

Christian Mirror.

NEW SERIES.

WEEKLY.]

"MANY SHALL RUN TO AND FRO, AND KNOWLEDGE SHALL BE INCREASED."—DANIEL XII. 4. [7s. 6D. PER AN.

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POETRY.

THE CASTAWAY.

The following beautiful and affecting lines, by Cowper, the bard of freedom, morality, and religion, have not been generally printed in the edition of his works. They derive an increased interest from the fact, considered to be authentic, that they were written after one of those attacks that temporarily bereft him of reason, and with allusion to a similar and final catastrophe that might befall him:—

Obscurest night involved the sky ;
The Atlantic billows roar'd ;
When such a destined wretch as I,
Wash'd headlong from on board,
Of friends, of hope, of all bereft,
His floating home for ever left.

No braver chief could Albion boast,
Than he with whom he went,
Nor ever ship, left Albion's coast,
With warmer wishes sent ;
He loved them both, but both in vain,
Nor him beheld, nor her again.

Not long beneath the whelming brine ;
—Expert to swim, he lay ;
Nor soon he felt his strength decline,
Or courage die away ;
But waged with death a lasting strife,
Supported by despair of life.

He shouted : nor his friends had fail'd
To check the vessel's course,
But so furious the blast prevail'd
That, pitiless per force,
They left their outcast mate behind,
And scudded still before the wind.

Some succour yet they could afford,
And such as storms allow,
The cask, the coop, the floated cord,
Delay'd not to bestow ;
But he, they knew, nor ship, nor shore,
Whatever they gave, should visit more.

Nor, cruel as it seem'd, could he
Their haste himself condemn,
Aware that slight, in such a sea,
Alone could rescue them ;
Yet bitter felt it still to die
Deserted, and his friends so nigh.

He long survives who lives an hour,
In ocean, self-upheld,
And so long he, with unspent power,
His destiny repell'd ;
And ever, as the minutes flew,
Entreated help, or cried—' Adieu !'

At length, his transient respite past,
His comrades, who before
Had heard his voice in every blast,
Could catch the sound no more ;
For then by toil subdued, he drank
The swelling wave, and then he sank.

PRAYER.

It is not the length, but the strength of prayer, that is required ; not the labour of the lip, but the travail of the heart, that prevails with God. "Let thy words be few," as Solomon says, "but full, and to the purpose."—Spencer.

WHAT IS LIFE ?

Oh ! what is life ? 'Tis like a flower
That blossoms—and is gone :
It flourishes its little hour,
With all its beauty on :—
Death comes—and like a wintry day,
It cuts the lovely flower away.

Oh ! what is life ?—'Tis like the bow
That glistens in the sky ;
We love to see its colors glow—
But while we look, they die,
Life fails as soon ; to-day 'tis here—
To-morrow it may disappear.

Lord what is life ?—If spent with thee,
In humble praise and prayer,
How long or short our life may be,
We feel no anxious care :
Though life depart, our joys shall last
When life and all its joys are past.

THE FAMILY CIRCLE.

"MAY YOU BE HAPPY."

Such were the words used by a mother, when she kissed her only son, and bade him take her blessing to go forth and preach the glad tidings in Zion, to bind up the broken hearted, and proclaim liberty to the captives—to put on the Christian armour, and become a soldier and follower of Christ. And although her tears fell on his bosom, to mingle with his own, she knew the eye of the Almighty, whose mission he went to perform, was over him to direct him for good. Yet she had a mother's heart, and there dwelt a mother's fondness. She breathed a prayer, that when trials should assail him, he might be enabled to look to heaven with patience and resignation ; and then she added, "May you be happy !"

