

and they are visible in his serious as well as lighter productions. One is his constant lightness of spirit and tone. His verse is not a chant but a carol. Deep as may be his internal melancholy, it expresses itself, in, and yields to song. The heavy thunder cloud of woes comes down in the shape of sparkling, sounding, sunny drops, and thus dissolves. He casts his melancholy into shapes so fantastic, that they lure first himself, and then his readers, to laughter. If he cannot get rid of the grim gigantic shadow of himself, which walks ever before him, as before all men, he can, at least, make mouths, and cut antics behind its back. This conduct is, in one sense, wise as well as witty; but will, we fear, be imitated by few. Some will continue to follow the unbaptised terror, in tame and helpless submission; others will pay it vain homage, others will make to it resistance equally vain: and many will seek to drown in pleasure, or forget in business, their impression, that it walks on before them—silent, perpetual, pausing with their rest, running with their speed, growing with their growth, strengthening with their strength, forming itself a ghastly rainbow on the fumes of their festival, lying down with them at night, starting up with every start that disturbs their slumbers, rising with them in the morning, rushing before them like a rival dealer into the market-place and appearing to beckon them on behind it, from the death bed into the land of shadows, as into its own domain. If from this dreadful forerunner we cannot escape, is it not well done in Hood, and would it not be well done in others, to laugh at, as we pursued its inevitable steps? It is, after all, perhaps only the future greatness of man that throws back this gloom upon his infant being, casting upon him confusion and despair, instead of exciting him to gladness and to hope. In escaping from this shadow, we should be pawing the prospects of our immortality.

How cheerily rings Hood's lark-like note of poetry, among the various voices of the age's song—its eagle screams, its raven croakings, its plaintive nightingale strains! And yet that lark, too, in her lowly nest had her sorrows, and, perhaps, her heart had bled in secret all night long. But now the 'morn is up again, the dewy morn,' and the sky is clear, and the wind is still, and the sunshine is bright, and the blue depths seem to sigh for her coming; and up rises she to heaven's gate, as aforesaid; and she soars and sings, she remembers her misery no more; nay, hers seems the chosen voice by which Nature would convey the full gladness of her own heart, in that favourite and festal hour.

No one stoops to question the songstress in the sky as to her theory of the universe—"Under which creed, Bezonian!—speak or die!" So, it were idle to inquire of Hood's poetry, any more than of Keats's, what in confidence was its opinion of the origin of evil, or the pedobaptist controversy. His poetry is fuller of humanity and of real piety than it does not protrude any peculiarities of personal belief; and that no more than the sun or the book of Esther has it the name of God written on it, although it has the essence and the image. There are writers who, like secret, impassioned lovers, speak most seldom of those objects which they most frequently admire. And there are others, whose ascriptions of praise to God, whose encomiums on religion, and whose introduction of sacred names, sound like affidavits, or self-signed certificates of Christianity—they are so frequent, so forced, and so little in harmony with what we know of the men. It is upon this principle that we would defend Wordsworth from those who deny him the name of a sacred poet. True, all his poems are not hymns; but his life has been a long hymn, rising, like incense, from a mountain-altar to God. Surely, since Milton, no purer, severer, *living* melody has mounted on high. The ocean names not its Maker, nor needs to name him. Yet who can deny that the religion of 'Ode to Sound,' and of the 'Excursion,' is that of the 'Paradise Lost,' the 'Task,' and the 'Night Thoughts?' And without classing Hood in this or in any respect with Wordsworth, we dare as little rank him with things common and unclean.

Hear himself on this point:—

"Thrice blessed is the man with whom
The gracious prodigality of nature—
The balm, the bliss, the beauty, and the blood
The bounteous providence in every feature—
Recall the good Creator to his creature:
Making all earth a frame, all heaven its dome!"

Each cloud-capped mountain is a holy altar;
An organ breathes in every grove;
And the full heart's a Psalter,
Rich in deep hymns of gratitude and love."

And amid all the mirthful details of the long warfare which he waged with Cant, (from his Progress of Cant, downwards,) we are not aware of any real despite done to that spirit of Christianity to which Cant, in fact, is the most formidable foe. To the *mas.* of religion, his motto is, spare no arrows; but when the real, radiant, sorrowful, yet happy *face* appears, he too has a knee to kneel and a heart to worship.

