

rived before a new change succeeded; and we were now told that it was *finally* settled for the Ulysses to go in company with two or three other ships of war, and make a running passage to Martinique, in order to hasten thither a body of troops, without waiting the interruptions, and tedious delays of a convoy; and, to this end, vessels were to be alongside, early in the morning, to take out all the stores belonging to the St. Domingo division.

Presently, after we had heard the latter report, the lieutenant, commanding the ship, came on board with instructions to the same effect. This, therefore, stands as the final arrangement: but we have already known so many *final arrangements* that we begin to regard a *last* decision, with respect to the Ulysses, in the light of a diplomatic *ultimatum*—fifty times renewed! What the morrow may bring forth is yet in embryo, and exceedingly doubtful: but the commanding officer having received his official instructions, probability would seem to render the present decision conclusive.

How we are to be disposed of is not yet determined, but, in case of this plan being adopted, we shall, no doubt, be driven to seek our births elsewhere.

I had almost forgot to notice to you that, a few mornings since, we had an opportunity of witnessing the distressful ceremony of flogging a sailor round the fleet, in consequence of a sentence passed upon him for desertion. That the sufferer might be exhibited with all the parade of a public punishment, and that all due solemnity might be given to it, a number of boats, from the different ships of war, were ordered to attend in procession. The man belonged to the Trusty. He was, accordingly, placed in the long-boat of that ship, and made to stand up, with his back uncovered ; and when, the other boats had assembled around him, to the number of fifteen, they all proceeded, in slow and solemn movement, to the several ships, whence these boats had been dispatched. Upon arriving at the side of each ship, the boats rested on their oars ; and the ship's company being piped upon deck, to witness the spectacle, ten

Stripes were inflicted upon the bare back of the delinquent—thus dividing the sentence of a hundred and fifty lashes, into fifteen separate punishments, according to the number of ships, whose boats attended. In this way the disgrace, resulting from the crime, was made public, and the punishment not only rendered more severe, but so conducted as to be an example to the whole fleet.

LETTER XIII.

Author and his comrades again on shore. Portsmouth thronged, and many compelled to sleep in chairs, hammocks, &c. Author obtains a bed by stratagem. St. Domingo stores removed from the Ulysses; and the social quartette of the wardroom ordered to separate into the George and Bridget, and the Lord Sheffield transports. Further account of the disastrous effects of the storm. Author and his comrades supposed to have been at sea with the convoy. Felicitations of an old lady at Gosport, on seeing Dr. Clegborn safely returned.

Portsmouth, Nov. 30.

PORTSMOUTH! methinks, I hear you exclaim! What, again on shore? Yes, again on shore! and, in England, too! Be not surprized! I have already told you that it is not less difficult to know our ultimatum, than that of a political negociation. Since I wrote to you last we have remained in a most unsettled state, wandering from Spithead to Portsmouth, and from Portsmouth to Spithead, even as men without a home—*sans* lodging on shore—*sans* birth on board. Some nights we have passed in the Ulysses—others we have slept at Portsmouth; but, in either, we have felt our-

selves mere intruders, the ship having been one grand scene of hurry and confusion—the town a great and overflowing throng. In consequence of the fleet returning, every inn, and every house is so crowded that beds cannot be procured—hence some sleep upon tables, some in chairs, and some in hammocks, hung in the sitting rooms ; while others find other expedients for the night.

Last night I was indebted to my profession for my pillow. I had gone the whole round of the town, and had sought throughout every street, and almost every house, in vain, when I was compelled to have recourse to a *ruse de guerre*, and by a stratagem, which I trust you will allow to have been both warrantable and innocent, succeeded in procuring an excellent bed, whilst many others were obliged to sit up the whole night.

The hour was late. I was ready to drop with fatigue, and had quite despaired of finding a resting place by other means, hence, necessity seeming to sanction the ex-

pedient, having chanced to hear that the landlord of one of the inns was ill, and confined to his room, and having once seen him, and heard his name, I walked straight into the bar, and, addressing myself to his lady, without asking for a bed—or entering upon other subjects, inquired civilly after Mr. ———. The good lady, taking it for granted that I was well acquainted with her husband, thanked me,—entered into a long detail of the symptoms of his complaint, and with an appeal, which implied that she had not mistaken my profession, asked what might be most likely to give him relief—expressing herself grateful for the hints I suggested; and, after conversing a short time, upon indifferent subjects, and drinking a glass of brandy and water, I had the good fortune to be accommodated with one of the best beds in the house; which had, probably, been reserved in case any particular friend, or any officer of high rank or interest should apply in distress.—You, my friend, will give me credit for having contributed all in my power to the relief of Mr. ———, before I left his house in the morning.

It is now reported that three forty-four gun ships, viz. the *Ulysses*, the *Experiment*, and the *Charon*, are to take in the troops, which, during the gale, were in such extreme peril on board the vast and unwieldy *Commerce de Marseilles*, and to run out with them, as speedily as possible, to the West Indies.

Consistent with this arrangement, vessels came alongside the *Ulysses* early on the morning of the 26th instant, for the purpose of removing the St. Domingo stores; and the hospital packages, which were stowed in this ship, are now distributed into two or three different vessels; which is an improvement, gained by the change, for should either of these ships chance to be lost, captured, or delayed, still a proportion of the stores may safely arrive in the others. Further advantages may also derive from the distribution, as an assortment will be more conveniently at hand for any case of emergency—such as immediate or unexpected service, detachments, or supplying different islands or colonies.

You will feel that, with respect to ourselves, it were difficult to acknowledge similar advantages from the separation of our happy and social mess, although we are, likewise, obliged to make a division of our stores, and mess-apparatus, being now instructed to make the voyage in different ships. This is matter of high regret to us all, and the more so, as we had been long enough together to become well acquainted, and happy in each other's society, besides having jointly provided ourselves for the voyage. But it consists with the many uncertainties that surround us, and is quite within the limits of our expectation.

We have received orders to repair, two of us to the *George* and *Bridget*, and two to the *Lord Sheffield*: Master and myself feel ourselves fortunate in being appointed to the latter, for we had been on board the *George* and *Bridget*, and had not acquired any strong predilection in her favor. She wears the appearance of a heavy, dull-sailing vessel; and seems not to offer any thing superior in her accommodations. The cabin is deep,

dark, and gloomy, and her general appearance conveys nothing of neatness nor arrangement, but all about her looks *sombre*, unclean, and comfortless. The Lord Sheffield we have not yet seen, but her captain tells us she is a fast sailing ship, and fitted up in a superior style, with her cabin neat, light, and lively as a "drawing-room." We do not give implicit confidence to the report of one so strongly interested in speaking her fair; but the probabilities are much in her favor, she being a West India trader, and, no doubt, better fitted for passengers, and better adapted, in all respects, for a tropical climate. The George and Bridget is a large Baltic timber ship, and, of course, has not had the same occasion either for conveying or accommodating passengers.

Master and myself have also the prospect of a further advantage in the society of our friendly inspector Mr. Weir, who intends to take his birth on board the Lord Sheffield. Should we be fortunate enough thus to form a trio, we shall have far less cause to feel our regretted separation than our friends

who are doomed to make the voyage in the gloomy George and Bridget.

We have met with many of the officers at Portsmouth who were out, in the fleet, during the late destructive gale. Their reports are sad and afflicting beyond all the suggestions even of fearful anticipation. Deducting in due allowance for the augmented terrors of young and fresh-water sailors, still the whole scene, and its result have been most painfully disastrous; for, melancholy to repeat! multitudes of souls have perished; and, no less than six or seven vessels have not been heard of since the storm.

By our letters we find that many of our friends had imagined us to be at sea, and, consequently, they had read our destiny in fate's darkest page. We are happy in the power of relieving them from their fears, and rejoice that those with whom we were in the habit of more immediate correspondence, have not been exposed to similar apprehensions.

From a like error having obtained here, we are hailed, by almost all we meet, with cordial greetings on our safe return. In our walk, through the streets of Gosport, we chanced to see an old lady, with whom Dr. Cleghorn had been an inmate, during his attendance at the Haflar hospital, and the very instant the good old dame espied us, she ran to us, with out stretched arms, and welcoming the doctor, with warm embraces, spake the anxious fears with which her bosom had beat towards him; while she expressed herself enraptured to meet him, again, safe on shore. Never were friendship and regard more naturally, or more powerfully evinced. The good old woman's eyes alternately overflowed with tears, or sparkled with youthful fire: and she told the anxious griefs, and vivid terrors she had suffered, with all the glowing expression of a fond mother who had just recovered her lost, and only son.

Upon such occasions the anxiety of immediate friends and relatives is an expected tribute, and it operates as a consolation and support in the hour of peril. But the acute

and impressive concern of this kind-hearted old woman surpassed all that is looked for on the part of those, who only stand in the relation of distant acquaintances. It was, in so far, the more grateful, and not only did honor to human nature, but stood in proof of the high worth, and respectability of our esteemed comrade.

LETTER XIV.

Perilous expedition of the author and others to the Mother-bank. They save themselves on board the Diana frigate. Hospitality and humane attentions of the officers of that ship. Lieutenant Davy a valuable officer, and an accomplished man. Author and the companions of his peril pass the night on board the Diana. Proceed to the Mother-bank, and embark on board the Lord Sheffield. First impression from the appearance of that ship highly favorable.

Mother-bank, Dec. 3.

MY late letter to you, from Portsmouth, had nearly been a last address. In my passage from thence to the Lord Sheffield, at the Mother-bank, I was exposed to such imminent peril as to have had scarcely a hope of escape. The necessary arrangements being made for occupying our new births, I left Portsmouth in a small four-oared boat, belonging to the Lord Sheffield, accompanied by Mr. Jaffray (the master of the ship) and Mr. M Lean, of the hospital department; when, on our way to the Mother-bank, we were suddenly overtaken by a violent, and, situated as we were, most perilous storm.

The sky blackened ; the tearing winds roared ; and the tumid sea, gathering into frightful mountains, rushed before the wind in boisterous loudness, threatening us with instant destruction. Tossed from wave to wave, and dashed and rolled about, amidst the broken mountains of water, every moment seemed likely to be our last ; for any one of the heavy seas might have upset our little bark, or have broken over us, and sent us at once, to the bottom. Beset by multitudes of rugged and liquid hills, rupturing on all quarters, and rolling and tumbling one over another towards her, so small a boat seemed to have no chance, nor even a possibility of maintaining herself upon the rude and ever changing surface. From the deep swelling of the sea, together with the constant agitation and breaking of the waves, the sailors could not take sufficient depth to pull steadily with their oars ; nor could the boat be made to obey the helm. At one moment we were raised, as it were, on a pinnacle—at the next ingulphed in deep shade between two roaring surges, towering high above us, and seeming to say, “ Ye shall never rise again.” Yet, quickly, were

we cast upon a new formed summit, and as suddenly dashed again into the vale of still more rugged billows, each contending in hasty strife, which should be the messenger of our fate.

Poor M^cLean, who had taken his seat at the bow, in order to trim the boat, trembled, and turned pale with fear; the sailors grew tired and dissatisfied; and the captain, with a countenance strongly expressive of trouble and anxiety, begged of us not to speak, lest we should divert his attention from the helm; upon the management of which our only chance seemed to depend. Sitting at his elbow, in dead silence, as he desired, I carefully, watched his features as the barometer of my hopes and fears, and you will believe that I felt not much at ease, upon observing him betray manifest symptoms of alarm. To move was even worse than to speak, and might be instant destruction to us all, hence it only remained to us to sit in solemn stillness, and meet whatever fate should overtake us.

The captain assures me that I behaved uncommonly well, upon the occasion ; but I fear all the merit due to me was merely negative, for I am not sure that my conduct was not more the effect of resignation, than of fortitude. Seeing that no effort, no power that I possessed, could, in any degree, aid our safety, I resigned myself, in implicit obedience, to the captain's better judgment ; and, without expressing, indeed I might say, without harbouring useless fears, sat calmly prepared for any result that might occur.

To reach the Lord Sheffield was absolutely impossible ; for the wind and tide were both in concert with the storm, to prevent it : and to return to Portsmouth was, scarcely, less difficult, or less perilous, from the inability of our little boat to resist the enormous following waves, impelled by all the force of the gale and the tide.

In this critical dilemma it was decided that we should bear away, and steer for the nearest ship there was any hope of our being

able to fetch, and the captain, encouraging the sailors to continue at their oars, and bear away to leeward, directed the helm accordingly. In this attempt we struggled on, often washed with the heavy sprays, which struck against the boat, and as frequently almost upset by the tearing gusts of wind, or driven to the bottom by the disordered waves. But perseverance, together with great dexterity and address in the management of the boat, at length, succeeded in bringing us alongside the Diana frigate, where we were kindly received, and even cherished as friends rescued from the devouring deep.

Having witnessed the danger to which we had been exposed, the officers, in the most liberal manner, welcomed us on board, and refusing to hear a word of apology, insisted upon our not attempting to put to sea again until every appearance of the gale had subsided. Indeed they gave orders that our boat should be hoisted on board, and desired that we would think only of making ourselves comfortable for the night. In this they were

imperative, nor will you imagine that our obedience was reluctant.

The *Diana* was under the command of Lieutenant Davy, in the absence of Captain Faulkner. This gentleman gave directions for our receiving every accommodation the ship could afford, and tendered his services in a manner that made it grateful to accept the kindness bestowed. Every individual seemed to emulate the commanding officer in his friendly attention towards our party, inasmuch that we had cause to rejoice in the peril that had cast us on board.

As soon as we were made dry, and enabled to feel a little like ourselves, we were invited to the dinner table of the mess. The board was spread with plenty, and we partook with Mr. Davy, and the whole party of officers, who all vied with each other in kind hospitality towards the rescued strangers. Good humour prevailed; the conversation was agreeable; and the bottle passed freely until evening, when a party was formed to

a rubber at whist, and, at night, we were conducted to some of the best births of the ship.

It happened that captain Jaffray recognised an old acquaintance, in the person of the surgeon, and M^cLean proved to be known to one of the young gentlemen of the cockpit, so that we were not such entire strangers as we had expected.

We were pleased to hear every person, with whom we conversed, speak of lieutenant Davy in the highest terms of praise. He was entitled to our best wishes, and we owed him much respect and gratitude, we were, therefore, exceedingly happy to learn that he had equally the esteem of his captain, his mess-mates, and the sailors. As an officer he is respected by all, and he is equally valued, and beloved as a man. Combining a pleasant suavity of manners, and mildness of command, with a correct, and firm discipline, he proves himself to be at once a sailor, and a gentleman. Active and spirited as an officer, he is an example to those about him,

and the regularity and order which obtain throughout the ship, and govern all its duties, evince the promptitude with which such an example is followed. The sailors both love and respect him, and they obey him from inclination, while they fear to offend him. As a companion, he is amiable and engaging. His address is easy; his manners are accomplished; and, independent of his great kindness to us, in the hour of peril, his general conduct, and the handsome report of his messmates, could not but call forth our esteem.

We passed the night in rest and comfort. In the morning the weather was settled and fine, therefore, after taking breakfast with the Diana's pleasant mess, our boat was lowered down, and we made the best of our way to the Lord Sheffield, reluctantly quitting the hospitable party, with whom misfortune had brought us acquainted.

