

A LADY'S LOG-BOOK.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "AIMS AND ENDS," "CARWELL," &c.

ALL books of southern voyages are so contrived, that a third of the first volume records only the sea-sickness of the writer, the baritas, sea-gulls, and reflections that crossed him between Portsmouth and Madeira. He is then naturally led to dwell on the beauty of that lovely little island, its fruits and flowers, its glorious grapes, and "golden wine;"—he describes the prickly-pear at his foot, and the carapons on the head of the bronzed and short-cloked peasant; the oxen drawing the barrels of wine about the streets, and the incessant cry of "Capara mi boa!" from their drivers. After the nausea and weariness of a month perhaps, he eats and wonders at the rosy guava, the perfumed banana, the turpentine-tasted rose-apple; the jew-fish, with his telescope-shaped eye. The abrote consoles him for lost whittings and turbot; in the claw of the sea craw-fish he is recompensed for the lobsters of London recollection. When the sudden southern night-fall withdraws the light, the heavy perfume of the white-blossomed datura (whose large blossom made a witty friend observe, that it always reminded him of a tree "*hung with dimity waistcoats,*")

the sweet mysterious vapour of the "buenos noches," make him ashamed to regret even the violets and wild hyacinths of a Devonshire spring.

He blesses himself at the profaneness of their processions, when he sees the Virgin, as large as life, in a blue satin gown and tinsel coronet, carried in a butcher's tray, and other exhibitions of the same kind, but yet more shocking to protestant Christians. She is followed by brawny, masked, and barefoot penitents, in blue or green, by little children, with rouged cheeks, goose wings at their shoulders, and chaplets of flowers on their heads. One of the penitents belabours his own back, with the heavy whip, till the blood flows profusely, and he keeps time in his blows with the utmost apparent indifference. All these things are new to the English traveller (or at least were so, when Napoleon denied a continental tour to our wandering inclinations), he describes and remembers them; but the most profound impression I received, and which no time can ever efface, was from the great kindness and noble hospitality of the gentlemen of the factory; who, to a man, show every sort of kindness to the strangers recommended to their notice by friends at home; and among the resident merchants, I cannot refuse myself the pleasure of recording my obligations to the house of Messrs. Gordon, Duff, and Bean, whose wine was, by my male friends, considered the best in the world, and whose hearts are as friendly as their wine is generous.

The last day spent in that hospitable house in the Rua Emeralda at Funchal we were a company of sixteen persons, now going to part with almost the certainty of never meeting again: some were going to England, some to India, some to the West Indies. We were for

southern Africa; some were to stay in Madeira. It was not without a *serrement du cœur*, that we heard our healths drank as "the outward bound." Great discussion took place whether our little fleet would sail the next day, and whether our ship (the Annes) would ever sail at all, so many circumstances had occurred to delay her departure, which we had been expecting to take place every day for the last two months. This time we were not disappointed: on the afternoon of the following day we walked to the Pintinha, and the day being fine and calm, we had a pleasant "trip" to the Annes, accompanied by some of our friends, who kindly saw us deposited in our cabin. Fortunately our convoy did not give signal for sailing on the following day, which last delay enabled us to hear again from England, and to receive the last flowers which were to be gathered for us in Madeira; and on the following morning, at 10 o'clock, found H. M. S. the T— under weigh, with a fair wind. Our fleet consisted of four brigs, store ships, and one king's ship as convoy, for the war still endured. Our vessel was one of 280 tons. The crew, including our family and the master's wife, consisted of fourteen persons. The master, a respectable man and good seaman, had had great experience in the coal trade, but this was his first voyage southwards. It has been my fortune to sail in various ships, but I have found it an invariable rule in all, that the captain or master assures you that there never was so good a sailer, so fine a sea-boat, so admirably constructed a vessel, as that particular one then intrusted to his guidance. We received this customary encouragement, and in this case, as in all others, observed it was not an assertion to soothe female cowardice, but the deliberate opinion of him who

spoke it. A fair fresh wind impelled us briskly forward, but we had the mortification to discover that the master had been rather partial in his view of the Annes' merits. It is true she was an excellent sea-boat, and well calculated to bear the buffeting of the long southern waves, but from being built much too round she was wanting in vivacity: in fact, a very bad sailer: she "walked the waters" not "as a thing of life," but like a large dowager straining a quadrille, or a fat elderly gentleman as "cavalier seul." This discovery did not add to the pleasure of the voyage, or of a very squally night, which closed that 20th of April.