But, best of all in Hood is that warm humanity which beats in all his writings. His is no ostentatious or systematic philanthropy; it is a mild, cheerful, irrepressible feeling, as innocent and tender as the embrace of a child. It cannot found soup kitchens; it cannot only slide in a few rhymes and sonnets to make its species a little happier. Hospitals it is unable to erect, or subscriptions to give, silver and gold it has none; but in the orisons of its genius it never fails to remember the cause of the poor: and if it cannot, any more than the

kindred spirit of Burns, make for its country 'some useful plan or book,' it can 'sing a song at least.' Hood's poetry is often a pleading for those who cannot plead for themselves, or who plead only like the beggar, who, reproached for his silence, showed his sores, and replied, 'Isn't it begging I am with a hundred tongues?' This advocacy of his has not been thrown utterly away; it has been heard on earth, and it has been heard in heaven.

(To be concluded in our next.)

CATCHING A PIRATE.

Our Captain was what might be termed a through-bred bull-dog. Courage was inherent in him; he thought nothing impossible to be achieved as long as his ship would carry canvas or answer to her rudder.

We were lying at Gibraltar, taking in wood, water, and fresh provisions, when one morning a little corvette came in, and reported that a pirate was hovering about, looking out for prizes, from whom she had escaped with difficulty.

As soon as our Captain heard of it, he was all in a fidget to get out to sea. "The rascal!" exclaimed he, "I must have a brush at him. I'll search the whole ocean, and every creek and cranny on it, but what I'll have him. With the morning's light I'll turn my ship's stern to Gibraltar, and go in search of this marauder. So, d'ye hear, lads, get all ready for sailing by daylight."

"Please, Sir," said I, "we can't be ready—our trysail an't slung yet."

"Trysail!" exclaimed our Captain; "I'll sail tomorrow if I've nothing but our cook's apron to hoist for a mainsail. There's no knowing what you can do till you try; and I know there isn't a man among you but would be eager to catch this piratical scoundrel as myself; so work away, my lads, and I won't spare the grog bottle."

The Captain's words acted like a charm upon us, and we all worked away for dear life, and had a good ten hours' spell. At last up went our trysail, jib, and foresail, as neat as a lady's maid would put on a new gown, amidst three hearty cheers from the men. Our Captain, who was down in the cabin, heard the noise, and was soon on the deck to know what was the matter. My eyes! how he stared when he saw our neat new canvas shivering in the wind.

"Well done, my lads," exclaimed he, as his eyes glistened with satisfaction, "I *knew* you would manage it. Purser, serve out a double allowance of grog; then all hands turn in for a few hours' rest, and be up and in good sailing trim by sunrise."

Well, we didn't want to be told twice; we were soon alongside of our grog cans, and when we turned into our hammocks, we didn't want much rocking to set us to sleep.

Morning broke, and Tim Barnacle, Boatswain, piped all hands, and we were all upon deck in the springing of a luff tackle. All was soon ready: "Sheet home!" was the word; and the anchor was hove a-peake, the wind right aft, and we soon left Gibraltar astern of us.

We sailed, and kept a course westward, and then re-tacked; and we veered about on all points, but devil a bit of a glimpse of this same pirate could we catch. Our Captain was mortal vexed, and the crew looked at each other as shy as if the 'bacco canister had gone overboard.

Well towards evening, Madeira being in sight, we described a little vessel right ahead; she was latina-rigged, and looked rather a suspicious craft. We kept her in view as long as the light lasted; but night came on, and then we were all abroad again. We kept our course towards Madeira; but we hadn't run twenty knots after dark before the man at the mast-head called out, "Strange sail astern!" The Captain looked out astern, and sure enough we could plainly see a light.

"That's the light from her cabin windows," said the Captain. "Hang me if we won't have him yet."

Well, we put about, and kept a steady course towards the light. We gained quickly on it; and no wonder, for it did not appear to move from us.

"What the devil does this mean?" exclaimed the Captain. "It is not a lighthouse, for there is none down in the chart in this latitude. But no matter,—we'll keep our course, let what will turn up."

Well, we kept our course, and we came up with the light at last; and a precious set of fools we looked like. It wasn't a will-o'-th'-wisp nor a ship on fire—no, nothing of the kind; it was only a cursed tar-barrel that had been set on fire, and then set afloat to deceive, while the cunning pirate cut and run, and gave us the slip.

Well to be sure, didn't our Captain swear above a bit when he discovered the hoax; but it was all of no use repining; the rogues had given us the slip, and that was certain.

Well, we knew we had neared the African coast, and so we beat about till daylight; but no sail appeared, except a merchant-man or two, which we hailed, and from one of them we learned that a small craft had passed under her stern during the night, which she at first suspected was a pirate; but she had kept her course without attempting to molest them. A good reason why—the lubbers knew there was a tight brig of war close at her heels.