Without further interruption we reached the Mother-bank, and I have now the pleasure to address you, in safety, from the Lord Sheffield,

a very fine West India ship, and as superior to the gloomy George and Bridget, even as her captain had represented. She is thoroughly clean, has a general air of neatness, and, if we may judge from her appearance, seems likely to verify the commander's report of her sailing. She is conveniently fitted out for passengers, and is, expressly, calculated for the West Indies, having awnings, scuttles, port-holes and all the necessary accommodations for the climate. The cabin is commodious, and is fitted up with mahogany wainscot, pier glasses, chairs, sofa, &c. due regard being paid to taste and ornament.

We have several guns on board, and wear the appearance of being well armed, but the ship is not sufficiently manned to defend herself against a regular attack, and this is what we have most to lament in our change from the Ulysses, for, perhaps, in most other respects our situation is improved. In point of convenience and accommodation the Lord Sheffield is far preferable to our late favorite—the cabin being a neat and distinct sitting room, and the sleeping births, separate state

rooms entirely shut away from it, and enclosed as private apartments. Here we shall require no canvas partition to keep us from the noisy crowd of another mess, but may feel ourselves as retired and uninterrupted as we could be in a private room on shore.

LETTER XV.

Excursion to the Commerce de Marseilles at St. Helen's. Appearance of that ship as viewed from a small boat at her side. Author visits his comrades on board the George and Bridget : goes to the play at Portsmouth. Tumultuous proceedings at the Theatre. Author returns to the Lord Sheffield. Dr. Cleghorn joins the mess on board that ship. Symptoms of sailing. Linen taken wet from the wash-tub.

Lord Sheffield, Dec. 8.

AGAIN I have been unfettled, and moving about from place to place, making my home sometimes on board, sometimes on shore. Upon examining my baggage, soon after I joined the Lord Sheffield, I perceived that one of my boxes was missing ; and it has cost me a long, and very sickly round, to recover it, in consequence of our old ship, the Ulysses, having changed her birth, and dropped down to St. Helen's to take in troops from the Commerce de Marseilles. In following her we were brought into an open and heavy-swellling sea, the motion of which made me very unwell, and led me to contemplate the probable suf-

ferings I shall have to support upon the long voyage we are about to undertake.

Capt. Jaffray never having been on board a ship of such immense bulk, availed himself of my necessities, and took the command of the boat, upon this excursion, in order to view the vast Commerce de Marseilles. I wish it were practicable to convey to you, in words, the sense of grandeur with which the mind is inspired on first approaching such an enormous floating battery; or to paint to you the sensations excited by rowing, in a small boat, close under her stern, and her sides; but it were quite impossible for the pen to describe how diminutive we felt, and how immense and wonderful she appeared.—To express it by the image of the knat and the camel, it were necessary to suppose the former the minutest of its race, and the latter hugely overgrown. Looking up from our little skiff the sight was truly awful—the figure of the ship was forgotten—the hull appeared a mountain, the masts lofty obelisks erected upon it; and the tremendous batteries, projecting from her sides, conveyed the idea of a stu-

pendous rock hanging over us, fortified with many tiers of cannon.

We also availed ourselves of this excursion to make a visit to our friends on board the *George and Bridget*, which ship appears still more *sombre* and uncomfortable, after witnessing the neatness of the *Lord Sheffield*.

Having to pass another night or two at Portsmouth, and finding that a company of players had arrived, we took the opportunity of visiting the theatre. The performance, as might be expected, was *très médiocre*, yet it might have passed off tolerably well, and with sufficient amusement for the evening, but for an unhappy interruption, which arose from some of the actors opposing the will of the audience, respecting a song, and introduced a scene of tumult and disorder, very like what I before mentioned to you from Southampton.

The performers at the country theatres do not seem to feel, like those of the London boards, how much they are the servants of the

public. In town, it may be remarked that the house, on all occasions, is perfectly obedient to the audience. This is discreet on the part of the managers and the actors, and entitles them to some merit, for it is often a matter of astonishment and admiration how they can govern themselves, so implicitly as they do, and maintain enough of forbearance to bend submissive to the will of the public.

The loyal song of "God save the King" being called for, some of the performers advanced to the front of the stage, and, bowing to the audience, obtained a general silence, from the idea that they came forward to sing it: but, to the surprize of the multitude, they began the air of "Rule Britannia," which, however grateful to the ears of Englishmen, was not the song demanded; therefore from a sense of indignity, at the actors assuming the quality of dictators, they strenuously opposed it, and a violent clamor ensued. "Rule Britannia" was, however, continued, notwithstanding the loud opposition, and the general cry for "God save the King;" and after having gone through this, amidst all the con-

fusion of groans, hisses, and every noise of disapprobation, one of the actors advanced a step before the others, and insolently brandishing his arms, began the song that had been called for, which was then sung without spirit, and with the most careless indifference. Tell me if a London audience would have submitted to such an insult ; or if a metropolitan performer would have been hardy or imprudent enough to have hazarded such misconduct ?—No ! methinks I hear you reply : he would have been driven from the stage, and would never have dared——never have presumed to return, until repentance and humility had led him forth, in due submission, to offer his apologies.

We returned, yesterday, to the Lord Sheffield, and you will be glad to know that we were accompanied by our friend Cleghorn, who, in consequence of a new arrangement, is permitted to join our mess, so that we have again the prospect of crossing the Atlantic pleasantly *en quartette*. Dr. Henderson is less fortunate, for, while we are, agreeably, associated to our former number of professional

colleagues, he is left to make the passage alone, or, perhaps, crowded with strangers in the gloomy George and Bridget: nor do circumstances now seem to afford any probability of a further change, for both the appearance of the weather, and the report of the hour, seem to imply that we have, at length, made our *final* visit on shore.

To-day a signal has been given for the fleet to unmoor; and, in consequence of this, the Lord Sheffield has dropped down from the Mother-bank to the Eastern part of Spithead.—We have taken the precaution of bringing our linen on board, wet from the wash-tub, lest we should be compelled to leave it behind, for should the wind continue at the point from which it now blows, we may be to-morrow on our passage.

LETTER XVI.

Convoy sails on the 9th of December. Author promises to make notes on the passage for his friend, if the sea will let him. Splendid appearance of the convoy. It meets with tempestuous weather. Description of a storm at sea. Elements hostile to the expedition. Gale repeated. Lord Sheffield left alone upon the ocean—Prevented from giving relief to a sinking ship. A melancholy and afflicting scene ensues.

Lord Sheffield, at sea, Dec. 31.

AT length we are at sea! the convoy sailed from Spithead and St. Helens, the day after I sent you my last letter, and I now lift my pen to you upon the bosom of the wide Atlantic. From the time of the ever memorable attempt of the fleet to proceed upon the voyage, in the month of November, the adverse winds, which had driven it back, in so shattered and disastrous a condition, detained it, in harbour, until the 9th instant, when it again put to sea under a serene sky, and propitious breezes; but, notwithstanding these favorable appearances, we have, since, had a most harassing and perilous succession of storms, one having, scarcely,

subsided before it has been followed by another, and I have now so entirely lost my confidence in the weather, that although I am sitting in tolerable quietness to write to you, at this moment, I scarcely dare hope to finish my letter before I am again tossed from my seat, by a renewal of the gale—feeling that the present may be only one of those short respites, which, like the delusive intervals of convulsion, only prepare the body for a more violent struggle.

It is now the last day of the old year, and, whichever way I look, my eye surveys only an unbounded ocean. When we may again see land, it were difficult to conjecture, but my pen shall prepare for you some *notes* of our proceedings, occasionally, when the sea will permit me to guide it; and I will send them by any vessel we may chance to meet on the passage, or by the earliest packet, after we reach the West Indies.

On the first morning of our being at sea, the weather was clear and mild, and the whole fleet, consisting of nearly three hun-

dred vessels, of various magnitude and burden, was assembled in compact form, occupying a certain circle of the ocean's surface, and gliding smoothly on the passage. It formed one of the grandest spectacles ever beheld. Never shall I forget climbing up the shrouds, as high as the main top, to enjoy it in all its perfection. The sun shone; the sea was smooth and undisturbed; the air serene. All sails were set, and the vessels being near to each other, the white canvases seemed spread, in crowded continuation, throughout the whole extent of the fleet. Looking down upon the multitude of ships, it created the idea of a whole nation moving upon the waters. It was a proud emblem of Britain's glory. We appeared to command the whole empire of the main; and the prospect, being calculated to excite flattering hopes of victory and success, could not fail to be viewed, by every true Briton, with delight. But alas! how delusive were these auspicious dawnings! We had advanced but little on our passage, before a dire reverse succeeded. The sun was now obscured; a thick fog overspread the ocean; and the

whole fleet was shut from our sight. Dark clouds gathered around; the heavens scowled in terrific blackness; the shadowed sea swelled with pregnant throes; and the ships heaved in sickening motion. At length the heavy clouds burst into a roaring storm; the waters broke into huge and tremendous mountains; and the ships rolled and pitched, in dreadful agitation, upon the ruptured surface. All seemed a mighty conflict. The boisterous gale tore, in hideous sound; the fleeting clouds hurried before the wind; the rugged ocean, in violent disorder, hurled mountain over mountain, and issued forth loud-roaring threats of destruction. The ships, struggling against the wild and furious waves, were, at one moment, tossed on a pinnacle to the heavens, and, the next, plunged into a gloomy deep, surrounded by dark and disordered mountains; whence there seemed no possible escape. In an instant they were again amidst the clouds, and again as suddenly sunk in the dark valley of liquid hills: thus, alternately, threatening us with the danger of being hurled from a summit, or swallowed up in a frightful gulf of the unfathomable ocean. Nor

had we, barely, to encounter the common dangers of the sea, but, from being amidst a crowded fleet, were, every instant, liable to the additional peril of running aboard some neighbouring ship, and being dashed in pieces, or driven, at once, to the bottom; and to this we were equally exposed by the darkness of the night, and by a heavy fog. The terror of these critical moments is necessarily augmented by the lively apprehensions of those who are but little accustomed to the sea: nor is this wonderful, for, where every motion, and every sound is calculated to excite alarm, he must be more than a philosopher, he must be a sailor, who can regard even the less imminent perils with unconcern.

During a storm, the deep rollings of the ship, her deeper lurches, the thundering concussion of heavy seas against her sides, the hollow dreary sound of the wind howling in her sails and rigging, the hurry and clamor of the ship's company, the clattering of broken plates, dishes, and basons, and the dismal creakings of the masts, bulkheads, and

other parts of the vessel, all conspire to create tumult and confusion, and to keep alive the most trembling apprehensions. At one moment the ship is upset, the next you feel her strike upon a rock: suddenly she is shattered to atoms; or, foundering, sinks to the bottom; and, while you are absorbed in these sensations, a sea, or heavy spray breaks over the deck, a threatening wave beats in the quarter gallery, or a rolling mountain dashes the stern windows into the cabin. The water now pouring upon you, from every opening, your fears are confirmed by the confusion of the moment, and you feel that the vessel is positively sinking. It has been my lot to experience, precisely, these sensations. At one time I have hurried upon deck, in the intention of throwing myself into the sea, there to cling to a part of the wreck, in the hope of outliving the storm: At another I have sat in silence, upon my birth, with the water creeping up to my knees, and, hopeless of being saved, have resolved to submit to my fate, and seek the deep, without useless bewailings. Quickly, the accident has been repaired, and, in the moment of

despair, I have been greeted with tidings of safety.

Often, in the midst of threatening appearances, and manifold disquietudes, you are visited by the carpenter, with the "dead-lights," who, fixing them in the stern windows, nails you up in darkness, as in a coffin, and with as much *sang froid* as men of his calling screw up the bodies of those who are actually dead: at the same time replying, with unfeeling indifference, to your anxious and fearful inquiries regarding the necessity of that step being taken, that it is "*only to keep the spray from breaking the windows!*" But I am fatiguing you with a detail of what every one knows; what all have read; and most, who have been at sea, have felt: let me, therefore, revert, from storms in general, to our present voyage, in which you will find, perhaps, more of novelty.

What shall I say to you of our great armada—of our unfortunate, unhappy fleet! Ere this can reach you, you will have had many, alas! too many melancholy proofs of

the disasters which have befallen it. Did ever the seas—did the heavens ever fight so cruelly against an expedition! were ever the elements so decidedly hostile to the great and flattering efforts of man!

To convey any adequate idea of our situation would require the best energies of your own all-animating pen; but, as that pen is but the representative of your imagination, call this in aid of an humbler quill, and you may have some conception of the peril and the horrors to which we have, already, been exposed, and which we may still have to encounter! After the violence of the first gale, most of our scattered fleet, owing to the great attention and exertions of Admiral Christian and his officers, was again assembled, and we felicitated ourselves in the hope of proceeding to our place of destination without further interruption: but the turbulent mountains of a disordered sea were, scarcely, reduced to a more tranquil surface, before the storm was renewed with additional violence. Quickly we were more scattered than before. Many of the ships, unable to resist this second shock, were,

now, much injured, and obliged to put back into port. Some, we suppose, again joined the admiral, and others wholly lost the convoy. We were among the latter, but when the weather cleared we fell in with a small division of the fleet, with which we sailed in company, for several days. Further repetitions of the storm again separated us, and we were tossed about, seeing no more than three, sometimes but two, and often only a single ship, until, at length, we found ourselves quite alone upon the broad and merciless ocean.

Previous to our final separation we witnessed a scene of a most melancholy and distressing nature. Knowing the exquisite sensibility of your feelings, on such occasions, I ought to spare them the sad relation, but that it may exhibit to you one of the dangers of the sea, in a point of view under which you may not, perhaps, have contemplated it. At the most furious and terrific moment of the storm, we suffered the cruel affliction of seeing a neighbouring ship in the utmost danger of being lost, without having the power of affording her any relief. She hoisted a flag, and fired guns

of distress ; but the gale was so dreadful, and the sea running so frightfully high, that it was, totally, impossible to give her assistance. We stood towards her, and kept her anxiously in view, in the hope of administering aid, should she be supported upon the surface until the weather became moderate. Unhappily the storm continued increasing rather than diminishing in violence. We looked fearfully on the ship, expecting every instant to see her go to the bottom. She repeated signals of distress. We heard them, and saw them, but were unable to obey them. It was a most melancholy and awful crisis. We regarded her in anxious forebodings, examining her, both with the eye and with the telescope, again and again. Her masts were standing ; her sails entire ; and the rigging, apparently, perfect ; but this, which to landsmen would have seemed favourable, we discovered to be the very reverse ; for, hence it was that our best sailors formed the fatal conclusion that her situation was hopeless, and that she must have sprung a leak !

We watched the heavens, and the wa-

ters in painful solicitude, but saw no relaxation of the storm. Tremendous mountains at one moment concealed the wretched ship from our view: at another we appeared to be enveloped, together, in the same dark and dismal gulf. You will conceive our sensations upon feeling that, in one instant more, this deep pit of the ocean might be the grave of every soul on board. Signals, denoting the extreme of danger, were repeated: the sea rolled in terrific disorder: we bent our eyes in vain towards the vessel, deploring her threatened fate, and our own inability to prevent it! Night came on. We lost her in darkness, and——beheld her no more!

