

Christian



Visitor.

A Family Newspaper—Devoted to

Religious and General Intelligence.

BAILEY & DAY, Proprietors.

"BY PURENESS, BY KNOWLEDGE—BY LOVE UNFEIGNED."—ST. PAUL.

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THE SAILOR AS HE WAS—AS HE IS.

BY W. B. TAPPAN.

The sport of one deceitful wave,
He toiled where dangers oft appear;
And careless trod the billowy grave,
Stranger to thought or fear.

Unknown the power that stayed his youth,
The God that holds the sea unknown—
On his dark soul no ray of truth,
With kindly impulse shown.

Fiercely the sullen midnight storm
In anger mingled wave and sky;
While the red lightning scathed his form,
His curse was heard on high.

The thunders shook the reeling mast,
The vessel rent by every sea—
No tear was given to the past,
Nor to futurity.

Then burst the cry of agony,
Then quailed the stoutest on that deck;
The toiling vessel climbed on high,
And plunged a buried wreck.

No prayer was wafted to the throne—
Could the profane, the scoffer pray?
No! wretched, trembling and alone,
His spirit fled away.

Weep, sailor! for thy comrade weep,
For he was noble, generous, free;
Yet passed he, in transgression deep,
To his eternity.

O! had he scanned the living chart,
By which the unerring course is laid,
His vision purged, made clean in heart,
The wanderer ne'er had strayed.

Weep for the dead! yet with thy tears,
Blend earnest love for grace divine!
Sailor! a happier dawn appears—
Hope's beaming star is thine.

The Man of Nazareth calls to thee,
He bids thy toils and sorrows cease;
The voice that calmed proud Galilee,
Speaks to the weary, Peace.

And He—or be thy peaceful way
The dark blue wave, or when afar,
By gathering perils led astray,
Will be thy Morning Star.

Safe in the tempest as the calm,
Art thou that seekest the mercy seat?
Sailor! rejoice, death hoasts a charm,
Leading to Jesus' feet.

Death at Sea.

There is only one class of men whose lives are more shortened by the nature of their occupation than the sailor's, and those men do not work above ground. They labor in mines and amid foul exhalations and noxious vapors, dig out for others the treasures of the earth. With their exception, the sailor's life is shorter than that of any operatives; and why? Because the treacherous element upon which he sails, and the capricious winds to which he trusts, oblige him—by snatches to take his rest—because he wanders through all climes from the equator to the pole—now scorching him with heat, then freezing with cold. Because he works in all weathers, and because the worse the weather

the harder he must work. In the rain storm when it descends in torrents, and continues so long as not to leave him a change of clothing in his chest. In the sleet, in the snow, in the frost, when the rigging becomes like jagging steel, and the sails like sheets of iron. In the tempest, when the winds rage and the seas roar, and the good ship struggles as it were for life, now plunging as though in despair into the depths below, and then rising as if with exultation on the towering wave. Then must the sailor work, and it is these hardships, this severe toil, this constant exposure, that shortens his life. But alas, it may be fearfully shortened by other causes than the wear and tear of his calling. How often in the discharge of some perilous duty aloft, is he precipitated into the deep, and swallowed up by the devouring waters! How often cast away! How often the victim of the malignant diseases of foreign climes. How many sailors have met with an untimely death from the club of the savage, the sword of the foe, or the desperate charge of the wounded whale. But there would be no end of particularizing in this way the perils and hardships of a seaman's life. I must appeal to the hurricane and the battle, to the ocean with its dark caverns, and to the foreign shores with their unburied dead. I must call upon the thousands who have gone down with the waves for their winding sheet, and who await in their deep sepulchres the resurrection of the dead, to bear witness what toils, what dangers, and what sufferings are the sailor's lot.

We may observe, however, that sailors commonly die at sea. Death, bitter at any time, must have its bitterness exceedingly increased under such circumstances. A ship is no hospital. None but able-bodied men are rated on her books; and if sickness befall them, they must take their chance. The medicine chest perhaps is the only proof on board that such a calamity was ever thought of.

Where does the sailor die? In a cheerful room? On a couch of feathers and a pillow of down? Watched over by an attentive nurse? Watched over by an anxious friend? Surrounded by sobbing and weeping relatives? Far different. In that wretched hole where a suspended lantern just gives light enough to show the seamen's chests by which it is incumbered. In that rude hammock swinging from the beam. There is no minister of Christ there to listen to his wailings over an ill-spent life, or to awaken him to a sense of his sin and danger. There is no messenger of love there, to speak of Jesus, and point him to that anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast. No herald of that salvation which, like the ocean itself, rises above high water mark, overtops the mountains of sin, and washes away the guilt of every penitent transgressor. He dies without comfort in this world, and too often without hope in another.

But suppose the dying sailor to have enjoyed in former years the fostering care of this society, how different, in all probability, would be his end. Then he would have in his possession the word of God; then he would call to mind, as he lay in his loneliness, many a solemn truth—many an earnest prayer—many a kind exhortation—many an encouraging promise which he had heard from the mouth of its missionary. Then perhaps his danger would strike him like a thunderbolt—his heart might be smitten—he might shed a tear of penitence, and cry out with affecting earnestness, 'O, Lord, save, or I perish.'

