

SATURDAY EVENING MAGAZINE.

PRICE TWO PENCE.

Vol. I.]

MONTREAL, APRIL 26, 1834.

[No. 23.

THE SPRING JOURNEY.

O, green was the corn as I rode on my way,
And bright were the dews on the blossoms of May,
And dark was the sycamore's shade to behold,
And the oak's tender leaf was of emerald gold.

The thrush from his lolly, the lark from his cloud—
Their chorus of rapture sung jovial and loud;
From the soft vernal sky, to the soft grassy ground,
There was beauty above me, beneath, and around.

The mild southern breeze brought a shower from the hill,
And yet, though it left me all dripping and chill,
I felt a new pleasure, as onward I sped,
To gaze where the rainbow gleam'd broad over head.

O such be life's journey, and such be our skill,
To lose in its blessings the sense of its ill:
Through sunshine and shower, may our progress be even,
And our tears add a charm to the prospect of Heaven!

In all human institutions there is something imperfect—otherwise they would not be human;—and if every thing went quite right in this world of ours, man would be too happy. We had always thought that the constitution of the British Navy was as nearly approaching perfection as could be possible, considering the nature of the service, and the means to work upon—but, it seems, we were mistaken in so thinking.

We have reprinted the following paper, from Tait's Magazine—the repertory of British grievances—as an amusing caricature on what all Britons have hitherto delighted to honour. We suppose it was written by some disappointed Lieutenant of Marines, who has been turned out of the ward room for a misdemeanour, and has revenged himself by lampooning the service.

BRITISH SHIPS AND BRITISH SAILORS.

CHAPTER I.

The striking peculiarity of the age we live in seems to be the prevalent disposition to rake up all abuses of long standing, and to expose them to the public gaze, leaving it to time to make the due impression, in order to the adoption of the efficient remedies. Amongst other abuses, that of the ill usage of seamen in the mercantile navy is at last taken up, in a very partial manner, it is true, but with considerable activity, apparently by a knot of individuals actuated by human sympathies, and at the head of whom stands Mr. James Ballingall, from whom a work of considerable interest has emanated. I should judge that the article on "Sea Burking" might be traced to the same source; it evidently seems to be the production of a man uniting the various employments of seaman, shipowner, and surveyor of shipping." The ex-

citement of the public mind on the subject is but just beginning; yet I doubt not that it will increase, and that ultimately the cause of humanity will triumph.

The particular portion of cruelty which Mr. Ballingall has taken up, is the fact, that merchants and shipowners are in the habit of sending seamen and passengers to sea in vessels which are but little better than sieves, solely for the lucre of gain. He has made out a clear case, that those who profit by such nefarious doings are four classes of persons—underwriters, merchants, ship-owners and the British Government. The latter personage seems never to be out of the way wherever 'revenue' may accrue, whether morally or immorally. The losers in the transaction are sailors, passengers, and the community at large; and, as is common in such cases, the community loses, perchance, a thousand pounds outright, in order that the above named worthies may gain half or fourth of that sum; just as, for the sake of the patronage of a colony, three times the amount of the actual speculation is frequently wasted. It is for the interest of the above named parties that ships should occasionally be lost; because the underwriter would not otherwise be able to drive a profitable trade; and the merchants, so long as they were paid for their goods, would willingly see the whole raw material of England wrought up and thrown into the sea. The shipowners care for nothing but the wearing out of ships, in order that they may build new ones; and the government dearly loves its revenue. With regard to the sailors, it has long been considered that their natural death is drowning; and pity, until Mr. Ballingall took up their cause, was altogether out of the question. The poor passengers have never yet had any remedy but patience for all the evils inflicted on them in sea transits. Sailors are accustomed to regard them as nuisances on board ship—even worse than marines; and if any accident happens, they usually go to the bottom, as infallibly as the cargo, unless it be timber, or some such matter, which will float the ship while water logged. I once was superfluous enough to pay for a cabin passage out of the port of London; and from continual accidents, owing to the vessel being short handed and ill found, I was harder worked at spar-making than any shipwright in a king's dock-yard. Let no passenger ever go to sea until he has made himself familiar with the use of tools, and, if possible, the art of navigation. It is my most strenuous advice; for only thus will he have a chance to hold his own. The power of knowledge holds good at sea as it does on shore. The sailors and passengers mostly suffer in person, and the community pays the expenses, which it does not grumble at, as the amount is not much in the subdivision. Mr. Ballingall states that the principal cause of ships being lost is their original defective construction; being built unfirm, of open timber work, instead of a solid mass, as is the case with ships of war. In short, the ships of war are constructed so that they would swim without their planking, and the merchant vessels depend entirely upon their planking. In the majority of cases in which ships are lost, striking the ground or rocks is the proximate cause; and ships built for the purposes of war are found not to go to pieces, which is rarely the case with merchant vessels. It is evident, therefore, that the remedy is at hand; but it is one