Heaven grant that she may be in safety! But we all fear she cannot have withstood the violence of the gale, which continued until morning, and throughout the whole of the following day, with unremitted fury. Our anxiety was also much augmented, from having seen masts, spars, and other pieces of wreck, float by the side of our ship, when the storm abated. Until now I had regarded the sailing in company with a fleet as a kind of

social protection ; but henceforth I shall feel no desire to move in crowded society on the ocean. Being alone, we now suffer the risk of falling into the hands of the enemy ; but, compared to our late suffering, even the vilest of French prisons loses its horrors ; for, to a man of any sensibility, what can be so truly afflicting as to see a number of his fellow-creatures plunged in the deepest distress, and to feel himself withheld from tendering them relief ! Our solitary situation must prevent a repetition of such a scene : it also removes the peril of our being injured or destroyed, by other ships, of which we had much dread, while we were amidst the fleet : for it is not only during a storm that there is danger of one ship running foul of another : it is equally, and perhaps, even, more likely to happen when the wind abates,—more particularly if this occurs, suddenly, for then the ship, not being supported by the resistance of the gale, gives way to the heavy seas, and, from disobeying the helm, is liable to be driven aboard other vessels. Often, at this moment, as well as during the storm, the ships appear to have no weight, or depth of

purchase in the water, but they toss and roll about, at the mercy of the waves, like empty barrels floating upon the surface.

At the period of separating from the fleet we knew not our place of destination, and hence it became expedient to open the sealed instructions: from which we discovered that Carlisle Bay, in Barbadoes, was fixed as the general rendezvous of the fleet. Here, therefore, all our attractions lie, and to this port we are endeavouring to steer; but adverse winds, and unprosperous gales perpetually oppose our progress. It is now more than three weeks from the date of our departure, and we are yet beating about much nearer to you than you imagine, having, hitherto, advanced, on our passage, only twelve degrees of longitude, and three of latitude. But in whatever latitude or longitude—amidst whatever storms or dangers, I am always

Yours.

LETTER XVII.

The new year mild and of good promise. Æolus and Neptune enraged against the youthful deputy of time. Storms and gales repeated. Delight of associating with congenial friends. A good ship scarcely perishable at open sea. Accidents and disasters of the Lord Sheffield. Contrast between landsmen and seamen during a storm. Apathy of sailors regarding the weather. Their peculiar degrees of comparison. Cool replies of an old steward. Odd tumbles, and postures of the passengers amusing to the sailors. Dinner scene during a gale. Superstition and prejudices of sailors. Whistling on board ship. Mother Cary's chicken. Blowing for a wind. Marks of the Lord Sheffield having passed the Azores.

At sea, Jan. 24.

ON concluding my former letter, I had pleased myself with the expectation of not communicating another sentence of woe: indeed I had hoped not to resume my pen upon the face of the restless Atlantic; and that, long ere this, I might have addressed you from the island of Barbadoes; but, unhappily, nearly four more tedious weeks have been consumed, in struggling against the united violence of merciless winds, and a relentless ocean. New-

year, attended by gentle and fair-robed zephyrs, presented himself in smiles. His countenance was benign—his every look bespoke mildness and tranquillity. We did funeral honors to his tempestuous father, without the affectation of grief; and greeted each other on escaping from his turbulent government, to a milder reign. We now sailed pleasantly on our passage. The breeze was fair—the sea smooth and tranquil—the sun shone with genial warmth—the ship advanced in steady motion; and our cares were dissipated in the hope that all our disasters were buried in the grave of boisterous *Old—year*. But, alas! our cup was not yet full—the period of probation was not thus to end. Æolus and stern Neptune, enraged at the mildness of the new deputy of hoary time, poured forth all their ire; and, tearing away the delusive veil, openly, exposed our error, proclaiming, in loud tyranny, that the young steward of the winged hours was not the milder son, but the very twin-brother of the late tempestuous agent. Our flattering prospect had not the duration of a day! Ere morning dawned, dark clouds obscured the sun; the tumid ocean heaved

in threatening anguish, and, a thick storm gathering at the horizon, the winds and waves rushed into conflict, and, in all the dreadful wrath of tempest, pronounced themselves the messengers of angry Gods !

From this moment gale has succeeded to gale, and storm to storm, defeating all our happiest calculations ; even the best established prognostics have deceived us, clouds separating, a change of wind, heavy rain, and the like, are no longer any indication of an abating storm. At one time, under the clearest azure sky, and the brightest, fairest sun, the dry wind tears in keenest violence, as if rushing, from the parched heavens, to devour all the fluids of the ocean : at another, loaded with moisture, it bursts into sudden gusts and squalls, heaving the ship, as it were, out of the sea, and leaving her suspended in air ; and, as if the fates had resolved to torment us, whenever the wind, and the heavy waves have a little subsided, and we have looked for steady sailing on our passage, a breeze has sprung up, from the most unfavorable point of the heavens, which, though mode-

rate, for a moment, has quickly increased, again, to a storm. Seven long weeks, now, have passed, and with difficulty can it be said that we have had an interval of one diurnal round, free from the perils of raging winds, or of the huge and shattered mountains thereby engendered!

Did I not feel that I am steering *from* my friends, the cruel perplexities of this tormenting voyage would lead me into a vow—perhaps somewhat rash—never again to intrust my body to so fickle and merciless a guardian as the sea. But not all her frowns or threats—not all the perils of which she is mistress, nor any thing short of death, can deter me from again hazarding my person, in order to return amidst those I love. Novelty has many charms. It is pleasing to regard society under all its forms, and to contemplate the human species in every country and every clime; but even in this, the great enjoyment centers in the endearing hope of returning, some day, to be stationary amongst our friends; for to associate with those of similar minds, whose dispositions—whose interests and pursuits are congenial

with our own, is the greatest gift of society—the highest boon of civilized life : beyond this, the world has nothing to offer.

You, who know me, are well aware that my mind delights not to dwell on the dark surface of events. The severity of the trial is perhaps at an end. Undaunted, I yet look forward to the happy termination of our passage ; and, even, in our present suffering, see much of eventual good, for it will arm me against a multitude of future alarms ; already, indeed, am I become so courageous a sailor as to regard the recurring gales with patient firmness ; and to look with tranquil eye at the immense mountains which strike the ship, or the dashing waves which out-top her masts : indeed I can almost fancy that a good ship is imperishable at open sea ; and could you know what ours has borne, you would be inclined to countenance the opinion. She has amply proved herself to be what the sailors term *a good sea boat* ; and, from what I have said of our passage, you will feel the force of the technical expression that *she can live in all weathers*. The shocks and beatings she

has withstood, are almost incredible. Often have I felt astonished that the huge seas and raking winds have not torn every plank asunder, and shivered her to atoms. Her top-masts, yards, and different parts of the rigging have been carried away—her sails split—the quarter boards stove in: things have been washed overboard from the deck—seas have broken over her—sprays dashed in the cabin windows—and various other accidents and disasters have befallen her: yet all have been repaired, and she still rides triumphant!

Often our party meet with drooping countenances, and sit down in gloomy silence, not recovering their spirits throughout the day! At other times they grow restless and irritable, and cannot remain a quarter of an hour in the same place. During the severity of the storm I have often remarked how differently the scene has affected the minds of those accustomed, and those who are unaccustomed to the sea. The sailor, patiently observes the gale, lowers the yards and topmasts, furls or reefs his sails, makes all snug, and thanks the tempest for a holiday:—heedless of the

perils which surround him, he extends himself in his hammock, or reclines his head on a plank or a locker, and, courting the tranquil embraces of Morpheus, regards the howlings of the storm as his peaceful lullaby. The landsman, on the contrary, is restless and impatient—listens in terror to the wind—and shrinks in agitation at every sound: the dangers that are, he magnifies, and his mind is tortured in the creation of others, which do not exist. Each moment, to him, breeds new alarm. He asks a thousand questions, dictated by a thousand fears. He goes upon deck—looks round with affrighted eyes—his feet are unable to support his trembling body—he clings to the companion door-way, and, thence, ventures to steal a look at the ocean and its waves. His head grows giddy—nausea seizes him, and he again descends to the cabin in extreme anxiety. He fixes himself in the leeward corner—places his elbows on his knees—his head on his hands, and, concealing his eyes, bewails his wretched fate! Suddenly he again seeks the deck—multiplies all the perils of the moment—storms the captain and sailors with new questions, all expressive of his

terror—fastens again to the companion doorway—gazes at the masts and sails—observes the yards dip into the ocean—feels the yieldings of the ship—imagines she is upset—fancies the masts are falling overboard, and, in each rolling wave, beholds a devouring sea. Destruction occupies his mind! He returns below—impatiently seats himself—seeks relief in a book—is unable to read—throws away the volume—again takes it up, and again throws it down: nausea returns, and he is seized with dizziness and reaching. His bodily feelings, now, augment the anguish and disquietude of his mind, and, at length, as a remedy for both, he prostrates himself in his birth; but is still wretched and comfortless—all rest is denied him—sickness and anxiety remain—and he lies rolling, in fear and anguish, to wear out the fury of the storm!

Strong as this contrast may appear, I have often seen it, fully, exemplified. The passengers in the *Lord Sheffield*, being of the hospital staff, are mostly fresh-water sailors, and a large majority of them can bear ample testimony to these remarks. It has happened

that I have, before, had occasion to make many voyages by sea, but my stomach assures me that I can never become a sailor: yet, from this long trial, in bad weather, I find that I am growing courageous, for I now can witness the seeming apathy of older sailors without surprize; and can even listen to the returning gale, rather with regret for the delay it occasions, than with any apprehension, regarding the dangers to which we are exposed. When, from the tossing of the ship, we are unable to walk, or even to remain upon our legs, we seek a quiet corner of the cabin—seat ourselves—take up a book—and, in patient reading, hope for better weather. Occasionally we venture, in giddy and stumbling step, as high as the companion door-way, and, looking round, amidst all the rage of the storm, prophesy gentle breezes and smooth seas. In these visits we often feel wonder and amazement at observing the carpenter and his mates working, quietly, in the tops; and the sailors hanging about the yards and rigging, in seeming unconcern—toffed by each rolling sea from side to side, far beyond the limits of the ship, and, not unfrequently, while seated at the end of the yard

dipped and drenched in the foaming billows of the ocean! The indifference of sea-faring men to the dangers around them is exemplified in every part of their conduct, and, even, in their common expressions. Often when we have felt the most vivid apprehensions from the fierceness of the storm, and the huge roughness of the ocean, and have, tremblingly, sought relief, by an appeal to the captain or mate, we have met only a look of unconcern, or, at most, the laconic reply "*it blows fresh.*" From their quaint and technical terms it is difficult for any one, unaccustomed to the sea, to know precisely what they mean to convey. Their degrees of comparison are peculiar to themselves, and, at first, not easy to be comprehended: taking the term fresh as the positive, they say it blows *fresh*—it blows *strong*—it blows *hard*: and again, to denote the severest possible gale, they assume hard as the positive—add an oath to form the comparative, and augment that oath to constitute the superlative: thus, it blows *hard*; it blows *d—— hard*; it blows *d—— hard by ——*. Previous to this extremity we are commonly furnished with an omen, by the captain com-

ing down, below, to change his long coat for a short round jacket, and from this we always prognosticate unfavorably, it being a precaution which denotes busy, and perhaps, perilous employment.

Our steward is a very old sailor, tough as the ropes of the ship, and callous to every alarm ; and, being the person more immediately about us, it most frequently falls to his lot to be teased with questions regarding the weather, the wind, and the sea ; and the steady apathy of his feelings, together with his excessive *sang froid* and unconcern, have been often subjects of remark—sometimes, indeed, of vexation to us ; for his utter insensibility to the circumstances, which called forth our cares and alarms, have, occasionally, provoked us. During one of our perilous storms, the wind having shifted to a point somewhat less unfavorable, although still blowing a terrific gale, the usual question was asked—Well, steward ! how is the weather ? “ *Squally, squally, gentlemen—the wind’s coming about—be fine weather soon.*” According to the feelings of this old weather-beaten tar, the severest

tempests that we had suffered, had been only squalls, for, in the midst of the most tremendous gales, his reply had always been "*Squally, a little squally, gentlemen.*"—"Are we making any way, steward?" "*Oh yes, fine wind, quite free, going large, make six or seven knots.*" "But surely we have too much of this good wind, steward?" "*Oh no, fine wind as can blow, gentlemen—but a little squally—rather squally.*"

The ship's company often reap much amusement from the little accidents—the ridiculous tumbles—and the strange postures which the passengers are thrown into by the unsteady motion of the vessel: indeed we now feel so little alarm during a gale, that we sometimes disregard its perils, and join in their smiles and jokes at the ludicrous occurrences which happen among ourselves. Hogarth might have feasted upon them. In the confusion of motions, caused by the heavy seas, if we attempt to walk, we *fetch way*, and are tossed to the farthest side of the cabin, in all the odd and uncommon figures that can be imagined: and, often, before we can regain our legs, the ship yields to another wave, and we are

tumbled, in the most ludicrous manner, to the opposite side, kicking, struggling, or crawling, amidst a confusion of moving chairs, stools, boxes, and other furniture.

Our dinner ceremony is often rendered a humorous scene: at this hour the cabin being the general rendezvous of the party, we meet—crawl, trembling, towards the table—and tie ourselves in the chairs. A tray is set before us, with deep holes cut in it for the dishes, plates, and glasses; the table and chairs are lashed to the deck; yet one or other frequently gives way and upsets half the things in the cabin! Presently enters the steward with soup, followed by his little slave with potatoes; and the servants with such other covers as there may chance to be. But scarcely are the things upon table, and the servants stationed, clinging to the backs of our chairs, before a sudden lurch of the ship tumbles all into disorder. Away go steward, servants, and little Mungo, to the lee-corner of the cabin: the soup salutes the lap of one of us; another receives a leg of pork; a third is presented with a piece of mutton or beef; a couple of chickens or ducks

fly to another ; the pudding jumps nearly into the mouth of the next ; and the potatoes are tossed in all directions, about the deck of the cabin. One saves his plate ; another stops his knife and fork ; some cling to the table, thinking only of saving their persons ; one secures the bottle ; another, half fallen, holds up his glass in one hand, and fixes himself fast to his chair with the other. Chaos is renewed ! every thing is in motion—every thing in disorder and confusion. At the next roll of the ship the servants, staring with amazement, again *fetch way*, and, with extended arms, are tossed to the opposite side of the cabin, where they cling fast, and remain fixed as statues, afraid again to move : and, although we are lashed in the chairs, ourselves, it is with difficulty we can maintain our seats. Plates, dishes, knives, forks, and glasses clatter together in all the discord of the moment : the steward and his boy, crawling upon their hands and knees after the dancing potatoes, the flying fowls, or walking joints, are rolled over and over at our feet ; and all is disorder and confusion. The ship now becomes steady for a moment ; the scattered parts of

the dinner are collected ; and those who have escaped sickness, again attempt to eat. Some, foreseeing all these accidents, fix themselves in a corner upon the cabin-deck, and take the plate between their knees, fancying themselves in security: but, quickly, they are tumbled, in ridiculous postures, to the other side of the cabin, sprawling, with outstretched limbs, like frightened crabs. Some, having no calls of appetite, join not in the feast, but lie swinging up and down in their cots or hammocks ; others remain rolling from side to side in their births. Some cry out with fore bruises ; some from being wetted with the sprays : one calls for help ; another relieves his stomach from sickness ; while others, lamenting only their dinner, loudly bewail the soup, the meat, and the pudding. Some abuse the helmsman ; others the ship ; and others the sea ; while all join in a chorus of imprecations upon the wind.