Mogadore was on the starboard, and the Captain made up his mind to run close under it, to reconnoitre. We got into a snug little cove under the head-land, and we let go the stream cable, for there warn't wind enough to blow a feather off the spanshankle, and the

water was as smooth as the chin of our dandy Lieutenant, what never had a beard. Well, we spied two or three huts along shore that seemed to belong to some fishermen; for we could just see the little topmast of their craft peeping over the sand-hill. So we manned a boat, and the Lieutenant, with Joe Gibbons, myself, and six others went ashore to try what information we could get. We took Joe Gibbons with us, because he said he understood their lingo. So then we went ashore, and came athwart one of the huts, and we hailed them; and there came out to us a jolly fellow, who looked like a Spaniard, although perhaps a little darker, and he spoke enough of broken English to make himself understood. And Joe Gibbons began to get his Spanish lingo under weigh; but somehow or other he didn't sail on the right tack, because the Spaniard couldn't understand him.

So the Lieutenant laughed, and said jeeringly "I tell you what, Joe Gibbons, it strikes me that this man will understand downright English easier than your broken Spanish."

"Oh yes, yes," exclaimed the stranger, "me speak it English—me like him English—yes, yes—him intendo Anglist, ver much."

And then our Lieutenant spoke to him, and asked him if he had seen a strange sail; but he shook his head, as much as to say he had not. Now we all knew he was telling a lie, and so did the Lieutenant. Well, it was no use threatening because threats would not squeeze the words out of him; and so the Lieutenant put five pounds into a purse, and held it up before him; and then the stranger's eyes began to glisten, and he seemed to consider how he should contrive to obtain the purse. And he was not long before he made up his mind; and then he put his finger on his lips, and told us to draw round him; and then he took up a stick, and drew over the sand the very shape and likeness of the pirate's ship which we had seen the day previous. And then he asked the Lieutenant if that was the ship he meant; and the Lieutenant said it was. And then the stranger described what course she had taken, and gave all the information we could desire; and the Lieutenant was so well pleased with the fellow's frankness that he gave him the purse, which he clapped into his pocket, and bolting into the hut, was out of sight in a moment; but he was soon back again, and he brought out a couple of bottles of some sort of wine, and put it down before us, and he gave us a cup to drink out of; and the Lieutenant served it out to us, and very good it was. And when we had finished the wine, we looked round for the stranger; but he had cut his cable, and gone clean out of sight.

Well, we all thought this rather odd, and we waited near a quarter of an hour in expectation that he would return; but he did not. And so the Lieutenant said he would go towards the hut, and we all began to move forward, when the report of two muskets, quickly fired in succession, brought us to a pause; and it was a very near chance we escaped, for we heard the bullets whizz over our heads.

"Confound the rascals," exclaimed the Lieutenant, "do they mean to make targets of us? Come on, lads; let us take their huts by storm, and rout the skulking villains."

We all drew our cutlasses, and prepared our pistols, and were about to rush forward, when a gun fired at our ship brought us to, and we saw the signal flying to call us all on board. So we were obliged to give up the idea of making the attack; and jumping into the boat, we got on board without delay.

The Lieutenant told the Captain what had passed on shore, and pointed out the course that the pirate was supposed to have taken; but the Captain shook his head, and told the Lieutenant he had been imposed upon, for he had seen the very pirate ship sail out of a creek on the opposite side of the point of land which lay almost a head of us. And the Lieutenant bit his lips with vexation, and looked very sheepish—and so did the whole of us that had been ashore; but it was all of no use; we had been regularly humbugged, and there was an end of the matter. The wind was right aft, and we soon weighed anchor, and went to look after the pirate; but the devil a bit of him was to be seen, far or near.

The Captain said he was either the devil, or the Flying Dutchman, or some enchanted swab that could make himself invisible when he liked. We sailed, and we tacked, and we lay-to, and we sailed atry, and then we edged away close under the land; but it was all to no purpose, for we couldn't get a glimpse of the pirate. So the Captain and Lieutenant held a consultation, and they thought of one scheme, and they thought of another; but all to no purpose. At length the look-out from the mast-head called out, "Strange sail on the starboard!" and we looked in that direction, and we saw a trim little pinnace-rigged sort of craft, coming along in good style. But she was no pirate, for she didn't attempt to avoid us, but came right along towards us.

Our Captain hailed them, and they came right under our bows, as we lay-to to wait for them. They were loaded with silks and various merchandise of that sort, which they offered for sale. And a sudden thought struck our Captain. All our ports were closed at the time, and he invited the master of the pinnace on board. We quickly covered all our guns with tarpaulins and sailcloths, and what ever came to hand. The mariners went down below, and kept out of sight, and all pikes and fire-arms were put out of sight; so that we hadn't the least appearance of being a ship of war. The merchant came on board with two attendants, and our Captain, who had