

## THE DISENTHRALLED.

He had bowed down to drunkenness,  
An abject worshipper;  
The pulse of manhood's pride had gone,  
Too faint and cold to stir;  
And he had given his spirit up  
Unto the humblest thrall;  
And, bowing to the poisoned cup,  
He gloried in his fall.

There came a change; the cloud rolled off,  
And light fell on his brain,  
And like the passing of a dream  
That cometh not again,  
The shadow of his spirit fled;  
He saw the gulf before;  
He shuddered at the waste behind,  
And was a man once more.

He shook the serpent's folds away,  
That gathered round his heart,  
As shakes the sturdy forest oak  
Its poison vine apart;  
He stood erect; returning pride  
Grew terribly within,  
And conscience sat in judgment on  
His most familiar sin.

The light of intellect again,  
Along his pathway shone,  
And reason, like a monarch, stood  
Upon his golden throne;  
The honored and the wise once more  
Within his presence came,  
And lingered oft on lovely lips  
His once forbidden name.

There may be glory in the might  
That treadeth nations down;  
Wreaths for the crimson warrior,  
Pride for the kingly crown;  
But glorious is that triumph hour  
The disenthralled shall find,  
When evil passion boweth down  
Unto the godlike mind.

BY JOHN G. WHITTIER.

## WHAT I SAW IN A MIRROR.

We live in a quiet neighborhood in the quiet city of Brooklyn, and our domestic life has, with one exception, proved a very uneventful one. The exception was, however, a decided adventure, of a very unpleasant character, which might have proved a terrible experience. Fortunately, I came out unharmed, though I shall not soon forget the episode. Brooklyn residents had been during the warm months greatly alarmed by the unwelcome visits of burglars, and nearly every day the newspapers recorded fresh instances of the daring and adroit operations of this class of thieves. Our neighborhood had, however, so far escaped the attentions of these predatory gangs, and my wife was so very careful about her door and window fastenings, that we believed our little home to be quite safe. To please mother I had purchased a revolver, which was kept in a safe place in our bedroom, though it was never used, and was out of my reach when most needed.

I had for years devoted an hour or two after the family retired, to perusing a favorite author, and on the night in question was so occupied. Cosily seated in a huge arm chair, near the open sliding doors between the two parlors, I was making rapid progress in my reading. The house was wrapped in silence, and though the many noises of the night were remarkably distinct, yet they did not disturb me. The window-curtains moved idly as the night breezes came in at the open windows at my back, the mice gambled merrily behind the wainscoting, and the clock on the mantel piece ticked loudly, as if complaining at being compelled to work while everything else rested. The footsteps of passers-by in the streets echoed strangely in the room, and I could now and then hear the faint cry of an infant in the adjoining house.

Save for these noises, all else was silent about me, and I enjoyed my book as one can only do under such circumstances. As the night air played coolly on my cheek, I experienced a sense of calmness and security, which made the interruption so soon to occur only appear the more startling.

Having read for some time, I came at length to a striking passage, which led me to lay the volume on my knee to think it over. As I did so my eye caught the reflexion of myself in the large mirror standing between the windows of the front parlor. In the same mirror I could discern the mirror at my back, and in it my arm chair and figure were dimly visible. It seemed odd to thus view myself in two different aspects, and I fell into a reverie on the two pictures thus presented.

I have forgotten to say that the side door of the real parlor was wide open, and the gas-light in the passage burning brightly. There was also at my back, and on a line with the hall, a small room, the door of which was wide open.

Indeed, it was seldom shut, having been badly hung, and was constantly swinging open when not closely latched. I could see the edge of this white door in the mirror before me, and it formed a distinct feature in that reflected picture.

Sitting thus, I was suddenly startled by the unexpected appearance of another face, peering intently over my shoulder, while in the inner mirror I could discern his back as he stood behind the bath room door. Though by no means a timid man, this apparition sent a strange and painful thrill through my body, and I felt very uncomfortable indeed. The face of the intruder was a sinister one, and he was apparently watching me in no pleasant mood.

He was a burglar or a sneak-thief—there could be no question of that. As I sat there looking at my visitor for a few seconds, I remembered that my wife had been sorely troubled about finding one of the basement windows open, though I had paid very little attention to the matter at the time. The fellow was evidently responsible for that window. Even now I can recall the appearance of the scene before me, so vividly is it impressed on my mind. One of the sliding doors had been partially drawn from its receptacle, thus throwing part of the front room into shadow. A ray of light, however, illumined the centre of the room. The gilt binding on some books shone brightly, and one or two pictures on the wall were clearly revealed. But as I saw all of these the face of that strange man continued to peer at me, and the situation became quite dramatic in its intensity.