It has been, commonly, observed that sailors have many prejudices and superstitions. They often predict a gale, from circumstances which seem to bear no kind of

connexion in the chain of cause and effect. The prejudice against whistling, on board ship, appears to be universal ; nor do I remember ever to have heard a sailor whistle in any ship ; beyond the common *whew-ew, whew-ew*, when he wants a breeze ; and passengers are even called upon to pay a forfeit should they, however inadvertently, be heard to whistle. The superstition respecting the flight of a bird, which they call mother Carey's chicken, is peculiarly strong. This is a black small bird with long wings, which flies swiftly and very near the water. It only appears, they say, in stormy weather, and however temperate when the chicken is seen, they always predict, from its presence, an approaching gale. The latter part of the observation we have but too often seen verified, for the presence of mother Carey's chicken, has, too frequently, been succeeded by a violent storm : but in how far the fact of this bird appearing, only, in such weather may be correct, we have had little opportunity of judging.

With pleasure I feel myself able to inform you that we have some indications of having

passed the Azores. The temperature of the atmosphere is become very genial to our feelings, and, amidst all our tossings and buffetings, we seem to have brought all-inspiring May close upon the heels of frigid Christmas. A considerable quantity of sea-weed appears floating upon the water, and this, the sailors say, is never seen to the north of the Western Isles, it being supposed to proceed from the gulf of Mexico, and not to be carried beyond these islands. We are steering more to the south than our direct course; but we are glad to make *southing* at the expence of a little *westing*, in the hope of beating out of the latitude of the tormenting gales, which have, almost incessantly, beset us, from the moment of our departure from England: but I forget that I am tiring you with uninteresting details, and that you may think my letter is growing as tedious as the voyage.

Adieu.

LETTER XVIII.

Lord Sheffield arrives at Barbadoes. Setting in of the trade wind. Striking change in the sailing and working of the ship. Lord Sheffield falls in with No. 4. transport, with a band of music on board—speaks a Spanish vessel—also the Britannia transport. Advantages of being on board a West India ship. Author adopts a preparatory regimen to guard him against the effects of climate. Exclamation of one of the author's comrades, on being first attacked with "prickly heat." Distant land visible to sailors long before it is to others. First appearance of Barbadoes. Lord Sheffield, happily, prevented by the land breeze, from going into the harbour at night. Scenery on entering Carlisle Bay.

Carlisle Bay, Feb. 13.

REJOICE with me and give thanks! After all our perils and dangers we are, again, safe at anchor, with terra firma in view! How delightful an element—how cheering—how animating is the solid earth! Even its grosser part is now endeared to us, and we hail the heavy soil in cordial sympathy, almost rejoicing that our very bodies belong to dull clay! During nine long weeks had we been wandering, amidst a multitude of perils, upon the fickle waters, without once obtaining even

the most distant view of land: but of this enough! Let me not recall, to your mind, scenes that we are endeavouring to forget. Throughout the last fortnight the horrors of boisterous old Ocean have been assuaged, and for two or three days, after writing my last notes, we were nearly becalmed. The foaming Atlantic became smooth and tranquil as the fish-pond of a pleasure ground; and, while resting in the most genial temperature, we had, only, to lament the total absence of that wind, which had long been so frightfully abundant. This placid interval was occupied in making preparations for fair sailing; and the captain flattered us with the hope of having passed the stormy latitudes. The top-gallant masts were set—the royals and steering sails made ready—fishing lines were thrown into the still sea—and an awning prepared for the quarter-deck; all of which were indications of steady breezes, warm regions, and pleasant sailing. Sensible that you will feel your share of complacency upon the occasion, I must not neglect to note the event of a most joyous day—a day which will be held in gladness by our party, so long as re-

turning years shall continue to place before us the 25th of January. We were in latitude $27^{\circ} 49'$, the thermometer at 69° . The morning was mild; the sea still and smooth, as a lake: all nature seemed hushed in silence, and no wind could be felt. We rose early, and enjoyed a steady walk on the, now, quiet deck. The sun, protruding from the bosom of a tranquil ocean, softly stole above the horizon, and, swelling into globular form, mildly, assumed refulgent brightness, and spread his genial rays around. From excess of motion we had now lapsed into perfect rest. We contemplated the change with admiration and delight: yet wished enough of wind to carry us on our voyage. The timoneer left the helm; and the ship remained immoveable upon the water. Casting our eyes over the silver surface of the sea, to behold the beauteous rising of the sun, we offered aspirations that fierce Eurus, in the placid humour of milder Zephyr, might follow in his train. Two strange vessels were observed to be in sight—a brig and a schooner. The former was directly in our wake, and viewing this, amidst the universal stillness

that prevailed, we observed, with surprise, that she was moving, towards us, with full sails. At this moment the sky darkened; the thermometer fell to 64; a gentle rippling spread, lightly, over the still surface of the water; and, almost imperceptibly, brought us - - - - - a favorable breeze! It was from the north-east; and so soft and steady that scarcely did we feel the vessel in motion, ere we were advancing at the rate of five knots an hour! What we had so long and anxiously sought, was now arrived, and we most cordially hailed - - - - - *the trade wind!* The sailors announced it in loud greetings: need I say that we partook in their liveliest joy! You will readily conceive, without expecting me to describe, our feelings upon the occasion. Never was a happier moment! All sense of our long sufferings vanished, and we were in perfect raptures on this glad event. Indeed we had much cause to think ourselves fortunate on being saluted by the favoring trades in their very earliest latitude. This was a most grateful period of our passage, and, together with the weather we have since experienced, has, in some degree, compen-

fated former evils. The temperature grew cooler than it had been during the few days of calm. The breeze freshened, and all hands were busily occupied in preparing and setting all possible sail, to obtain the full benefit of this great and constant trader's friend. Quickly new canvases stretched from every point of the masts and yards, and the ship, winged with five additional sails, widely spread her expanded pinions to embrace the breeze. What a change ! transported, at once, from the perils of severe tempest, to the finest, smoothest sailing ! During seven tedious weeks we had not known the wind from the point we wished ; and we had been perpetually beset with all the dangers of raging storm. Now, the breeze was all we could desire ! Sickness, and other uneasy feelings were dispersed ; we exercised, freely, upon the deck ; and sailed on our passage, almost without perceiving the vessel move ! So rapid, indeed, was our progress, that the ship seemed to feel no resistance, but to fly, uninterrupted, through the water !

The crowded sails now remained night

and day. No change: no new arrangement — occasional bracing, only, was required! We stood before the wind, and in all the delight of fair weather, and fine sailing, made from 160 to 200 knots within the sailor's day—from noon to noon. In such seas, and with such a wind, the ship's company might have slept; leaving the helmsman only, to steer the vessel's course. The delay, the difficulties and dangers we had met with, served but to augment the value of the ever-constant trades, and to render them even more enchanting than we had hoped. The steadiness of this friendly breeze, and its certainty of duration, likewise enhanced its charms. So truly delightful did we find it, and so pleasant were the wide ocean, and the weather, that, had not former sickness, with the torment of repeated gales, already confirmed my abhorrence of the sea, I know not but I might have been led into the belief that discomfort and a sailor's life were not strictly synonymous!

It were wrong to adulterate these happy tidings—or to chequer this letter with any

circumstance not perfectly in unison with the joy we felt on meeting our excellent friends - - - *the trades*. I, therefore, reserve some detached occurrences of the voyage for my next letter, in order not to interrupt the harmony of this ; which I wish to conclude, as it began, with happily terminating the voyage.

In the course of our passage, we fell in, occasionally, with stragglers of our unfortunate *Armada*, and remained in company with them, until we were again separated by a storm, a thick fog, or the night. A few days before we reached Carlisle-bay, we were joined by No. 4. transport, with troops, and a band of music on board. This was a happy rencontre, and afforded us a most pleasing novelty. The day had been fine ; the evening was mild and clear ; and gentle Cynthia, with her silver beams, seemed to aid the general stillness that prevailed. Every thing conspired in favor of the music, and the notes of the various instruments, coming to us across the water, were so sweetly soft and melodious as to convey the idea of celestial harmony. We listened in raptures, and, feeling quite en-

chanted with her delightful sounds, we hoped to continue in the society of our new companion, during the remainder of the voyage : but the night concealed us from each other, and, when Aurora again opened the gates of the east, we perceived, with strong regret, that we had, already, to lament our harmonic associate.

When any strange vessel appeared in sight, it, commonly, excited some apprehension, from our being alone, and badly armed ; but, fortunately, the wide ocean seemed to be the path, only, of friends. In latitude 37 we descried a foreign sail, but we quickly discovered that she was not of warlike aspect, and, therefore, were desirous of speaking her, in the hope of ascertaining our longitude. On approaching her, for this purpose, we hoisted our ensign as a signal ; to which she replied by a white flag, with a red stripe, implying that she belonged to Spain. We were pleased to find her an ally ; and, employing a Portuguese, whom we chanced to have on board, to hail her, we discovered that she was from the Havannah, bound to Malaga ; but

this was all the information we could obtain, for, unluckily, our Portuguese sailor was not able to render his questions, concerning the longitude, intelligible to the Spaniards.

On the morning of the day before we made the land, we spake the *Britannia* transport, and learned that, during the preceding night, she had been boarded by a sloop of war—one of the Barbadoes cruizers, and had received information that she was within sixty leagues of the island. This intelligence was peculiarly opportune, as we were in no certainty regarding our longitude, and must have proceeded in fear, during the night, or have created further delay by shortening sail.

It was a great advantage to us being on board a West India trader, for the ships built for this service, being intended for a hot climate, are constructed with much attention to the comfort and accommodation of passengers, and have all the conveniences of ports, scuttle-holes, window-blinds, awnings, &c.; from the want of which, many of the transports were, distressingly, close and oppressive.

As soon as we had entered the trades, our ports and scuttles were beat open, and we had a free circulation of air, through the cabin, night and day. The windows were likewise opened; and, as we sailed before the wind, the Venetian blinds admitted the breeze, while they excluded the rays of the sun. From these means we were kept pleasantly cool, below; and, when upon deck, we were protected by a canvas awning, under which we had a shaded walk, ventilated by a free current of air. Having several bathing tubs, on board, we had, likewise, the comfort—the luxury I might say, of plunging into seawater every morning; and, in order not to meet the torrefaction of these burning regions, with all the rigid fibre, and strong vascular action of Europe, I have adopted the plan of using a very abstemious diet, and have submitted to a short preparatory course of medicine. My comrades smile at the precaution, but, *although doctors may disagree*, I shall hope, on some future day, to exhibit, to you, the good effects of this early discipline. Wine, 'tis said by many, will *counter-act* the heat of the climate. Let those take

it who think so—my faculties have not yet enabled me to comprehend the ingenious doctrine which would employ fire to extinguish heat—nor has my sagacity taught me how to quench a flame by the addition of oil, or æther !

Many days previous to our arrival in Carlisle bay, the increase of temperature had brought out upon our skins that troublesome eruption called *prickly heat*. Our bodies were covered with it, and the irritation and itching it occasioned were intolerable. Our companion, Dr. Cleghorn, being an early sufferer from it, demanded of those who had been accustomed to the West Indies, how long his skin was to be thus tormented ? So long, good doctor, as you remain in health, was the reply ! Upon which, with additional rubbing and scratching, the doctor jocosely, although somewhat impatiently exclaimed, in the accent of his country, “ Faith captain, and would you carry us into never-ceasing torment ? ’Bout ship and tack for England immediately.”

On the morning of the 10th instant the boatswain descried the highest points of Barbadoes, when *land! land!* was instantly echoed throughout the ship, to the great joy of all on board; and to the boatswain's profit, who, being the first that sounded the glad tidings, became entitled to the customary fee of a bottle of rum, or brandy. It required the eye of a sailor to distinguish the all-delighting terra firma, amidst the clouds: the passengers looked, and looked in vain! a nearer approach of yet some leagues, was necessary, to render it visible to the eye of a landsman, and when we, at length, discerned it, the earth appeared, only, as the more fixed of the clouds—forming a dark streak a little above the horizon. This streak grew, gradually, more and more distinct, till, breaking as we advanced, it became unequal, and assumed the form of mountains; and, at length, the appearance of land. Soon we discovered it to be the northern point of the island of Barbadoes; but Carlisle-bay is to the south: we had, therefore, to coast round nearly half the extent of the island, before we could

reach the harbour. This delay afforded us a good opportunity of viewing the island. We stood near in, and could observe, distinctly, the objects on shore. I took my seat upon deck, and with an anxious eye, aided by the telescope, minutely, examined every thing we passed. The mind, ever active, generally forms to itself some image of the things we hear spoken of, before any opportunity occurs of seeing them. Often the picture is very incorrect and extravagant; but, upon the present occasion, I was pleased to find that I had formed to myself a tolerably accurate copy of the West Indies, from the descriptions I had heard and read. In particular the appearance of the fields, and of the slaves, labouring with the whip at their backs, had been painted, very correctly, in my imagination; for, I now saw them, in reality, what my mind had long represented them.

Our coasting view of the island was not the most favorable; for a nakedness, which Barbadoes does not possess, appeared to prevail: nor did the general verdure seem to equal our expectation: houses, huts, wind-

mills, and sugar-works, although plentifully distributed, in patches, about the island, did not present the scenery, nor the air of richness and comfort we had expected. There seemed to be a want of inclosures, and a deficiency of trees and hedges. The buildings looked bare and exposed, and there was a want of that protecting shade, for the cattle, which our feelings had deemed requisite in such a climate. The houses, devoid of ornament, and without chimnies, conveyed the idea of barns: nor could we associate them in the picture of wealth and abundance which had been called up in our minds. We lamented that the numerous windmills, houses, and other buildings we saw, were not more protected by the deep shading foliage of tropical vegetation. Had a variety of trees been interspersed, or had the branching silk-cotton, or stately mountain-cabbage, contributed their shelter, the appearance of comfort had been preserved, and the picturesque effect rendered more striking. The land is considerably varied, being hilly and unequal; and from the general view, in sailing along the coast, it appears to rise into two or three

distinct tables, which elevate themselves abruptly, one above another.

We made the entrance of the harbour, just as the sun was sinking into his watery bed, for the night; and it was in debate whether we could fetch in before it grew dark, when it was suddenly decided against us, by the wind shifting and coming round *directly a-head*. This we learned was the land breeze. In these regions the trade-wind blows from the sea, during the day; but this commonly subsides, as the sun goes down, and a contrary breeze sets in, from the land, which continues to blow throughout the night.

Being prevented from coming to anchor, we stood off and on, at the harbour's mouth, until morning, when we discovered that we had no cause of regret in this additional delay; for all the beauties of Carlisle-bay were, now, exhibited to us—not only under the still light of the morning, but brightened by the golden rays of a rising sun. Had we gone in at night, we must have lost a most enchanting prospect; and the loss had been

irremediable, for, after the eye had been accustomed to the rich foliage, the houses, the towns, the fields, and all the peculiarity of tropical scenery, the impression we now felt could never have been excited. The mind was, at this moment, in a state to enjoy them : the novelty was great, and every object striking. We had been long at sea, and the eye sought, eagerly, the shore. Land was anxiously desired : the view of it opened to us very favorably ; and, from all the various circumstances conspiring to its improvement, the prospect was rendered more delightful than it could have been at any other period.