O ! how joyous are those tears that flow from the source of good, or the hope of futurity ! And thus it was with the mother ; her tears were but a little shower before the bursting forth of a bright and beautiful sun. For time had numbered but a few years, when the missionary had laid down his load—had overcome the hardships he had to undergo, and surmounted the greatest difficulties of his Christian labor. While around him were gathered a congregation, anxious to hail him as their pastor and have the gospel preached to them by his mouth ; he had sought out the waste places in a distant land—he cried to them as the voice of one in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord !" and had pointed the people to seek that righteousness which is found only in Christ Jesus.—The few sheep that had before wandered in the desert, without a guide, were now led forward amidst the green pastures and beside the pleasant streams that guided them on, until they should reach the heaven of everlasting bliss, and partake the hope of their salvation. O ! happy Son—O ! mother blessed indeed ! for now are thy desires fulfilled, and Heaven hath answered thy supplication. But alas ! how uncertain is human nature. He that hath not extended his hopes beyond the limit of time, has nothing but briars in his pathway, and not one beam of gladness before him. Was it so with the mother, when tidings came that her son lay sick ? No ; a thorn indeed pierced her bosom, but it was not painful ; so bright and pure is the happiness of religion, that no affliction can lessen its conquering power. She knew that in the regions

above was laid up for them a crown of immortal glory ; and she murmured not. O how few there are, who, under such circumstances, find no cause for complaint. But such was not the case with the mother of that son, who had been the means of bringing a few souls to the Saviour ; for although she shortly heard of his death, it rejoiced her greatly to find that he had borne his sufferings with fortitude—with a quickened faith, firmly united to his Lord and Master ; and that his last words, when he left this frail world, responded to the prayer of his weeping mother—he had lived, and he died HAPPY.

GRATITUDE OF THE RESCUED.

Dr. Parker, in his interesting book, "INVITATIONS TO TRUE HAPPINESS," gives a beautiful illustration of fervent gratitude for Divine forbearance, so justly due from the hearts of all men, yet felt by comparatively so few, who are permitted to live on by its exercise, year after year, in impenitence.

During a sea voyage, a few years since, I was conversing with the mate of the vessel on this topic, when he concurred in the view presented, and observed that it called to mind one of the most thrilling scenes he had ever beheld. With this he related the following story.

"I was at sea, on the broad Atlantic, as we now are. It was just such a bright, moonlight night as this, and the sea was quite fough. The captain had turned in and I was upon watch when suddenly there was a cry of a man overboard. To go out in a boat was exceedingly dangerous. I could hardly make up my mind to command the hands to expose themselves. I volunteered to go myself, if two more would accompany me. Two generous fellows came forward, and in a few moments the boat was lowered, and we were tossed upon a most frightful sea.

"As we rode upon the mountain wave, we discovered the man upon a distant billow. We heard his cry and responded 'Coming.' As we descended into the trough of the sea, we lost sight of the man, and heard nothing but the roar of the ocean. As we rose on the next wave, we again saw him and distinctly heard his call. We gave him another word of encouragement, and called with all our strength. At the top of each successive wave, we saw and heard him, and our hearts were filled with encouragement. As often in the trough of the sea, we almost abandoned the hope of success. The time seemed long, and the struggle was such as men never make but for life. We reached him just as he was ready to sink with exhaustion. When we had drawn him into the boat, he was helpless and speechless. Our minds now turned towards the ship. She had rounded to. But exhausted as we were, the distance between us and the vessel was frightful. One false movement would have filled our boat and consigned us all to a watery grave. Yet we reached the vessel, and were drawn safely upon the deck. We were all exhausted, but the rescued man could neither speak nor walk ; he had a full sense of his condition. He clasped our feet and began to kiss them. We disengaged ourselves from his embrace. He then crawled after us, and as we stepped back to avoid him he followed us, looking up at one moment smiles and tears, and then patting our wet foot-prints with his hand, he kissed them with an eager fondness. I never witnessed such a scene in my life. I suppose if he had been our greatest enemy he would have been perfectly subdued by our kindness. The man was a passenger. During the whole remaining part of the voyage he showed the deepest gratitude, and when we reached the port he loaded us with presents."