On the following day, in order to hasten the tardy movements of the Annes, the captain of the T—— took us in tow. He proved a most obliging neighbour. His notes, visits, and conversation, formed our principal amusement during the voyage: he was exceedingly lively and intelligent in spite of illness, by which he was oppressed, and there was an originality in all he said that made him very interesting. On the 22nd we had the good fortune to acquire the guidance of a fresh and strong trade-wind, which blew us on beneath a lovely cloudless sky, and our company was augmented by a band of porpoises, who played on the "level brine" on each side of the ship, with great vivacity. No incident worth relating occurred, unless we might dwell on the frequent breakage of the towing rope, as constantly replaced, till the trade-wind grew too fresh to allow of the process being continued; and having extracted from the master his opinion that towing was injurious to the strength of the vessel's constitution, it was impossible not to rejoice when the Annes resumed her own sluggish struggle through the waves. Happy are those who can

read, write, and employ themselves afloat with the same perseverance and interest as in a comfortable chamber; it is easier to respect than imitate their independent character! To the less favoured traveller there is something to discourage, when

“His pens and paper, ink, and he
Roll up and down the ship at sea.”

When, having made himself comfortable with a large folio on a gun carriage, and a thick cushion to sit on, a sudden lurch sends folio and cushion through the opposite port-hole, and the student is only saved from following, by being caught by the throat, arm, or leg, as it happens, by the strong arm and tarry hand of a friendly shipmate. Or a lady on deck is working a calico dress, and one of those unaccountable waves which seem to have had no provocation of wind to stir them, suddenly washes herself and embroidery, which, if in colours, will be much mellowed by the process, besides the pleasure of a second toilet, when *one* presents difficulties of great magnitude.

Perhaps you play chess; if you have not provided yourself with those spiked men who insinuate themselves into the board, your skill will avail you nothing, just when you see your adversary look wildly on impending check-mate, when you see

“————— the king at chess,
His rooks and knights withdrawn,
His queen and bishops in distress,
Shifting about grow less and less,
With here and there a peon.”

You send that Zenobia, that Catherine, *your* queen, backed by two castles and the white bishop, to give him

the coup-de-grace in a corner. She comes—the amazon! Alas for Hoyle! alas for Philidor! they are all in the ship's waist, trodden by the sheep! munched by the hogs! swallowed by the ducks!—while that arch-monster of insincerity your adversary says with a meaning smile, he “is *really* sorry, it was a very good game, and he had just discovered the way to extricate himself, he was *sure of the game in three more moves!*” It is small comfort to tell him he lies—for you cannot prove it.

Among other attempts at occupation, I sought to converse with the master's wife, but she was a perfect mistress of the art of silence, though a female. He was more disposed to speak, and as I one day besought him to tell me whether he had formed any decided opinion as to the existence of mermaids, he gave me the following anecdote, either as having happened to his father or his father's intimate friend, I am not positive which. The hero of the tale commanded a collier called the “Sea-adventure,” which one calm evening in some north country bay, was spoken by a mermaid, whose address was couched in the following terms:—“Sea-adventure! Sea-adventure! Clew up your sails and let go your sheet-anchor!” As the evening was fine and the weather promising, the greater part of the crew conceived that a mermaid who gave such unnecessary advice, was either of a ridiculously timid disposition, or that she had on that evening partaken of an extra shell containing some liquor more bewildering than her native wave, and they inclined to scorn the admonition,—but the captain being a cautious man, thought the mermaid might have private reasons for what she said, and being a courteous man thought it right to pay some attention to a female neighbour, so he obeyed and was rewarded

for his complaisance, for a sudden storm came on that night which the Sea-adventure rode out very comfortably, while several other ships were wrecked which had not had a mermaid to pilot them. From this tale it may be seen "how pleasant was my friend!". On the 26th we made the Cape de Verds, we had not the pleasure of seeing them; we passed Brava in the night, but saw birds and large shoals of flying fish for the first time. Several fell on our deck; it must be confessed they seem to have less discretion and foresight than any other living creatures whatsoever: perhaps if this could be explained to the ornithological, and I wish it could, it might prevent the envy their double talent of swimming and flying is calculated to inspire. It was pretty to see their little silvery wings, their haste and agitation as they rose from one wave to bury themselves in the next, but it was too like the fate of mankind to be a very cheerful sight. The same gay commotion, anxious speed, momentary importance, and vanishing ere we have well gazed at it, buried in the surge of time! During the last days of the month we had an opportunity of observing the appearance of fire on the water, of which I had often read, but now saw for the first time. As we approached the Line, the heat rapidly increased; the beautiful bright days continued, with cloudy nights, and often much lightning after it was dark. We were very anxious not to be becalmed when about crossing the Line, which is not an unusual circumstance. The wind failed entirely on the 2nd of May, and it became intensely hot. We had no thermometer on board, but, I imagine, the temperature was about 88°. We had heavy rain on the 4th, which was uncomfortable, as it confined us to the cabin; our discomfort continued until