The harbour is a fine open bay, the whole of which, with its varied shores, were before the eye : many ships were riding at anchor, and a multitude of boats and small vessels were sailing and rowing to and fro. The two points of land, at the entrance, serve as a defence ; while they augment the beauty of the harbour. On one of them appears a formidable battery, together with an extensive barrack for troops : on the other is a fine grove of mountain cabbage, and coco nut

trees. Through the shipping at the bottom of the bay, are seen numbers of neat cottages; among which are interspersed various tropical trees, affording the protecting shelter of their umbrageous summits. On the south-west shore stands Bridge-town, the capital of the island; and on the north-east, upon high ground, is a new and handsome quadrangle of stone barracks, with the military hospital and other buildings of St. Anne's Hill. Nor is the prospect confined to these limits. It extends still wider, and in addition to the water, the shipping, and the numerous other objects, immediately before the eye, the back ground, beyond the bay, and above the town, forms a rich and extensive landscape. The land is seen above the houses, the trees, and the topmasts of the ships, rising to a great distance, clothed in all the richness of its tropical apparel. Verdant fields of sugar, of coffee, and of cotton; fine groves, dark with luxuriant foliage; country villas; clusters of negro huts, windmills, and sugar-works, all present themselves to diversify and enliven the picture. Such was the scene that appeared before us as we sailed into

Carlisle-bay. You, whose idol is nature, in all her forms, will feel a friendship for the evening land-breeze which so happily lengthened a voyage, before too long.

Adieu.

LETTER XIX.

Ceremony of cleaning and painting West India ships. Feelings of sailors respecting the sailing of their vessels. Tobacco an universal cordial among sailors. Specimen of œconomy in a young tar. Negro œconomy. Baptismal ceremony on crossing the tropic. Author and his comrades work at the capstan. An accident happens to Dr. Cleghorn. Harpoons and other instruments prepared for striking fish. Peculiar habit of porpoises. Sharks, dolphins, and flying fish used as food. Stupidity of the Shark. Splendid appearance of a shoal of dolphins. Remarks upon the structure, and motion of the wings of the flying fish. Small flying fish an indication of approaching the land. Temperature of the water of the Atlantic. Lights produced by the ship at night. Small rainbows upon the surface of the ocean. Appearance of the sun and moon at sea, within the tropics. West India sky. Evening clouds.

Barbadoes, Feb.

PREVIOUS to our coming into harbour, from our late voyage, the ship's company was, for several days, busily occupied in cleaning, painting, and adorning the vessel; and we learned that it is a general custom to dress the West India ships in a new jacket, during the steady sailing of running down the trades, in order that they may appear clean,

and in the best condition, while remaining in the harbours of the islands : and that in this the sailors have a degree of pride, which excites a general spirit of emulation—every captain wishing to render his vessel the object of attraction and admiration. In consequence of this custom the West India harbours become quite a drawing room of fine-dressed merchantmen. Here each ship exhibits her best apparel, and vying with the others, holds out her lures to catch the eye of every beholder. The decoration is universal. From head to stern, not a plank, a mast, a yard, nor scarcely a rope escapes ; each receives a full-dress coat of paint, or is made new with a black varnish of tar. The painting of the more prominent parts of our ship being completed, the progress of cleaning, and new-dressing was extended to such minutiae as to become very highly ridiculous. A painting mania seemed to have seized the whole crew, and every one was up to his elbows in grease, tar, and paint. The capstan—the quarter-boards—the binocles—the hen-koops—every thing around us was bedaubed. The cannon—the hand-spikes—the capstan bars—the barrels

—the buckets—the very handle of the pump—all were painted—all put into one uniform of black and yellow. Not an iron ring, a bolt, nor a nail was neglected—not even the cannon balls escaped—and, that nothing should be omitted, the inner surface of the water buckets, regardless of health, were dressed with their poisonous coating. Never was system more universally observed; nor idle excess rendered more conspicuous. Not an inch, nor an atom, but appeared in Lord Sheffield's livery; black and yellow prevailed from the highest point of the masts, down to the very water's edge. Nothing can convey to you a stronger idea of the fine steady sailing, in a trade wind, than to know that the outer part of the ship is painted at sea, by men hanging in ropes, at her sides, while she is proceeding with full sails, on her passage,

The sailors have another, and yet stronger pride, which respects the sailing of their vessel: like every man's horse,—every sailor's ship is *the best in the world*, — every captain commands the quickest sailing vessel of the fleet; and *he* would cease to merit the honor

of a jacket, who could be brought to acknowledge, however true it might be, that his ship was a bad sailer: for, however manifest this shall appear, an excuse is never wanting. She is in bad trim—she is too much astern—too much ahead—is too deep—too light—the breeze is not from her point—she sails best upon a wind—before the wind—she makes best way in a gale—in a light breeze: so that be the weather, and the attendant circumstances whatever they may, here is a *side-wind* for each of them; and a son of the ocean is always expert enough to appropriate them in favor of his vessel, so as to guard her, at every point, against the imputation of being a dull sailer. It happened that our ship was found not to advance in proportion to the breeze; it was, therefore, deemed expedient to give her a new main-top-gallant mast; and this was put up, in the night time, with as much secrecy as if the failure of the whole expedition had hung upon its disclosure. We, afterwards, discovered that it was done, in the dark, not to conceal it from the passengers, only, but from the ship's company of a vessel, which happened, then, to be sailing near us;

and with which the Lord Sheffield was, secretly, vying in her progress.

Among other circumstances, perhaps as little worth noting, but which amused an idle moment upon the passage, was a remarkable instance of œconomy, which we observed in a young Scottish sailor. The tars have, universally, a fondness for tobacco: to deprive them of food—of drink—nay, even of their loved grog, is not so distressing to them, as to debar them of their cud. To those who are acquainted with the properties of this plant, and with the habits of the Turks respecting opium, this will not seem wonderful; for its effects being those of a strong cordial, they, who frequently use it, will necessarily feel a great degree of languor from being deprived of it. From the unusual length to which the passage was extended, our sailors' stock of tobacco had become exhausted before they reached Barbadoes. They, consequently, suffered depression of spirits, restlessness, languor, and all the usual indications of debility. They felt, severely, the abstraction of their accustomed cordial—and would have submitted to

many sacrifices to have obtained it. At this moment of distress and want, the wary *Sandy Cameron* opened his store, and, in the general eagerness to procure it, retailed tobacco to his messmates at an enormous profit. Some pawned their shoes, some their shirts, some their jackets: some gave their food, some their grog—every thing was devoted to purchase this filthy herb. *Sandy* became a perfect *marchand de tabac*—and was, thereby, enabled to accumulate clothes and property to no trifling amount. Four ounces of tobacco were given for a jacket valued at seven or eight shillings—other articles of use or apparel were bartered at a similar rate; but, from some accident, it was, at length, discovered that young Cameron's store was, mostly, the produce of a very filthy piece of œconomy; *Sandy* having collected it, by picking up the old cuds of his messmates, during the passage—which he had dried and preserved for future use: so that the sailors were now paying extravagantly, for the privilege of again sucking, what had already been between their teeth.

This dirty occurrence happening on

board led the captain to mention a habit, sometimes practised among the negroes in the West Indies, which is not less distinguished for its filthiness and œconomy. The blacks, both men and women, are very fond of rum, and sometimes, when they can only procure a single dram, the wife, as a mark of tenderness and attachment, satisfies herself by warming her mouth with it, and, affectionately, employs that as a glass for conveying the rum to her husband; who receives it, from her, in due kindness, beak to beak, as pigeons feed their young; and thus, with extraordinary œconomy, the single dram is made to serve both man and wife; and sometimes it is, even, said to go through the mouths of the whole family.

A day or two after we had entered into the latitude of the trade-wind, we had to cross the tropic; which was an occasion of great mirth and festivity. The usual ceremonies were performed—the usual honors paid to old Neptune, and all was holiday. The great deity of the ocean, accompanied by his queen—rib of the waters, ascended from the deep,

in order to welcome us to his tropical abode, and to witness *the baptism* of such of his children who had not, already, done homage at his font. This is a ceremony which is, commonly, thought to be ludicrous : but, in the way it is conducted by the rough tars, it becomes a very dirty and severe process. It is extended to every person on board, who has not, before, been within the tropics, varying only in its mode of application, and in its severities.

The old sailors are careful to discover, in the course of the passage, which of their messmates have not undergone the discipline of this tropical baptism ; and on this day, all who are marked for the ceremony, are led upon deck, one by one, blindfolded. In this state the young sailor is made to seat himself upon a small narrow plank, laid across a large tub of salt water, or upon the edge of the tub itself, and, in this perilous situation, they administer to him a long and ridiculous oath ; then offer him a glass of gin, by way of cordial, which he is compelled to drink, and finds it to be only a glass of salt water. They, then,

smear his face with a nasty compound of grease, tar, and stinking oil, taking care in the operation, to force some of it into his mouth. The next step is to shave this off, and the razor employed, for this purpose, is commonly a piece of an old iron hoop, beat full of notches. The filth being in part scraped from his chin, with this rough instrument, the baptismal process is completed by the plank, upon which he is seated, being suddenly withdrawn, and the young initiated plunged head and ears into the tub of water; where he is made to lie kicking and sprawling for a considerable time; after which he is permitted to rise from his briny birth; when his eyes are unveiled—he washes his countenance, and issues forth a privileged son of old Neptune—*free* to range in the tropical seas. If he contends, or offers any resistance, he is treated with three or four dippings, instead of one; he, therefore, finds it best not be refractory, and smothers his wrath in the secret pleasure of witnessing a similar process imposed upon the rest of his messmates. Every one, whether sailor or landsman, is

called upon to undergo this christening ceremony, as the task of initiation.

As passengers we were honored with a visit from father Neptune and his spouse, to welcome us to their tropical dwelling, and to announce to us the propriety and necessity of the baptismal vow: but we compromised the discipline of dipping and shaving, by offering the tribute of a few gallons of rum; and petitioning the beauteous Amphitrite to intercede in our behalf. Nevertheless, we were taught that it would be prudent to remain, quietly, in the cabin, during this briny christening of the sailors.

The servants were led by curiosity to visit the deck, hoping to witness the ceremony without becoming, themselves, the objects of it: but they were speedily presented with a complete washing of sea-water, and obliged to beat a hasty retreat, in order to escape the shaving: one of them, who was a great coxcomb in his dress, grew violently enraged, and felt highly indignant that the sailors

should dare to wet and spoil his clothes ; and in his anger he ran down below to arm himself with a sword, then returning upon deck, swore that he would run the first man through the body, who should throw water upon him, again : but scarcely had he said the words, and brandished his sabre, before several buckets of water were dashed upon his head and shoulders, by some sailors who had placed themselves in the main-top. The poor man stormed violently, swore, stamped, and vowed vengeance. The sailors, laughing at his impotent rage, continued to pour down bucket after bucket. He was unable to climb up the shrouds ; and they diverted themselves at his wrath and distress, until, at length, seeing that they defied all his threats, he again returned to the cabin, loading them with imprecations, and, loudly, vowing vengeance, unmindful that his best remedy was to change his clothes, wipe himself dry, and let his choler subside. Custom is absolute, and, in the hands of such hardy ministers, it were folly to oppose its despotic government.

After reaching the latitude of the trade wind we passed very little of our time in the cabin ; nor, throughout the whole passage, did we neglect to take our exercise upon deck, whenever the weather would permit ; occasionally also in order to divert the sad indolence of our inactive life, we gave assistance at the capstan, or in working the pump, or pulling the ropes ; but one of these moments of industry had nearly cost Dr. Cleghorn his life. A large block, exposed to excessive purchase in getting up one of the masts, broke from its rope as we were heaving at the capstan bars, and, flying to a great height with violent rapidity, struck the doctor on the head in its fall. Happily he was not within the circle of its full force, or, beyond all doubt, he had been killed on the spot. Moderate as it was, the blow being received from only the edge of the block, in its fall to the deck, it rendered him insensible for some time, and cut an alarming wound through the integuments quite to the bone. On recovering from the comatose state, which had followed the blow, he had no knowledge how the accident had happened ; and when the

broken block was presented to him he was struck with surprize at his escape. The wound has since healed kindly, and the doctor suffers, from it, no other inconvenience than, like poor Patrick, wearing, in his forehead, an honorable and warlike scar.

During our fine tropical sailing we were frequently amused in observing the immense shoals of porpoises, dolphins, and flying fish, which, from time to time, assembled about the ship. The frightful shark and spouting grampus also made us frequent visits.

Harpoons and other instruments, called gigs, or grains, were prepared for the purpose of taking these inhabitants of the ocean. They are formidable weapons of iron, made with barbed points, and at the time of using them, a wooden handle, loaded with lead, is affixed to them, together with a long cord; and they are struck into the animal while he is swimming at the side of the ship. If they penetrate beyond the barb he is unable to free himself from the instrument, and is turned

upon his back, by the weight of the lead in the handle, and consequently has no power to escape. Often the iron points are bent double without entering the animal; and sometimes they are thrown out by his struggles, from not having penetrated deep enough, and leave him to escape with his wound. This we saw happen to a large porpoise while he was swimming amidst a shoal of his species so numerous as to darken the sea; when, instantly, every individual of them abandoned the ship, not to protect or console their wounded brother, but, according to the unfriendly habit of these hideous and rapacious animals, to pursue him as their prey. The flying fish, the shark, and the dolphin, are all used, by the sailors, as food. The shark is a most stupid animal—unlike other fishes he disregards being seen, and flies not from people who appear before him, nor is intimidated at things falling near to him, or even upon him in the water. Does this arise from a deficiency of nervous sensibility, or from a consciousness that he is armed against the objects he commonly meets? By throwing out to him oc-

casionally a piece of fat pork, he may be induced to continue, at the side of the ship, while a rope, let down into the water, is passed over his head, and drawn tight round his body in order to take him alive, and if it happens to slip off, he is stupid enough to remain until it is fixed a second time. We caught a very large one in this manner; and also took a smaller one with the hook, which the sailors consumed as delicate food.

The shoals of dolphins are often so immense as to convert the sea into a kind of rich and dazzling mine, in which the lively interchanges of colour out-rival all the splendour of brilliants and gold.

The novelty of immense multitudes of fish darting from the sea and taking wing in the air, you will believe attracted our attention. To speak of fishes flying might seem to be a traveller's tale; we were, therefore, led to a minute investigation of the fact. We watched them with a sceptical eye, and, at many different times, before we admitted even the evidence of our senses. It appeared possible

that their short flight might be the effect of a single muscular effort, supported by the expansion of long membranous fins ; and this opinion became strengthened from observing them, occasionally, touch the water, as if to gain new force from its resistance, and then rise again, and fly as far as before. But, upon regarding them with strict attention, we observed their wings employed, like those of birds, in fluttering motion as they flew. We saw them change their course, from a direct line ; we perceived them rise and fall in their flight, to surmount the waves they met, and remarked that they often continued their progress to the distance of two or three hundred yards, without touching the water : at length two or three of them flew on board the ship, and, striking against the masts, fell dead upon the deck ; this afforded us an opportunity of satisfying our doubts ; and after very minutely examining their external form, we further assured ourselves, by carefully dissecting them ; and we have now no hesitation in saying that fishes - - - - *do fly* ! The wings are very long, : arising from behind the gills, they lie folded at the sides nearly the whole :

length of the fish, being formed of several fine cartilages, and a thin transparent membrane not unlike the wing of a bat. At the insertion, near the gills, they are narrow, but become considerably wider towards their extremities. When used in flying they are raised from the side, and expanded, by the cartilages separating from each other, and stretching out the membrane which covers them. They are not connected with the body by extensive muscular insertions; but are united by a ligamentous membrane. Two small muscles pass into each wing, terminating in strong ligaments. These serve to give them the command of the wing, but are not calculated to support long and powerful action. The fish is about the size of a herring. They are caught, in great numbers, near Barbadoes, where they are pickled, and salted, and used as a very common food.