I was apparently utterly helpless, being alone and unarmed. Yet my courage soon rose equal to the occasion, and I at once sprang to my feet and faced the burglar.

"Don't you stir or utter a word, or I'll blow your brains out."

As he uttered these startling words the ruffian leveled a revolver at my head, and his face—a most villainous one naturally—deepened in its lines until his features became fierce in their murderous hate.

"Who are you? What do you want? How came you here?" I exclaimed, despite his caution.

"Never you mind," was the gruff response. "You've spoilt my game; but I'm game to settle you if you hinder my leaving the house. I've got this shooting iron, and I mean to use it, too, if you don't keep quiet, and show me the way out."

All this time he kept his weapon aimed at my face, and the sight of the muzzle, small as it was, made me feel very uncomfortable. It was a singular predicament—to be thus all alone in a room with a desperate and determined man, who, having a prison staring him in the face, evidently preferred risking the gallows by murdering me, if he could aid his present escape.

"You want to leave the house, do you?" I remarked. "Well, I cannot stop you, so put down your pistol and follow me." I'll show you the door with pleasure."

As I spoke I could not help laughing faintly at the grim oddity of the situation, but my visitor could apparently find nothing to laugh at, for he was dreadfully in earnest. He followed me into the hallway, still keeping his revolver cocked and unpleasantly near my head, at the same time narrowly watching me as I undid the fastenings, evidently fearing some aggressive movement on my part.

During the few seconds that had elapsed since we had fairly faced one another, I had fully matured my plan of action, for I naturally wished to capture the ruffian and have him punished. This led me to acquiesce so quietly in his cool demand. Having carried off the matter so successfully, the burglar believed I intended to make no trouble nor resistance, so as I opened the street door he quickly passed out, at the same time unconsciously lowering his weapon. Then came my turn, and as he stepped off the door sill, I let the door swing with a crash, and by a desperate bound flung myself suddenly upon him. The momentum of my spring was so great that it sent us both tumbling headlong down the stone steps, the pistol accidentally exploding as we rolled over together. The ruse had proved successful, for the burglar was taken wholly by surprise, and his revolver having fallen from his grasp, I found myself more than a match for him. The report of the pistol started the echoes of the night, and the light from the hall gas jet gave additional force to my loud calls for the police. Fortunately, one of that much abused class happened to be within call, and I had the satisfaction of seeing my unwelcome visitor safe in his custody.

There is very little more to tell, for the prisoner was recognized as an old and desperate offender, and my evidence proved sufficient to send him to Sing Sing, while I keep the pistol he dropped on my doorstep as a trophy of that eventful night. The occurrence made no end of noise in the neighborhood, so to please my wife we moved to other quarters.

There is a moral to my story, however. Always be careful that your fastenings are all right and secure, else you may find unwelcome visitors on the premises, who may prove far more troublesome than I found my friend, the burglar.

## THE SEALED INSTRUCTIONS.

I had served twenty-five years on board an East Indiaman, and for the last ten years had commanded the *Belle*, one of the finest crafts that ever floated. I was an old sea dog, and had dwelt so long on salt water that I felt almost a hatred for the land.

On the 10th of October, 1824, I received orders to put myself in readiness to sail for Cayenne. I was to transport seventy-five soldiers and a convict. I had orders to treat this individual well, and the letter I had received from the directory inclosed another, with a huge red seal, which I was not to open until between 27 and 28 degrees west longitude; that is, just before we were about to cross the line.

The letter was a long packet, so well closed on every side that it was impossible to catch the slightest glimpse of its contents. I am not naturally superstitious, but there was something in the look of that letter that I did not altogether like, though I could give no reason why. However, I carried it into the cabin, and stuck it under the glass of a little shabby English clock, which was fastened above my head. I was busy fixing the letter under the clock, when who should come into my cabin but the convict and his wife! This was the first time I had seen either of them, and I may say that a more prepossessing couple I never met. The woman was scarcely more than fifteen, and as handsome as a picture, while the husband was an intelligent, magnificently-formed man, on whose features nature had never written "villain."

His crime, to be plain, was the misfortune of being a hundred years ahead of his age. He and others had attempted something which our government called treason, and which is punished with death. It therefore occasioned me considerable wonder that he should be placed under my charge; but more of this afterward.

He had, as I said, his wife hanging on his arm. She was as merry as a bird; she looked like a turtle dove cooing and nestling beneath his great wing.

Before a month had passed over our heads, I looked upon them as my own children. Every morn I used to call them into my own cabin. The young fellow would sit writing at my table—that is to say, at my chest, which was my table. He would often help me at reckoning, and soon learned to do better than I could. I was amazed at his ability. His young wife would sit upon one of the round stools in my cabin, working at her needle.