the 9th of May, when we crossed the Line at midnight. The next day, the oft-described pantomime of a visit from Neptune and Amphitrite took place; Neptune's appearance was truly classical, but Amphitrite appeared in a black bonnet, and altogether was not unlike some terrestrials I have seen at Portsmouth. The 11th a brisk wind made the ship pitch so violently as to give us a day of complete discomfort, but the heat was diminished; and at night a beautiful scene took place, hundreds of dolphins playing by the ship's side and following our light. They were plainly seen many feet below the water when they turned colour, and fire appeared to flash from their sides. Many attempts to snare them were made, but none were caught, though the bait and hook were frequently carried away.

This brilliant spectacle, and the sight of some albatross, several of which were seen in the course of the day, were events to us. Those who have been afloat without sight of land for six or seven weeks, are alone capable of estimating the importance of the smallest incident which breaks the uniformity of "one wide water;" and the man had no touch of sympathy in his nature, who first ridiculed that celebrated memorandum in some nautical journal, "this day hook'd a shark, but let him go." On the 14th of May we had a visit from the *commodore*, as the master called him, who announced an intention of touching at Rio Janeiro for water, finding his convoy such slow-sailing vessels, from which circumstance we had drifted so much to the west it would hardly take us out of our way. The wind at this time seemed to conspire with the currents to oblige us to take that measure; we rather regretted the prospect of any change that might lengthen our voyage; but some

days subsequent to passing Trinidad, the wind, though occasionally sinking to a calm, grew on the whole more favourable, and by the 27th of May we were seventy miles east of Saxenberg; an island, the existence of which is, I believe, sometimes disputed: we however found some birds and weed in the latitude assigned to it. From this time our voyage was monotonous, the wind so fresh that we often went nine knots an hour, and the motion of the ship so violent some nights as to preclude the possibility of sleeping. By the beginning of June, our days were rainy and cold; weary of our imprisonment we counted incessantly the time we had spent on board, and computed how much longer our voyage might last. An incident occurred about the 12th of June that had nearly brought it to a sudden conclusion: we had had some rough winds, and for some reason or other, had occasionally received a signal to "lay to" from the T—. One day we had lost sight of all our companions from a thick fog, which suddenly cleared away; the next day we were enjoying a bright afternoon, and saw at a great distance one or two of the other brigs, and (as it appeared to us) the T— came nearer, and we received a signal to "lay to." Our master disposed the rigging to comply with the signal. We were sitting in our cabin after dinner when a sound of sudden bustle, an unusual sound, made me open the door. In a small cabin next to us, the door of which was open, I saw the master's wife and my maid with livid faces and dilated eyes, and, casting mine towards the window, their consternation was at once accounted for. The vessel we had taken for the T— was a stranger of twice our size, and what then appeared perfectly unaccountable, was rapidly advancing in such a

direction that it was next to impossible she should not run us down. For a couple of minutes it was impossible to conceive a more appalling expectation. I am not sailor enough to describe what measures were taken by the master of the *Annes*, but he evidently showed great readiness in his precautions, and great presence of mind. Our foe just cleared us, and till she had actually passed I believe no one on board the *Annes* believed it was possible she should do so; for the face of each person bore the same expression of alarm and intense anxiety, and no one uttered a word but the master in giving his orders. Our danger was over. The strange vessel passed on her way, and some hours afterwards we fell in with our companions, and also with a strong gale, which however subsided ere we saw the high blue promontory which pointed out the termination of our voyage. On the 17th of June we anchored in Simon's Bay. Some days afterwards we learned that the *L. C.*, an Indiaman, had come in two or three days before us, that the captain had been ill for some time, and the mate, who then commanded the ship, had boasted of an ingenious expedient he had adopted on meeting a French privateer, a few days previously: not having other means of defending himself, he, seeing she was half the size of the *L. C.*, had endeavoured to run her down, and had been very near effecting his purpose. He had mistaken our poor little store-ship for a French privateer.