The day before we made the land we met with shoals of flying fish of much smaller size than those we had commonly seen—not larger, indeed, than sprats. On rising out of the water, in large bodies at a time, they caused

a sound like the splashing of rain, which being heard by the captain, he instantly exclaimed "*Ha ! bravo ! land, land ! here are the little splashers, we can't be far from the land !*"— This small race of flying fish, it seems, is never observed at any great distance from the shore, nor in the deeper parts of the Atlantic : wherefore their appearance is assumed as a sure prognostic of a speedy approach to the land.

We observed upon the passage, that after the great heat of the day, the water of the Atlantic was somewhat warmer than the circum-ambient air. In latitude 14° , at 10 o'clock at night, the thermometer stood at $72\frac{1}{4}$, and upon being put into a bucket of fresh-drawn sea water it rose to 73.

Like all young sailors we felt our attention strongly attracted by the phenomenon of the lights produced in the sea, at night, from the ship beating her way through the water. We often witnessed them in a very striking degree, and were, frequently, led to the forepart of the ship to view them in their brightest splendour ; for, there, the ship appeared to be

sailing through liquid flames. On every side the lights were vivid and beautiful, but at the fore-castle we saw the pitchings and plunges of the vessel strike out wide flashes, resembling sheets of fire. The great noise at the head of the ship, likewise added to the effect, and it required very little help of the imagination to create a belief that we, actually, heard the sparks and crackling of more destructive flames. At the stern these lights appear as if they poured from the vessel in bright streams of fire, extending to a considerable distance in her wake.

We drew up buckets of water, occasionally, to the deck, and found that by agitating it, either with the hand or a piece of wood, we could excite the same luminous appearance: but, after disturbing it for a short time, this effect ceased; and no degree of agitation was sufficient to renew it in the same water. You know the various theories and speculations which have been offered in explanation of this phenomenon, I need not, therefore, swell my letter by repeating them.

The beautiful appearance of the iris resting in a number of small circles upon the surface of the ocean, also frequently attracted our notice. These were only seen near the ship, and it will occur to you that they arose from the minute particles of water, beat off by the vessel, dividing the rays of light, and causing them to fall upon the sea in the form of rich and distinct rainbows. They are often extremely brilliant, and are seen, as it were, lying in numbers upon the water.

The very beautiful rising and setting of the sun and the moon were the frequent and admired subjects of our contemplation. Viewed from a West India sea, the surface of these orbs does not appear, like a mere plane fixed in the heavens, as in Europe, but their convexity, and globular form are seen very distinctly. When rising they appear as detached globes protruding from the deep: at setting they resemble distinct spheres sinking, or rather dropping, divested of their rays, into the ocean.

The moon is brighter than in England, and reflects a clearer light. When only a few days old the whole orb is visible—not decked in uniform brightness, as when it is at the full, but with the great body in shade, while the horned edge, alone, is dressed in silver.

The appearance of the western sky was likewise an object of novelty to us. By day the whole canopy is one fine azure expanse, bright and unclouded; but, at evening, dark mountainous clouds accumulate, and, gathering into deep heavy masses, impend in awful majesty of form over the horizon.

LETTER XX.

Author continues to address his friend, but cannot send away his letters. Lord Sheffield visited by anxious crowds in quest of news. Perilous state of St. Vincent and Grenada. Guadaloupe reinforced. French gasconade. Enemy's frigates and cruisers infest the coast of Barbadoes. Loss of the Læda frigate. Brunswick detached with troops to St. Vincent. The lost Stanley safe in Carlisle Bay, also nine or ten other transports of the December convoy. Author and his comrades go on shore at Barbadoes. Remarks upon the novelty of the scene. Visit to an American slave ship - - - to a Liverpool Guinea-man.

Carlisle Bay, Feb.

IN pursuance of my promise I still direct my pen towards you, notwithstanding the uncertainty when I may be able to send away my letters. On account of the repeated disasters of the fleet, and the sad delays that have occurred, you will believe that we, who have had the good fortune to complete our passage, are extremely anxious to make known to our friends that we are in safety : but, as though the distaff of the fates were thrown out to entangle us in vexation, no opportunity offers of conveying intelligence to Europe. A packet

is established to sail, from England every fortnight ; but none has reached Barbadoes, for many weeks past ; and the inhabitants are looking out, with anxious solicitude, for several which remain due : nor is it expected that any mail will be made up for England until some of these arrive.

Should any merchantman sail, I will avail myself of that opportunity to forward to you this letter, together with those written upon the passage : but of this I have very little hope, as no unprotected vessel can venture to sea without extreme peril, on account of the enemy's cruisers.

The period is critical and important. News from each shore of the Atlantic, to its opposite, is sought with the most lively anxiety. While you are looking to us for tidings of ourselves, of our scattered fleet, and of endangered islands ; we, unable to relieve your suspense, are looking to you, with no less anxiety for intelligence of England and of Europe. The avidity for news, which, here, displays itself, is vivid beyond all I can express.

Our anchor was not dropped, indeed we had scarcely entered the harbour before a variety of people came out, in boats, to meet us, and, scrambling on board, asked the news in such hurried solicitude as scarcely to wait a reply, before each question was followed by another. What news? what news? what news of the fleet? what news of England? what news from the Continent? were all uttered in such rapid succession, that the only answer we could properly make, served as a general reply - - - "None! we have been nine weeks at sea, and have every intelligence to seek—none to give."

Our abrupt visitors were extremely disappointed, when, instead of being able to satisfy them, they found that we were equally solicitous to demand news of our convoy, of the Islands, and of the sailing of the packet for England. You will readily imagine that from the critical state of Europe, on the one hand, and the perilous situation of the Islands, on the other, together with the long interrupted communication between them, each party, partaking all the anxiety of the period, was

more desirous to ask questions, than to offer replies.

We could impart nothing satisfactory ; and the information we acquired was not very gratifying. The following were the leading circumstances which we collected at the moment. Grenada, we were told, was, almost wholly, in possession of the brigands : St. Vincent in imminent danger from the Charibs : and Guadaloupe, if not St. Lucie, so strengthened by reinforcements from France as to bid us defiance. As a specimen of French gasconade, I may tell you what is reported to be the present language of that insolent democratic tyrant, Victor Hugues : “ Let them come ! let the general lead hither his troops ! we will invite them ashore ; nay ! we will lay planks to their vessels that they may not wet their feet in visiting us, and when we have them here we will teach them who is Victor : we will give the officers their favorite toast, and accommodate them with speedy promotion.” Such is said to be the idle boasting of this man, in consequence of the reinforcements lately arrived from Europe.

Two French frigates, and hordes of privateers had been cruising, with too much success, against our scattered transports and merchantmen. The frigates had lately been daring enough to look into the harbour of Carlisle Bay, and the Charon of 44 guns armed *en flute*, one of the earliest arrivals of the Spithead fleet, had been sent out, with La Pique frigate, in pursuit of them.

The Læda frigate, employed to convoy a fleet of victuallers from Cork, had, been upset in a gale; and, unhappily, sunk to the bottom, with all hands on board, seven only excepted. These had since arrived in one of the victuallers, at Barbadoes; but several of the convoy, left unprotected by this fatal accident, had been captured by the enemy's cruisers.

The commander in chief was still unheard of; nor was there any accurate intelligence of the fleet, although a few straggling vessels had arrived.

This was the sum of the news that greet-

ted our arrival at Barbadoes. But gloomy as it was, the distressful feelings it produced were, in some degree, alleviated by our learning, soon afterwards, that the Brunswick, which had been ordered to proceed with troops to the relief of St. Vincent, had arrived most opportunely to save the island; and that the Stanley, which had sailed with the first fleet in November, and was supposed to have been lost, during the disastrous storm which arose in the channel, had arrived safe in Carlisle bay, on Christmas day, being the only ship of the *November* convoy that made good her passage; and, further, that nine or ten of the vessels of the *December* convoy had reached Barbadoes in safety, with upwards of two thousand troops on board.

The inhabitants, who best knew the state of the neighbouring islands, were extremely anxious to see these troops employed; and, on this account, they were looking out, with double anxiety, for the arrival of the commander in chief.

The delight we felt on the glad occasion

of setting our feet, again, upon terra firma was more exquisite than I can express; and it was highly augmented by the novelty that surrounded us. The houses, the streets, the people, the fruit, fish, and vegetables, the trees, the fields, every thing before us, was new. The very means of labour and amusement were novel, and all combined to indicate the change we had made—all bespoke our removal from a northern to a tropical latitude. We gazed on all we met, and all we passed. Objects which, at other moments, had been trifling and unimportant, now called forth our attention. The eye of curiosity suffered nothing to escape. Ideas crowded upon our minds in such rapid succession, that the confusion of chaos seemed to be renewed. The universal metamorphosis that surrounded us prevented our digesting the scene, which presented itself, into any thing of order or arrangement: yet was the whole uncommonly gratifying; and, without being able to discriminate, we contemplated, in a sort of pleasing reverie, this seeming change of worlds. Complex as are the feelings of such a moment, I have often wished that they

were less fleeting, or could more frequently recur ; for, upon such occasions, the mind seems to enjoy unparalleled delight ; and to dwell with rapture, on objects which, under other circumstances, would pass unheeded by.

We took our umbrellas in our hands, by way of parasols, but found less occasion for them than we had been taught to expect ; for although the heat was greater, by several degrees, in Bridge Town than in the harbour, we did not feel, from it, any degree of languor or oppression. A pleasant breeze counteracted the ardent rays of the sun ; and, at our first visit, we rambled, for two hours, about the town, to the barracks, and into the fields, with far less inconvenience from heat, than I have often experienced in the close and sultry days of England.

It will be quite within your recollection how long, and how much I have wished to visit the ships trading to Africa, and to witness personally, the manner of treating those poor beings of sable skin, who are torn from their

native home, by the iron-hand of commerce, to be transported to a home of slavery; and you will be pleased to learn that in this wish, I have had an early opportunity of being gratified. A slave ship, belonging to North America, and bound to Savanna in Georgia, had arrived from the coast of Guinea just before we came into harbour, and was lying very near to us, with a cargo of negroes on board. Fearing she might sail for America, and being unwilling to lose the first occasion that offered, of administering to a curiosity which beat strong in our breasts, Master, Cleg-horn, and myself took off a boat, the morning after we came to anchor, and went to visit the Guinea-man. We considered ourselves fortunate in finding both the master and mate of the ship disposed to shew us every civility, and to indulge us in ready reply to the questions which our curiosity suggested.

A little before they made Carlisle bay they had been taken out of their ship, and detained a whole night, on board an English frigate, while their papers were examined, under the suspicion that the vessel and cargo

were Dutch property : but the property being proved to be American, they were released, and the ship is now taking in water, preparatory to pursuing her voyage down to the state of Georgia.

The cargo consisted of a hundred and thirty slaves, of whom two-thirds were males, and one-third females. The two sexes were kept separate by a partition, or bulk-head, built from side to side, across the ship; allotting *the waist* to the men, and to the women, the *quarterdeck*. A great majority of them were very young, being from ten to eighteen years of age. We were pleased to observe that an air of cheerfulness and contentment prevailed among them. In a few only we remarked despondency, and dejection of countenance. Both sexes were without apparel, having only a narrow band of blue cloth put round the waist, and brought to fasten before, so as to serve the office of the fig-leaf, worn by our first parents, in the fruitful garden of Eden. As we walked through the different groups of them, they fixed their eyes upon us, with seeming curiosity; and some of the

boys, like those of fairer skin, were inclined to be playful, and to exhibit youthful tricks. One or two of the females, unchecked by the reserve of education, occasionally glanced an expressive look, or displayed a significant gesture. Many of them had marks upon the skin which appeared to have been made with a cutting instrument. These, we learned, were distinctive of the nation to which they had belonged. Some had their teeth cut, or filed to sharp points, giving them a very hideous, and canine appearance. They looked well fed and healthy, although some of them had an eruption, called the cra-cra upon the skin.

Their sleeping births were the naked boards. Divided into two crowded parties, they reposed, during the night, upon the bare planks below—the males on the *main-deck*—the females upon the deck of the *aft cabin*. In the day-time they were not allowed to remain in the place where they had slept, but were kept mostly upon the open deck, where they were made to exercise, and encouraged by the music of their loved banjar, to dancing and cheerfulness.

We saw them dance, and heard them sing. In dancing they scarcely moved their feet, but threw about their arms, and twisted and writhed their bodies into a multitude of disgusting and indecent attitudes. Their song was a wild and savage yell, devoid of all softness and harmony, and loudly chanted in harsh monotony.

Their food is chiefly rice, which they prepare by plain and simple boiling. At the time of messing they squat round the bowl in large bodies, upon their heels and haunches, like monkeys, each putting his paws into the platter to claw out the rice with his fingers. We saw several of them employed in beating the red husks off the rice, which was done by pounding the grain in wooden mortars, with wooden pestles, sufficiently long to allow them to stand upright while beating in mortars placed at their feet. This appeared to be a labour of cheerfulness. They beat the pestle in tune to the song, and seemed happy; yet nothing of industry marked their toil, for the pounding was performed by, indolently, raising the

pestle and then leaving it to fall from its own weight.

I am most happy to conclude my report of this visit by informing you that we discovered no marks of those horrors and cruelties, said to be practised on board the ships occupied in this sad traffic of human flesh ; and which are represented as so frightfully augmenting the manifold ills of slavery. Chains, stripes, and severities did not seem to have been in the catalogue of means employed in conveying these poor Africans to their American masters. Our minds, necessarily, suffered in contemplating the degrading practices of civilized beings towards the less cultivated brethren of their species: but the eye was not shocked by the abuses of tyranny and inhumanity. The comfort and health of the slaves were promoted with every care. Being fond of washing in cold water, they were encouraged to the free use of it ; and their persons, as well as the whole of the ship, were kept remarkably clean. They were plentifully fed ; and, in the day-time, were dispersed about the ship, so as to be prevented, as much as possible, from

assembling together, in close unwholesome crowds. Mirth and gaiety were promoted among them: they were roused to bodily exercise, and care was used to divert their minds from dwelling upon their change of state, and loss of home: and I may truly say, that a more general air of contentment reigned among them than could have been expected. While many were dancing and singing, and playing together, others were giving their assistance in working the ship; and, we even learned that several of them had made themselves highly useful on the passage, and were already becoming expert sailors.

They all seemed to regard the master of the vessel more in affection than fear; and, although strictly obedient, they did not appear to be at all under the influence of terror. Crowded in some degree, they, necessarily, must be, particularly in the place where they slept; but every attention was paid to prevent the injury which might derive from it; and to keep them in health.