I remember hearing of a sailor who, in a storm at sea, was observed sitting unmoved with a

Bible in his hand, and was heard to say, 'Courage my lads, we are as near heaven at sea as on shore;' and Oh! if you would but watch over his soul when he returns in port—if you would provide for his religious instruction when he makes the land—a hope might be breathed into his bosom, a peace imparted to his spirit, which the prospect of death in any shape could neither disturb nor take away. He might be swallowed up by the waters—he might be cut down in the battle—he might be murdered by the savage—he might be mangled by the rocks—he might die away from home and kindred, on board his ship—but under all circumstances he could exclaim with the apostle Paul, 'If my earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved, I know I have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.'—*Phil. Repository.*

Appeal to the Young on Temperance.

Ye young, might the speaker be permitted to address you, as well as your honored parents, and those teachers, their assistants, whose delightful task it is to bring forward the unfolding germs of thought, and teach the young idea how to shoot,—might the speaker whose chief concernment hitherto has been the education of the young, be permitted to address you, he would bespeak your influence, your urgent, persevering influence, in behalf of a cause so pure, so full of mercy, and so every way befitting your age, your sex, your character.

O! could the speaker make a lodgment, an effectual lodgment, in behalf of temperance, within those young, warm, generous, active hearts within his hearing, or rather within the city, where it is his privilege to speak, who this side heaven could calculate the blessed, mighty, enduring consequence! Could this be done, then might the eye of angels rest with increased complacency on this commercial metropolis, already signalized by Christian charity, as well as radiant with intellectual glory; but then lit up anew with fire, from off virtue's own altar, and thus caused to become, amid the surrounding desolation which intemperance has occasioned, more conspicuously than ever, an asylum of mercy to the wretched, and a beacon light of promise to the wanderer.

Then from this favored spot, as from some great central source of power, encouragement might be given, and confidence imparted to the whole sisterhood of virtue, and a redeeming influence sent forth through many a distant town and hamlet, to mingle with other and kindred influences, in effecting throughout the land, among the youth of both sexes, that moral renovation called for, and which, when realized, will be at once the earnest and the anticipation of millennial glory.

O! could we gain the young—the young who have no inveterate prejudices to combat, no established habits to overcome; could we gain the young, we might, after a single generation had passed away, shut up the dram shop, the bar-room, and the rum-selling grocery, and by shutting these up, shut up also the poor-house, the prison-house, and one of the broadest and most frequented avenues to the charnel-house.

More than this, could we shut up these licensed dispensaries of crime, disease and death, we might abate the severity of maternal anguish, restore departed joys to conjugal affection, silence the cry of deserted orphanage, and procure for the poor demented suicide, a respite from self-inflicted vengeance.

This—the gaining of the young to abstinence—would constitute the mighty fulcrum, on which to plant that moral lever of power, to raise a world from degradation.

O! how the clouds would scatter, the prospect brighten, and the firmament of hope clear up, could

the young be gained, intoxicating liquors be banished, and abstinence with its train of blessings introduced throughout the earth.—*Dr. Nott.*

Diverse Gifts in the Ministry.

Ministers differ in their intellectual powers and accomplishments. Here there is an Edwards or a Butler, trained to the most profound and discriminating research; there is a Hall or a Mason, the grandeur of whose conceptions throws the thoughts of common minds into the shade; and yonder standing alone, I had almost said in the world's entire history—is a Whitfield, who is familiar with avenues to the heart which others have not explored; who can raise a tempest in the bosom when he will, and as quickly speak it into a calm; while the great multitude shine with inferior but different degrees of lustre. There is a difference in their moral constitutions. The unshrinking boldness of Paul, the headstrong impetuosity of Peter, the winning gentleness of John, the docile spirit of Nathaniel, and every other variety of natural disposition, is continually exemplified in the Christian ministry. There is a difference in the amount of piety which they possess; some keeping the world always under their feet, and having their conversation habitually in heaven, while others seem scarcely to rise to the ordinary level of Christian attainment.

They are favoured also with different degrees of usefulness; and their usefulness flows in different channels. One exerts an influence in advancing the kingdom of Christ, which is felt far and wide; while another, with feebler powers and less zeal and perseverance, would seem to labour to comparatively little purpose. One is directly instrumental of turning many to righteousness, and there are hundreds and even thousands who expect to heap blessings upon him in heaven as the instrument of their salvation; while another exerts a more silent but scarcely less important influence, in vindicating the claims of Christianity, in moulding the character of the young, in guarding the general interests of the church. And to crown all, they differ in their ultimate reward. They that have been faithful in a few things will not lose their reward; but they that have turned many to righteousness will shine as the brightness of the firmament.

Such is the variety which the great Head of the church permits—I may say, has ordained, in the Christian ministry. And the wisdom of this appointment, especially in regard to the different intellectual and moral constitutions of ministers, is as manifest as its existence; for the ministry has to perform its work upon every variety of character, and the influence which might be entirely lost upon one individual, might operate with mighty power upon another. Hence I cannot think it desirable that all ministers should try to force themselves into conformity to any one particular standard; indeed, that seems to me to be doing violence to the divine constitution. God requires indeed that all his ministers should preach the same great truths—should be governed by the same great principles; but he has not required that they should all be of the temperament of Peter, or of John, or of Paul; he chooses to have his sons of thunder and his sons of consolation; and one may say which class he regards with the greater degree of favor, I have sometimes heard even ministers complain of their brethren as likely to accomplish little or no good by their preaching, because, though they preached the truths of the gospel plainly, they preached them with less energy, or less apparent fervor than could be desired. But I would say in all such cases, you have no right to require the brick where God has not given the straw; and besides, the very mode of preaching which you desire, would doubtless be far less acceptable and far less useful to many individuals, than that to which you object. Let a minister keep himself within those bounds of decorum which God's word and the dignity of his own office pre-