One day we were all three sitting in this way, when I said:

"Do you know, my young ones, as it seems to me, we make a very pretty family picture? Mind, I don't mean to ask questions, but may be you have not much money to spare, and you are both of you, as I think, too handsome to dig in the burning sun of Cayenne, like many a poor wretch before you. It's a bad country—a bad country, take my word for it. I, who have roughed it through tempest and sunshine, till I've the skin of a rhinoceros, might get along there; but you—I am afraid for you. So, if you should chance to have a bit of foolish friendship for your poor old captain, I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll get rid of this old brig; she's not much better than an old tub, after all; so I'll settle myself down there with you, if you like. You see I have not a living soul in the world to care for, or that cares for me. I want relations, I want a home, I want a family. I should like to make my home with you, my pretty young ones! What say ye?"

They said nothing at all, but sat looking, first at each other, and then at me, as if they doubted whether they understood what I said.

At last the little bird threw her arms around my neck and cried like a baby.

"But," said she, suddenly pausing, "you haven't looked at the letter with the big red seal."

"Hang it!" I exclaimed, "it had slipped my mind entirely."

With a cold, dreadful sensation, I went to my chest to see where we were. I found that we had several days remaining before we should reach the proper longitude for opening the letter.

Well, there we stood, all three of us, looking up at the letter as if it could have spoken to us. As it happened, the sun was shining full upon the face of the clock case, and fell upon the great glaring red seal of the letter. I could not help fancying it looked something like a big monster, an ogre's face, grinning from the middle of the fire; it looked horrid.

"Could not one fancy," said I, to make them laugh, "its great big eyes were staring out of its head?"

"Ah, my love," said the wife, "it loo's like blood."

"Pooh, pooh!" said her husband, taking her arm under his, "it looks like a letter of invitation to a wedding. Come, come, leave the letter alone if it troubles you so. Let's go to our room and prepare for bed."

And off they went. They went upon deck, and left me with that beast of a letter. I remembered that I kept looking at it as I smoked my pipe; it seemed to fix its great red eye upon mine, fascinating like the eye of a serpent. It was red, wide, raw, staring like the maw of a fierce wolf. I took my great coat and hung it over both clock and letter, and went upon deck to finish my pipe.

We were now in the vicinity of Cape de Verde islands, and the *Belle* was running before a fair wind at the rate of ten miles an hour. It was a splendid tropical night, the stars large and shining, the moon rising above the horizon, as large as a sun of silver, the line of ocean parting it, and long streams of bare shimmering light falling upon the waves, which as they broke, sparkled like jewels. I sat upon the deck smoking my pipe and looking at them.

All was still, except the footfall of the officer of the watch, as he paced the deck, gazing, as I was, upon the shadow of the vessel, stealing over the silent water.

I love silence and order, I hate noise and confusion. The lights should all have been extinguished by this time; but when I looked upon the deck I thought I saw a little red line of light beneath my feet. At another time and place this would have made me angry; but knowing that the light came from the cabin of my little *deportes*, I determined to see what they were about.

I had only to look down—I could see into the cabin from the skylight.

The young girl was upon her knees; she was saying her prayers. A lamp swung from the ceiling lighted her room. She had on a long, white night-dress, and her fair, golden hair, floated over her shoulders and almost touched two little bare feet which were peeping from under her white dress, so pretty. I turned away; but pshaw! said I, I am an old sailor! What matters it? So I stayed.

The husband was sitting upon a little trunk, his head resting upon his hands, looking at her as she prayed. She raised her face to heaven, and then I saw that her eyes were filled with tears. She looked like a Magdalene. As she rose, he said:

"Ah, my sweet Laurette, as we approach America. I cannot help being anxious—I do not know why—but I feel that this voyage has been the happiest part of our lives."

"So it seems to me," she answered. "I only wish it might last forever."

Suddenly clasping his hands in a transport of love and affection, he said:

"And yet, my little angel, I see you cry when you say your prayers, and that I cannot stand, for I know what causes it, and then I fear you must repent what you have done."

"Repent," she said, in a sad, rebuking tone. "Repent of having come with you? Do you think because I have been yours only such a very, very short time, that I should not love you? Was I not your wife? How can you be sorry that I should be with you, to live with you if you live, and to die with you if you are to die?"

The young man began to sigh, striking the floor impatiently with his feet, while he kissed repeatedly the little hand and arm which she was holding out.

"Ah, Laurette, Laurette! When I think if our marriage had been delayed only five days—only five days—that then I should have been arrested and transported alone, I cannot forgive myself."