We went down below to see their place

of repose, where the hard planks formed one common bed, and each individual employed his arm as his pillow. The men could not stand between decks, without stooping ; and when they lay down, the boards were so closely spread, that it was scarcely possible to set a foot between their naked bodies. They were always taken upon deck early in the morning, and the sleeping birth was thoroughly cleaned and washed ; but still it was highly offensive to European olfactories ; and plainly indicated, that were it not for the great attention paid to cleanliness and ventilation, disease must inevitably be generated. Their nakedness is, perhaps, their best security ; for although they had neither bed-clothes, nor personal covering, nor any kind of baggage, or furniture in the place, we perceived that all the cleaning and airing employed could not subdue the stench created by their sleeping together in such crowded heaps.

Although they are fond of washing, and seem to have some sense of personal cleanliness, they have none of cleanliness of place, nor of common decency : for, notwithstanding

the strictest injunctions against it, they cannot always be prevented from the filthy habit of depositing their natural excretions upon the spot where they sleep.

The wool of their heads forms a thick cover for vermin, of which they have, commonly, a swarming abundance ; therefore to prevent this, and to further the rules of cleanliness, all their heads had been shaved : but this, we were told, had deprived them of one great source of occupation and amusement ; it being a singular pleasure to them to sit down in pairs, for hours together, to enjoy the social feast of picking each other's heads, and afterwards twisting and plaiting the wool into a variety of forms.

The pleasure we had experienced from finding these poor blacks in a state of apparent contentment, and, with respect to the reported cruelty, enjoying a degree of comparative comfort, was succeeded by feelings of horror, on hearing the relation of an insurrection which had taken place, on board the ship, previous to their sailing from the coast of

Africa. Many of the negroes being detained on board for a considerable time while the cargo was completing, and lying, during this period, within sight of their native shore, from which, and, perhaps, from their wives and families, they were about to be torn for ever, had grown indignant even to desperation, and rising upon the ship's company, murdered the master and mate, who then belonged to the vessel, and wounded several of the men: nor was it until after a very severe and bloody contest that they were overcome; when the ring-leaders were put to death, as an example to deter others from again revolting. One of the sailors shewed us three desperate wounds which he had received on the face, the breast, and the arm, from the stroke of an axe, with which one of the blacks had, just before, struck off the captain's head.

The next day, after our visit to the American slave-ship, an opportunity offered of seeing one of our own nation—a Liverpool Guinea-man—a ship of much greater burden, fitted out expressly for the trade, with a sufficient number of hands and of guns on board

to protect her against the enemy's privateers; and calculated for a cargo of five hundred slaves.

We were taught to believe that we should find the negroes much better accommodated in this, than in the American ship; but we could not observe that the superiority was either great, or striking. Although the vessel was larger, the number of slaves was more than proportionally greater. In other respects the accommodations were nearly equal. The Liverpool ship was kept remarkably clean; but the American was not less so; and, between the decks, the American ship was the most commodious, being higher, and having more room in proportion to the cargo, from which the slaves had the advantage of being less close and confined during the night.

In the sleeping place of the English vessel we could not stand up without stooping almost double:—in each the men and women were kept separate—in both their food was rice; and in both they slept naked upon the

naked planks, crowded together like sheep in a fold.

The most striking difference that occurred to our observation was, that the slaves of the Liverpool ship were of blacker and smoother skin than the others, and all of them free from that dirty eruption, the cra-cra; but upon our noticing this better appearance of one cargo than the other, the apparent superiority was instantly explained to us, by the observation that the Liverpool vessel had reached her destined port, and that her cargo had been made up, for market, by having their skins dressed over three or four times with a compound of gun-powder, lime-juice and oil—a preparation which not only destroys the cra-cra, and gives the skin, a smooth, black, and polished appearance, but likewise renders it sleek and fine: and it was further remarked that the cargo of the American ship would be made to look as well, before they reached the port where they were to be exposed for sale.

LETTER XXI.

Author and his comrades live on board ship at Barbadoes.

Accommodation of a Barbadoes tavern. Method of cooling liquors. Porter better than in England. Tavern waiters. Black and mulatto hostesses. Privilege of female attendants. Bar-maid at Mary Bella Green's. Law concerning the children of slaves. Women of colour not dignified with the title of mistress. Conversation with two female slaves.

Carlisle Bay, Feb.

FROM the details I gave you of our tedious voyage, you will learn, with surprize, that we still continue to live on board ship. But to this we have many inducements. It is much cooler in the harbour, than it is in Bridge Town ; we are much less annoyed with musquitoes ; and, from our belonging to the St. Domingo staff, and being in daily expectation of receiving orders to proceed to that island, we are, at all moments, ready to move, and without the risk of leaving our baggage behind ; moreover, by living on board, while we are detained to windward, our sea-habits are continued, and perhaps we may thereby

avoid the tormenting sickness of a second voyage.

We have a regular mess established. Every morning we go or send to market for provisions; and our domestic arrangements are better regulated, and in more of comfort than if we were on shore. Occasionally we dine, and spend the whole, or part of a day at Bridge Town, but we never fail to return on board to sleep.

We find that the accommodations of a West India tavern, although not precisely what a Bond-street loungeur would expect in St. James's-street, or a high-fed alderman in the city, are by no means despicable: and you know that I am enough a soldier, and a traveller, rather to court the varieties we meet, than to repine, and regard them as hardships, because they are not, in every feature, the same as we are accustomed to in England.

But you have desired to be told of these varieties as they occur, and I have an early opportunity of trying your patience.—Our

first dinner on shore was at a tavern in Bridge Town, kept by a mulatto woman, Mary Bella Green. Plenty prevailed. The crowded table smoked with fish, a piece of boiled beef, a pepper-pot, a turkey, some roasted veal, and a quarter of mutton, with several different kinds of puddings, and quite an assortment of vegetables, of eight or nine different species—European and tropical. Our liquors were—most excellent bottled porter, good Madeira, tolerable claret, and very fine Noyeau. In the desert we were sadly disappointed, for, instead of the fine tropical fruits we had expected, three or four of the very common and inferior species were set before us, unripe, and bad in quality: viz. goavas, bananas, and four-fops, with some tough, and bitter shaddocks—to any, and all of which, the commonest apples, or gooseberries of Europe had been preferable. But Barbadoes is not an island abounding in the finer fruits of the climate, hence we do not judge of the delicious productions of the West Indies by this ill-chosen sample.

Our party, for whom we had ordered dinner, consisted of nine persons, but upon

coming to table, we found covers for fifteen, and learned that, instead of giving us a private dinner, as we had directed, they had put us into a large public room, and served a kind of *table d'hôte*. Not being prepared for this arrangement, we remonstrated against it, and, with some difficulty, prevailed in having the extra-covers removed ; but we soon perceived that we had gained little by thus interrupting the customs of the house : for they, directly, spread another table in the same room, and, setting down the six strangers close by us, divided the dinner, they had dressed, between the two parties.

In making out their bill for payment, they do not detail the separate articles of the dinner, the number of bottles of wine, the different plates of fruit, &c. as in England, but put down the whole sum, under the three general items of *dinner, wine, and fruit* ; and, at any house you are accustomed to use, if you call, occasionally, in a morning to rest, or to take shelter from the sun, or rain, they give you a glass of lemonade, or of coco-nut water, with a “*very welcome,*” and consider themselves rewarded, by the payment

you make when you take dinner at the house. Nor is the demand for this at all extravagant, except, in so far as regards the the bad fruit. We paid a dollar each for dinner ; the same for the wine ; and half a dollar for the desert.

They make the wine and porter very pleasantly cool, by putting the bottles in wet cloth bags, and placing them in the open windows, for some time before dinner ; taking care to sprinkle them, occasionally, with water, as they stand exposed to the breeze. A very rapid evaporation is thus produced, and, consequently, far more heat carried off, than by merely setting the bottles cold in water. The porter is so highly improved by the climate, and rendered so pleasant, by this method of cooling, as to be very superior to any that is drank in England.

The attendants of the table are very numerous, black and yellow, male and female—perhaps too numerous to serve you well : for they are badly regulated, and the duty of one

being the duty of all, it is not regarded as the particular duty of either, and, consequently, is apt to be left unheeded. Each, being idle and inactive, waits for another to step before him, when any thing is called for; and, although you have a crowd of servants round you, it is difficult to obtain what you want.

The females are, usually, of erect figure, and stately carriage, but they move in all the languor of the climate. They appear without shoes and stockings, in a short white jacket, and a thin short petticoat. They wear a white turban on the head; but the neck and shoulders are left bare. Silence is not esteemed a necessary qualification among them, for they often join, with great freedom, and a sad drawling accent, in the conversation of the table. This will appear to you but little consistent with the reserve and abject forbearance of slavery; but it is the consequence of the public situation in which these women are placed, and the familiarity that is commonly used towards them by strangers—to any, or all of whom

they are the very obedient, obliging, and *most convenient* humble servants.

On first making inquiry, respecting the accommodations of the house, we were surprized to learn their extent, and the facility with which they are attainable. A bed may be had for half a dollar per night, or three dollars per week ; and, for an additional sum well understood, the choice of an attendant to draw the curtains.

The hostess of the tavern is, usually, a black, or mulatto woman, who has been the favored enamorata of some *backra* * man; from whom she has obtained her freedom, and perhaps two or three slaves to assist her in carrying on the business of the house ; where she now indulges in indolence, and the good things of life, grows fat, and feels herself of importance in society. To those who, in compliance with the Highgate privilege, court her particular attention, in preference to the more youthful attendants around her, she is supposed not to be violently cruel.

* *The negro term used for white,*

It is to her advantage that the female attendants of her family should be as handsome as she can procure them. Being slaves, the only recompence of their services, is the food they eat, the hard bed they sleep on, and the few loose clothes which are hung upon them. One privilege, indeed, is allowed them, which, you will be shocked to know, is that of tenderly disposing of their persons; and this offers the only hope they have of procuring a sum of money, wherewith to purchase their freedom: and the resource among them is so common, that neither shame nor disgrace attaches to it; but, on the contrary, she who is most sought, becomes an object of envy, and is proud of the distinction shewn her.

One of our attendants at table, appeared, both from her conversation and behaviour, to be very superior to her degraded station. She had nothing of beauty, nor even prettiness of face, but she was of good figure, and of respectable and interesting demeanor, and, in point of intellect, far above her colleagues. Together with gentleness of manner, and an easy, pleasant address, she possesses a degree

of understanding and ability which claim respect. In principle, and in sentiment, she appeared virtuous; and, from the frankness of her replies, it was evident that she knew no sense of wrong in her conduct. We could not but lament that the imperious habits of the country did not allow of her being placed as a more respectable member of society.

This woman is the great support of the house—the bar-maid, and leading manager of the family. Her mistress had refused to take a hundred guineas for her; which, she assured us, had been offered by a gentleman who would have purchased her. She has a very lively interesting little daughter, a Mestee about four years old. Of this child she spoke with great tenderness, and appeared to bear it all the fond attachment of an affectionate parent. Yet, as the infant was born in slavery, should the mother, by any means, obtain her own freedom, she cannot claim her child; but must leave it, still the disposable property of her mistress, equally

liable to be sold as any other piece of furniture in the house : for, in Barbadoes, the offspring of a woman in slavery becomes the absolute property of the owner to whom the mother belongs, whether it be black, yellow, or white ; as the law knows no period when the child of a slave shall be born free, however removed from the African : nor can the mother, under any circumstances of subsequent liberation, claim her infant from its owner, even though it should be of fairer skin than the fairest European. Thus are the natural ties of our species torn asunder ; and the dearest attachments, and purest affections of the heart cruelly broken down ! Babes are separated from their parents, and mothers robbed of their children, by this unnatural appropriation of human substance !

The manners, and the circumstances attending the situation of this mulatto were strongly interesting. Her whole deportment bespoke a degree of delicacy and refinement, together with a superiority of mind and

understanding! Her intelligence and quickness of perception assured us that she had talents capable of high improvement; and it is probable, that had fortune so placed her in life, as to have offered her the acquirements of a chaste and cultivated education, this woman, notwithstanding the color of her skin, had made a faithful and virtuous wife; been an ornament to her friends and society; and a blessing to the man who should have made her the partner of his hours.

The taverns are commonly known by the names of the persons who keep them. The most frequented, at Bridge Town, are those of Nancy Clarke, and Mary Bella Green; the former a black—the latter a mulatto woman. Mrs. Clarke, or Mrs. Green would scarcely be known! A party is said to dine at Mary Bella Green's, or at Nancy Clarke's—or, more concisely, at *Mary Bella's* or at *Nancy's*.—The title Mrs—seems to be reserved, solely, for the ladies from Europe, and the white creoles, and to form a distinction between them and the women of color of all classes and descriptions—none of whom,

of whatever shade or degree, are dignified with this appellation.

In the evening, after taking our first dinner on shore, Dr. Cleghorn and myself made a walk to visit the hospitals and barracks at St. Anne's Hill ; and, on our way back to Bridge Town, we were accosted by two negro girls of respectable appearance, sitting upon the step of a gentleman's gateway, by the road side.

Being just arrived in a land of slavery, and feeling desirous to converse with the Africans, and their descendants, in order to ascertain whether any deficiency of intellect, or inferiority of natural capacity was observable among them, we gladly detained ourselves, for some minutes, in conversation with these decent-looking young slaves. They were the property of the gentleman, at whose gate they were sitting ; and were employed as house servants, or as they are here termed, "*house-wenches* *," in his family.

Trifling as it is, I give you the conver-

* *Domestics of the kitchen, not slaves of the field.*

sation as it passed, divesting it only of the broken accent, with which our language is spoken by the negroes. It will serve to shew you that the replies were not inapposite; and perhaps not inferior to what might have been expected, from the common order of people in Europe. One of the girls was about sixteen, the other eighteen years of age. They conversed with ease and affability, but were very respectful and unassuming; and their whole conduct might have done credit even to European servants, not of the lowest class.

On our asking to whom they belonged, they replied "We belong to Col. B's. lady." Is this Col. B's house? "Yes; but the Col. is not at home—he is gone to England." How does it happen that you are sitting here, instead of being in the house at work? "Our work, for to-day, is finished, and we came to the gate to see the strangers, as they pass by." What strangers? "The strangers, who are come with the army, from old England." Do you like to meet strangers? "Oh! yes, yes!" And to talk with them? "Yes, if

they talk with us." Are the people, here, kind to strangers? "Oh, yes! it is always our custom: every body should be more kind to strangers than to their own people." Why so?—should we not be kind to every body? "Yes! we should be kind to every body, but we should be more kind to strangers, because they come far from their own home, and their friends; and because we may some time travel ourselves, and want kindness from others." Have you ever been far from your home? "No! but, perhaps, we may some day." How far have you ever travelled from your master's house? "Never more than five miles." Did you ride or walk? They both smiled, and hung down their heads, looking to the ground. No reply could have been more expressive, nor better understood.—"Ride! a slave ride! you are strangers here indeed! No! we walked, bore our burden on our backs, and journied on our naked feet!" We bade them good night, and walked on, pleased with the rencontre.

LETTER XXII.

Meat sold alive in the market at Barbadoes. Custom of blowing the meat. Creoles caution Dr. Clegborn and the author against walking. Visit to a sugar plantation. Specimen of the indolent labour of slaves. A washing party. Indecency of women upon the streets. Effect of the indecent habits of slaves upon the minds of white females. Negro custom of picking each other's heads. Savage fight between a black woman, and a mulatto woman.

