

SATURDAY EVENING MAGAZINE.

PRICE TWO PENCE.

Vol. I.]

MONTREAL, MAY 3, 1834.

[No. 24.

A SAVIOUR'S LOVE.

To know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. — PAUL.

Sweet, O sweet, to those who roam,
Far from Heaven, their blissful home,
Are the thoughts that sometimes come,
Of Him they love.

Should the world neglect, forsake ;
Sickness sore the spirit break ;
O how melting thoughts that wake
A Saviour's love !

As the bird that left the ark,
Wandering o'er the ocean dark,
Gladly sought, at length, the bark,
A wearied dove :

So the heart that's found no rest,
Roving through this world, unblest,
Pants to greet a Saviour's breast,
Its home of love.

BRITISH SHIPS AND BRITISH SAILORS.

CHAPTER II.

In "His Majesty's Service" the sailors are well fed and clothed, and tolerably well paid. They have the benefit of surgical assistance; and were they not slaves, might be held to be physically well off. But they are cut off from all humanizing association with their fellows, and especially with wives and families. This state of existence is in itself sufficient to destroy morality. The cant which has been used about the 'generosity of British tars' is disgusting to a reflecting mind. There are examples of true generosity, doubtless, amongst the mass of sailors; as there has been amongst kings; but they are the exceptions to the rule. The word generosity implies a love of one's kind, not the reckless disregard of money which has been earned without thought, and is thrown away without care. There is a saying 'that sailors earn their money like horses, and spend it like asses.' It is true. And what are the cases of generosity cited for the most part? That a sailor, having no forethought, gives his cash away to such worthless beings as think it worth their while to set upon him. He breaks a window, and not thinking it worth while to wait for the change, breaks another, to balance the piece of money. True generosity must be accompanied by self-sacrifice; but the sailor is, for the most part, not conscious of any thing but the love of power, and of exciting wonderment for the time being; a lesson which he has unconsciously learned of his officers. Of the same nature is the generosity of the Tories to the poor. Bad as is the condition of the sailor in 'His Majesty's Service,' it is immeasurably worse in the merchant service. In the East India Service I believe the quality of the food is rather better than in ordinary vessels; but then the officers who are accustomed to misuse the subservient dingy natives of the East, arrogate to themselves the right of flogging their men. The consequence is that the papers teem with complaints,

and charges of tyranny and oppression, in which both sides are usually in fault: the men, in the brutality of ignorance; and the officers, in the brutality of irresponsible power. In the West India service it is much the same; but the acme of all misery is to be found on board the small vessels of from one hundred to two hundred tons, sailing out of the port of London to Spain, Portugal, the Mediterranean, and on other comparatively short voyages. These vessels are usually commanded by men who have risen from before the mast, and are only superior to the common seaman by a little knowledge of navigation. Their wages are but little higher than those of common seamen, and their provisions are mostly the same. Perhaps, when well treated, they are allowed grog, and tea and sugar, in addition to the bare beef, biscuit and water, which is the food of the sailors.

The advantages they have are, that they are not quite so hard-worked as their men, and they have the privilege of a little peddling traffic, with an apartment free from intrusion, which they can call their own, unless when an unfortunate passenger takes a berth with them, to pay his money for provisions and accommodations which he is never destined to realize. Like the keepers of small and uncomfortable inns, they know that passengers only resort to them as a matter of necessity, and that whoever has once embarked with them will never do it again; therefore, they extract as large a profit as they can, by the breach of every article in the specious bargain they have made. No human being is so full of promises as a captain in harbour: no human being so regardless of them as a captain at sea. Alas! poor passenger, when

"A rude and boisterous captain of the sea
Fastens a quarrel on him;"

especially on his own quarter deck, of which, though it measure but a five-foot walk, he is usually as proud as a skipper who hoists the swabs, and writes R.N. after his name.* The lot of the captain is bad enough; and emblematic of it is the economy of his domestic arrangement, where the provision-safe, and the paint-cupboards, the water-closet, and the rudder-head, are all contained in a green box some three feet square. But all this is as nothing to the condition of the seamen, who are simply the worst used class amongst "his Majesty's subjects." I say nothing of the chances of drowning, as set forth by Mr. Ballingall: that is, for the most part, a quick riddance of a miserable existence; but the life they lead is, for the most part, despoiled of all enjoyment. Their food is salt beef, coarse biscuit, and water

"That beasts would cough at."

The water of the Thames has the peculiar property of being in a kind of putrid state for six weeks after it is barrolled; and if the vessel which contains it be an ancient porter barrel, it becomes the most detestable liquid thing upon the face of the round world. But even of this the sailors are not allowed an unlimited expenditure. Washing in it is, of course, out of the question. Few persons are so superfluous as to

* Let the merchants and agents in foreign countries, who are obliged to ask these people to dinner with themselves and families, speak to their habits and manners.