina,' said the old lady, after perusing and reperusing it, to throw you into such a flurry; but you, are young and are thinking no doubt of getting home to your husband and children young people's feelings are, like soft wax easily melted.'

'There is a warmth in some kindness,' rejoined the daughter earnestly, 'that ought to melt the hardest substance.,

'Really, I do not see any thing so very striking in this man's civility. It would be of course, you know, in the British navy; politeness and all that sort of thing being inborn in an Englishman; but it may be, indeed I fancy it is quite unheard of in an American.'

'Shall I write our acknowledgments, madam to Captain Stuart?' asked the young lady with evident solicitude to drop the conversation.

'Certainly—certainly my dear Selina, always be ceremoniously polite with your inferiors.'

'Madam, I think this noble Captain,' she would have added, 'has no superiors,' but afraid of further discussion she concluded her sentence with the tame addition, 'richly deserves our thanks.'

She then wrote the following note. 'Mrs. Liston in behalf of her mother-in-law, lady Strangford, and on her own part, offers her warmest thanks to captain Stuart—the ladies esteem it heaven's peculiar mercy that captain Stuart is their captor.—They have already had such experience of his magnanimity, as to render them perfectly tranquil in reposing their safety and happiness on his honour.' The ring without any allusion to it, was re-inclosed.

When captain Stuart had perused the note, he inquired if the lady had not requested to speak with him. He was answered that so far from intimating such a wish, she had said to her mother that she should remain in her state-room till she was summoned to leave captain Stuart's vessel. The captain looked extremely chagrined he knit his brows, and bit his lips, and gave his orders hastily, with the usual sea expletives appended to them—'a sure sign,' his men said, 'that something went wrong with their captain,' but these signs of repressed emotion were all the expression he allowed to his offended pride, or perhaps his better feelings. The ladies were scrupulously served, and every deferential attention paid to them that lady Strangford would have anticipated in the best disciplined ship in his majesty's service.

A few days' sail brought the schooner to the port of Antigua. She entered the harbour under a flag of truce and remained there just time enough for the disembarcation of the ladies and their suite. During this ceremony the captain remained in his birth under a pretext of a violent head-ache but it was observed that they were no sooner fairly off than he was on deck again moving about with an activity and even impetuosity that seemed quite incompatible with a debilitating malady.

Captain Stuart continued for some months a fortunate cruise about the West India islands. His was not the prudent maxim that 'discretion is the better part of valour,' but when valour would have been bootless he knew how to employ the alternative and his little schooner was celebrated as the most desperate fighter and the swiftest sailer in those seas, and her captain became so formidable that the English admiral off that station gave orders that the schooner should be followed and destroyed at all hazards.

Soon after this he was pursued by a ship of the line and compelled to take refuge in the harbour of St. Kitts, a French, and of course a friendly port to the American flag. Here he anchored his vessel, and deeming himself perfectly secure, and wearied with hard duty, he retired to his birth after setting a watch, and dismissing his crew to repose. In the middle of the night he was alarmed by an attack from the pursuing frigate, which had contrived to elude the vigilance of the fort that guarded the entrance of the harbour, and was already in such a position in relation to him as to cut off every possibility of escape. His spirit far from quailing, was exasperated by the surprise. He fought as the most courageous animals fight at bay. To increase the horror of his situation, the commander of the fort, from some fatal mistake, opened a fire upon him. He was boarded on all sides by boats manned with eighty four men. We are too ignorant of such matters, and too peaceably inclined to give any interest to the particulars of a sea-fight. Suffice it to say, that our hero did not surrender till he was himself disabled by wounds, his little band cut down and his schooner a wreck. When the British commander ascertained the actual force with which he had contended, his pride was stung with a consciousness that a victory so dearly bought, had all of defeat but the disgraceful name; and, incapable of that sympathy which a magnanimous spirit always feels with a noble captive, he arraigned captain Stuart before him as a criminal and demanded of him how he dared against the law of nations to defend an indefensible vessel.

'Did you think,' retorted Stuart with cold contempt, 'that I had gunpowder and would not burn it? do you talk to me of the law of nations! I fight after the law of nature that teaches me to spend the last kernel of powder, and the last drop of blood in my country's service.' His conqueror's temper heated before, was inflamed by Stuart's reply. He ordered him to be manacled and put in close confinement.—This conduct may appear extraordinary in the commander of a British frigate, but the English in their contest with the colonies were not always governed by those generous principles, by which they have themselves so much alleviated the miseries of war. A defeated American was treated as a lawful enemy, or a rebel, as suited the individual temper of the conqueror.

The frigate was so much injured in the fight as to render a refit necessary, and her commander sailed with his prize for Antigua.

Stuart well knew that his fidelity to his country rendered him obnoxious to the severest judgment from the admiralty court and though he might plead the services he had rendered the ladies of the governor's family in mitigation of his sentence he proudly resolved never to advert to favours which he had reason to believe had been lightly estimated.

Spirits most magnanimous in prosperity are often most lofty in adversity. Frank Stuart mutilated by wounds dejected by the fatal calamities of his faithful crew, irritated by the indignities heaped upon him by his unworthy captor, and stung by secret thoughts of some real or fancied injury—chafed and overburthened with many griefs, received and sullenly obeyed a summons to the presence of the governor. It cannot be denied, that reluctantly as he appeared before the governor, he surveyed him at his introduction with a look of keen curiosity. He was surprised to see a man rather past his prime, though not yet declined into the vale of years. With generous allowance for the effect of a tropical climate, he might not have been more than forty-five. His physiognomy was agreeable, and his deportment gentlemanly. He received captain Stuart with far more courtesy than was often vouchsafed from an officer of the crown, to one who fought under the rebel banner, and remarking that he looked pale and sick, he begged him to be seated.

Stuart declined the civility, and continued resting on a crutch, which a severe wound in his leg rendered necessary.

'You are the commander of the schooner Betsy? said the governor.

'What's left of her,' returned Stuart.

'You appear to be severely wounded,' continued the governor.

'Hacked to pieces,' rejoined Stuart, in a manner suited to the brevity of his reply.

'Your name, I believe, is Frank Stuart?'

'I have no reason to deny the name, thank God.'

'And, thank God, I have reason to bless and honour it,' exclaimed the governor, advancing and grasping Frank's hand heartily. "What metal did you deem me of, my noble friend, that I should forget such favours as you have conferred on me in the persons of my wife and mother.'

I have known greater favours than those forgotten,' said Frank, and the sudden illumination of his pale face, showed how deeply he felt what he uttered.

'Say you so!' exclaimed the governor with good humoured warmth; 'well, but that I am too poor to pay my own debts to you, I should count it a pleasure to assume those of all my species—but heaven grant, my friend, that you do not allude to my wife

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