Carlisle Bay, Feb.

THE office of caterer for the mess having fallen to the lot of your friend, I may tell you that I sometimes go to Bridge Town, to buy living meat for dinnre. You will, perhaps, be surpris'd to learn that animals are, here, brought alive into the market, to be killed after the different joints are sold; and, that it often happens, that the meat is slaughtered, consigned to the pot or spit, brought to table, and eaten, without growing cold!

The very filthy custom of blowing the meat, is here carried to greater excess than in England. As soon as the calf is dead, a

hole is cut through the skin, near to the hock, and a long sharp-pointed stick, being introduced, is forced up the whole length of the thigh, and the side, to tear or break down the cellular membrane. This being done, the stick is withdrawn, and one negro puts his mouth to the hole and blows in air, while another beats, with a cane, upon every part of the skin; which beating and blowing, are continued until the carcase sounds like a drum, and the whole surface is inflated like a full-blown bladder—the animal being distended to nearly twice its former size. The skin is then taken off, and the meat distributed to the purchasers for immediate use.

Leaving our comrades, Weir, and Master, on board, Cleghorn and myself frequently make excursions on shore, and stroll about the town and the fields, by way of exercise, and of gratifying the strong curiosity which we feel to see and know all that appertains to the change we have made. In these ramblings, we often surprize the West Indians, by, what they term, the dangerous extent of our walks; and they assure us that, a

few months hence, we shall be little inclined to use such *violent* exercise. A walk of five or six miles appears to them *tremendous*: but we suffer no inconvenience from it, and, perhaps, without being, yet, well able to judge, we fancy that much of the languor and inactivity of the Creoles and creolised, might be prevented, and stronger health enjoyed, were they to accustom themselves, more freely, to habits of exercise. Against our theory they urge experience, remarking that all Europeans, however fond of using much exercise, on their first arrival, gradually lapse into the same indolent indulgence as the natives.

In one of these excursions we, lately, made a first visit to a sugar estate, in the hope of seeing the works, and witnessing the mode of making the sugar; but we were disappointed, by finding that none of the slaves were at work, and that the manager was from home, with the keys of the boiling house in his pocket. We had, however, some compensation in being allowed to walk into an excellent garden, adjoining the house, where we were gratified with the novelty

of seeing a number of the tropical fruits, and observing the garden hedge, which was formed of a bush bearing immense quantities of a species of cherry, of a very pleasant flavor.

From this walk we returned to Bridge Town, by way of Pilgrim, the residence of the governor—a pleasant home, situated upon an elevated spot, about a mile from the Town. Near this place our attention was arrested by a party of slaves, or, according to the language of the island, a *gang of negroes*, who were employed in making a road to the governor's house. It was the first large body of slaves we had met with, toiling at their regular employment, immediately under the lash of the whip; and we could not but remark that the manner of executing the task afforded a striking example of the indolence of climate, and of slavery. Nothing of diligence, nor industry appeared among them; and, verily, but little of bodily labor was expended. They seemed almost too idle to raise the hammer, which they let fall by its own weight, repeating the blow several times, upon the same stone, until it was

broken to pieces. A mulatto overseer attended them, holding a whip at their backs; but he had every appearance of being as much a stranger to industry, as the negroes; who proceeded very indolently, without seeming to be at all apprehensive of the driver or his whip, except when he made it fall across them in stripes.

In proportion to the work done by English laborers, and the price, usually, paid for it, the labor of these slaves could not be calculated at so much as twopence per day; for almost any two men in England would, with the greatest ease, do as much work in a given time, as was performed by a dozen of these indolent meager-looking beings.

In one of our late perambulations, we fell in with a party of negro women, washing linen, at the opening of a river near the sea; and a more disgusting sight I do not recollect ever to have beheld. They were old women, of strong-marked, and very hideous African countenance; and had no

regard to decency either of manner, or person. Their bodies were naked, save a bit of blue cloth folded round the loins, and brought between the legs, from behind, to fasten before. As they stooped down, to dip the linen in the river, many of them exposed the crowded and callous escars of repeated punishment; and when they moved themselves in rubbing the clothes, or beating them upon the large stones before them, their long flaccid breasts fell over their arms, or hung in loose masses of corrugated skin flapping upon their bodies, so as to create a most disgusting and abhorrent appearance.

It has also happened to us to witness another species of indelicacy among the negro women, which is extremely offensive to an European eye. Regardless of decency, and of the crowd they meet, they are sometimes seen drawing their naked, pendulous breasts as they walk along, and spilling their milk upon the public streets.

You will, perhaps, be more shocked

than surprized that such-like indecencies should occur among the slaves ; but you will join in my regret that they should happen before the eyes of European wives, and spinsters ; and you will lament the sad effect which the frequent recurrence of such offensive scenes must, necessarily, have in destroying that modest delicacy of sentiment, which renders so truly lovely, while it so much exalts the female mind.

Of this baneful effect, I am sorry to have it in my power to mention to you a striking example, which lately occurred to my notice. Being in company with a large party of Europeans, and white creoles, male and female, husbands, wives, widows, maidens, and strangers, at the time when the party was assembled, during the short moment before dinner, a sweet little babe, only a few months old, was brought into the room, by its black nurse, to be exhibited to the company : when the woman, who, with the exception of one short petticoat, was in perfect nudity, was desired, before all present, to suckle the child ; and its mother and grand-

mother, two of the most respectable ladies we have met, since we left England, in order to please "little bab," amused themselves by flapping, pressing, shaking about, and playing with the long black breasts of the slave, with very indelicate familiarity, before the whole company ; and without seeming to be at all sensible, that it was, in any degree, indecent or improper !

In all corners of the streets we meet with the filthy sight of pairs of negroes, of both sexes, sitting and lying about, with their heads in each other's laps, picking out the swarms of vermin which occupy their wool. This, as we had been told on board the slave ships, seems to be a feast of delight to the blacks, whether in freedom, or in slavery.

One day in passing along the street, we chanced to see a fight between two women of colour, one a negro, the other a mulatto. The crowd, about them, was very great, and European curiosity induced us to wait the result ; but we have no desire to witness such

another contest. You can have no conception of the brutal and savage means which were used by these women to injure each other. Not only biting, pinching, flapping, and scratching were employed ; but with the more horrid vengeance of the American gouchers, and in the most cold and deliberate manner, did each of these females thrust her thumb or fingers into the nose, mouth, and eyes, of the other, striving, in all the bitterness and cruelty of savage nature, to tear to pieces, to blind, or to maim her opponent.

I feel that this letter will be more painful than amusing to you ; and almost fear that you will charge me with having looked out for unpleasant and distressful events ! But I may assure you that, without going in search of them, they have accidentally fallen in my path ; and, as they are strong features, I cannot reconcile to myself to withhold them from you, merely because they are not of so pleasant a nature as I could have wished. It is my object, faithfully, to lay before you the facts I meet with, whether happy or unhappy, in order that you may be enabled

to form a just opinion of the character and habits of those among whom I may chance to be placed, while absent from England.

LETTER XXIII.

Sunday a day of festivity among the slaves. African dance, and music. Remarks of a Scottish woman on seeing the negroes dance. Fracas between a negro man and woman. Negro funeral. Faith of slaves in transmigration after death. Singular expedient to deter them from suicide.

Barbadoes, Feb.

IT is Sunday, and, separated by the wide Atlantic, I take up my pen to hallow the sabbath to my friend. Mentally I am every day in your society: but on the sabbath I breathe a still warmer aspiration to dear England, and sanctify the wish that we were, personally, nearer. Were you here to participate them with me, the novel scenes which occur to my observation would have a double interest, and I should find a charm in many things which now convey only a languid impression.

Sunday is a day of festivity among the slaves. They are passionately fond of dancing, and the sabbath; offering them an interval from toil, is, generally, devoted to their fa-

vorite amusement; and, instead of remaining in tranquil rest, they undergo more fatigue, or at least more personal exertion, during their gala hours of Saturday night and Sunday, than is demanded from them, in labor, during any four days of the week.

They assemble, in crowds, upon the open green, or in any square or corner of the town, and, forming a ring in the centre of the throng, dance to the sound of their beloved music, and the singing of their favorite African yell. Both music and dance are of a savage nature. I have wished myself a musician, that I might take down for you the notes of their songs; which are very simple, but harsh and wholly deficient in softness and melody. Ask the fair chantress our delighting friend - - - the next time you meet her, and if she be not afraid of distorting her sweet countenance, she can give you, very accurately, all you may wish to hear of an African song.

The instrumental parts of the band consist of a species of drum, a kind of rattle, and

their ever-delighting Banjar. The first is a long hollow piece of wood, with a dried sheep skin tied over the end; the second is a calabash containing a number of small stones, fixed to a short stick which serves as the handle; and the third is a coarse and rough kind of guitar. While one negro strikes the Banjar, another shakes the rattle with great force of arm, and a third sitting across the body of the drum, as it lies lengthwise upon the ground, beats and kicks the sheep skin at the end, in violent exertion with his hands and heels, and a fourth sitting upon the ground at the other end, behind the man upon the drum, beats upon the wooden sides of it with two sticks. Together with these noisy sounds, numbers of the party of both sexes bawl forth their dear delighting song with all possible force of lungs; and from the combination, and *tout ensemble* of the scene, a spectator would require only a slight aid from fancy to transport him to the savage wilds of Africa. On great occasions the band is increased by an additional number of drums, rattles, and voices.

The dance consists of stamping of the

feet, twistings of the body, and a number of strange indecent attitudes. It is a severe bodily exertion—more bodily indeed than you can well imagine, for the limbs have little to do in it. The head is held erect, or, occasionally, inclined a little forward—the hands nearly meet before—the elbows are fixed, pointing from the sides—and the lower extremities being held rigid, the whole person is moved without lifting the feet from the ground. Making the head and limbs fixed points, they writhe and turn the body upon its own axis, slowly advancing towards each other, or retreating to the outer parts of the ring. Their approaches, with the figure of the dance, and the attitudes and inflexions in which they are made, are highly indecent: but of this they seem to be wholly unconscious, for the gravity—I might say the solemnity of countenance, under which all this passes, is peculiarly striking, indeed almost ridiculous. Not a smile—not a significant glance, nor an immodest look escapes from either sex: but they meet, in very indecent attitudes, under the most settled, and unmeaning gravity of countenance. Occasionally they change the

figure by stamping upon the feet, or making a more general movement of the person, but these are only temporary variations; the twistings and turnings of the body seeming to constitute the supreme excellence of the dance.

For the most part only two enter the ring at a time, but, occasionally, as many as three or four! each making a small contribution to the band at the time of stepping into the circle. They circle, violently, together until one is tired, and when this escapes from the circle another assumes the place, thus continuing to follow, one by one, in succession, so as frequently to keep up the dance, without any interval, for several hours.

Both musicians and dancers seem, equally, to delight in the amusement. They exert themselves until their naked skins pour off copious streams. The band seem to be quite insensible to fatigue, for, in proportion as the fluid distils from their pores, they increase their efforts, raising their voices, and beating the drum and the rattle, with ad-

ditional violence : and such of the spectators whose olfactories have no relish for African odours, are sadly annoyed by the high effenced exhalation which spreads itself around.

As I was looking on at one of these dances I observed a soldier's wife, from the north of Tweed, gazing with curiosity and astonishment, amidst the throng : and seeing her features marked with dissatisfaction and surprise, I asked her what she thought of the African dance. "*Oot,*" said she "*tis an unco way o' spending the sabbath night.*"—And on my asking her if there were any as pretty woman in the Highlands of Scotland, she, instantly, replied "*whether or not—they smell better.*"

Presently a soldier passing that way, and observing the dance, asked a mulatto who was standing by, for a cud of tobacco, and twisting it between his lower lip and his teeth, forced his way through the crowd, into the middle of the ring ; and there placing himself, betwen the negro and the girl

who were dancing, set the nymph in African step and figure. Wowiski was responsive and they danced, cordially, together; but soon finished by footing it, in quick step, from the ring, happily enfolded in each others' arms; to the great disappointment of poor Sambo, who, no doubt, thought to regain his partner as soon as the soldier had grown tired in the dance.

Near this merry green happened a sad fracas between a negro man and woman, in consequence of gaming; which is a very prevailing passion among the blacks. The woman had won from the man three dollars, and some words having arisen between them, a scuffle ensued, in which the man had torn off the few clothes, that covered the ebon dame, and exposed her, in nakedness, to the crowd. She, in return, tore and mal-treated his breeches; and the dispute now was whether the woman, having been the successful adventurer, ought not to make reparation for the further injury she had committed. The man exclaimed, with sad violence, regarding the additional loss, sustained by the

destruction of his indispensable apparel. The woman, putting all success at play out of the question, insisted that she was the injured party, from having her petticoat ruined, and being exposed, in nudity, to the multitude.

At length a respectable looking, and decently dressed negro, who chanced to pass that way, kindly undertook to settle this important broil; and we observed that much deference was paid to his opinion; but I am not satisfied that he acted quite the part of an upright and impartial judge,—certainly his opinion was not fraught with gallantry, for having no eye of pity towards the distressed, and naked nymph, he decided that a hole in the *culottes* was an evil of greater magnitude than a rent in the *petticoat*, and accordingly decreed that Penelope should forfeit half a dollar to Cassandro, for taking him by the breeches.

Having led you to the merry song, and sprightly dance of the slaves, let me now conduct you to their bed of death. Seeing a crowd in one of the streets, and observing a

kind of proceſſion, we followed the multitude, and ſoon found ourſelves in the train of a negro funeral. Wiſhing to witneſs the ceremony of interment we proceeded to the burial ground, with the throng. The corpeſe was conveyed in a neat ſmall hearse, drawn by one horſe. Six boys, twelve men, and forty-eight women walked behind, in pairs, as followers, but I cannot ſay as deeply afflicted mourners. The females were neatly clad, for the occaſion, and moſtly in white. Grief and lamentations were not among them: nor was even the ſemblance thereof aſſumed. No ſolemn dirge was heard—no deep-foundiſhing bell was tolled—no fearful ſilence held. It ſeemed a period of mirth and joy. Inſtead of weeping and bewailing, the followers jumped and ſported, as they paſſed along, and talked and laughed, with each other, in high feſtivity. The proceſſion was cloſed by five robuſt negro fiſhermen, who followed behind playing antic gambols, and dancing all the way to the grave.

At the gate of the burying ground the corpeſe was taken from the hearse, and borne

by eight negroes, not upon their shoulders, but upon four clean white napkins placed under the coffin. The body was committed to the grave, immediately, on reaching it, without either prayer or ceremony; and the coffin, directly, covered with earth. In doing this, much decent attention was observed. The mould was not shovelled in roughly with the spade, almost disturbing the dead, with the rattling of stones and bones upon the coffin, but was first put into a basket, and then carefully emptied into the grave; an observance which might be adopted in England very much to the comfort of the afflicted friends of the deceased.

During this process an old negro woman chanted an African air, and the multitude joined her in the chorus. It was not in the strain of a hymn, or solemn requiem, but was loud and lively, in unison with the other gaieties of the occasion.

Many were laughing and sporting the whole time with the fishermen, who danced and gambolled, during the ceremony, upon