



LITERATURE.

RAIN ON THE ROOF.

When the humid showers gather
Over all the starry spheres,
And the melancholy darkness
Gently weeps in rainy tears,
'Tis a joy to press the pillow
Of a cottage chamber bed,
And to listen to the patter
Of the soft rain overhead.

Every tinkle on the shingles
Has an echo in the heart,
And a thousand dreary fancies
Into busy being start;
And a thousand recollections
Weave their bright hues into woe,
As I listen to the patter
Of the soft rain on the roof.

There in fancy comes my mother,
As she used to, years ago,
To survey the infant sleepers
Ere she left them till the dawn,
I can see her bending o'er me,
As I listen to the strain
Which is played upon the shingles
By the patter of the rain.

Then my little seraph sister,
With her wings and waving hair,
And her bright-eyed cherub brother,
A serene angelic pair,
Glide around my wakeful pillow
With their praise or mild reproof,
As I listen to the murmur
Of the soft rain on the roof.

And another comes to thrill me
With her eyes delicious blue;
I forgot, as gazing on her,
That her heart was all untrue;
I remember that I loved her
As I ne'er may love again,
And my heart's quick pulses vibrate
To the patter of the rain.

There is nought in art's bravuras
That can work with such a spell,
In the spirit's pure, deep fountains,
Whence the holy passions swell,
As that melody of nature—
That subdued, subduing strain,
Which is played upon the shingles
By the patter of the rain

[From Hogg's Instructor.]

THE IRON RING.

A TALE OF GERMAN STUDENTS AND
GERMAN ROBBERS.

(Continued from our last.)

"Yes," resumed the old man. "After a moment's hesitation, he took her hand, which she yielded easily, and they entered together. 'Come,' said Macdonald to me, with a sigh, 'since it must be so, we must go with them.' He took my arm and continued, 'We enter here according to our degrees of wisdom and folly—the Pole first, you and I last; but who is to pay for their blindness? Give me a light, Justus. Is that the same wine? It seems to me a little hard.'

"It is the same wine," said Justus. "Perhaps you find it hard, because it is cooler than the first."

"It may be so. Well, we went in, entering by a passage into a kind of hall. Here we heard the Frenchman's voice: 'Come along, my beauty, and show us your wonderful and enchanted chamber, where we are to sleep; for I suppose it is there we are to sup, too. I have been trying all the doors, and not one of them will open.'—'This way, gentlemen,' said the girl, disengaging herself from Laurenberg, and opening one of several doors which entered off the place we were in. 'That is your grandmother, I suppose?' said Macdonald, pointing to a figure bending over a small fire, which was expiring on the hearth. 'Good evening my good woman; you seem to feel chilly,' and, as he addressed these latter words to the crouching creature, he made a step as if he would approach; but the girl, quickly grasping his arm, whispered in his ear, 'Don't disturb her. Since my father's death, she scarcely ever speaks to any one but me. She is very old and feeble. Pray, leave her alone.' Macdonald threw another of his penetrating glances at the girl, but said nothing, and he and I followed her along a pas-

sage, some twenty paces in length, and very narrow.—At the end of it was another door, and this opened into the chamber we were to occupy. It was a round room, and we immediately guessed that it formed the under story of the tower we had remarked. The girl brought a lamp, and we found that the furniture consisted of a table and some stools, a large press, a heap of mattresses and bedding, a few mats of plaited straw, and a pile of fire-wood. The most curious thing about the place, however, was a strong pole, or rather mast, which stood in the very centre, and seemed to pass through the roof of the room. This roof, which was at a considerable distance from the floor, was formed—a thing I had never seen before—of furze bushes, supported upon slender branches of pine, and appeared so rickety as to threaten every moment to come down upon our heads. On questioning the girl, I was told that the mast supported the outer roof, which was possible enough. 'In the first place,' said Richter to the damsel, when we had seated ourselves, and she seemed to wait for our orders, 'is this an inn, or is it not?' 'You may see, gentlemen,' replied she, 'by the scantiness of the accommodation, that it is not exactly an inn. Nevertheless, you can make yourselves at home, as if it was, and welcome.' 'Good.—Then, in the second place, have you any wine?' 'Plenty. We sell a good deal to the foresters, who pass here often, and so have always a supply.' 'Where is it?' asked Macdonald. 'Below, in the cellar.' 'Very well,' returned he. 'I and two more of us will go down and help you to bring up a dozen bottles or so, if you will show us the way.' 'Certainly,' said she. While Macdonald and two of the others were absent with her, I contrived to light a fire, and the Frenchman, on exploring the press, having found that it contained plates, knives and forks, he and the Pole laid the table; so that when the others, laden with bottles, re-appeared, the place had somewhat of a more cheerful look. 'They have not had time to drug our wine, at least,' whispered Macdonald to me. 'Pooh, my friend,' returned I, 'you are far too suspicious. You will smile to-morrow at having had such ideas.' 'We shall see,' said he. Presently the girl brought in some bacon, some eggs, and a piece of venison. These we cooked ourselves, staying our appetite, in the mean time, with bread and wine. Then we made a hearty supper, and became very merry. Richter and the Pole plied the bottle vigorously, while Laurenberg and the Frenchman vied with each other in somewhat equivocal gallantries to the damsel. As for Macdonald, he wore an expression of mingled resignation, vigilance and resolution, which made me uncomfortable, I knew not why.

"Come, grandfather, don't keep us so long in suspense. Tell us at once if Macdonald's suspicions were well founded," exclaimed Justus. "Had you fallen into a den of thieves, or were you among honest people? Were you all robbed and murdered before morning, or were you not?"

"Justus, my boy, you must let me tell my story my own way," said the old pastor; "and pray don't interrupt me again. Where was I?"

"At supper, grandfather."

"True. When we had supped, smoked a few pipes, and finished our wine, we began to make our beds. As we were so occupied, the girl came in and offered to help us. We readily consented, for we were tired enough.—In a very short time, she had made six beds on the floor. 'Why do you lay them all with the head to the middle of the room?' asked Macdonald, observing that all the pillows were all ranged round the mast in a circle, and as near it as possible. 'That is the way I always do,' said she, with a careless air. But she did not succeed in concealing a certain strange expression which her features assumed for a moment, and which both Macdonald and I remarked, without understanding it. We well understood afterward what it meant. As she was retiring, the Frenchman and Laurenberg assailed her with some rather too free jokes. She turned and cast on them a look of ineffable indignation and scorn; then, without a word, she passed out at the door, and closed it behind her. 'We all admired her for her modesty and virtue.—Fill our glasses, Justus. But appearances are deceitful; this world is but a vain show; all is not gold that glitters; and—'

But, a second time, Justus cut short the homily. He dexterously spilt some of the wine, as he performed his Ganymedian office, and so drew down on himself a mild sarcasm for his awkwardness.

Forgetting the sermon he had begun, the old man therefore thus went on: "All, except Macdonald, were soon in bed. We had, however, only half undressed.—As for Macdonald, he drew a stool toward the fire, and, seating himself, buried his face in his hands, as if in thought. I almost immediately fell asleep, and must have slept for some time, for when I awoke the fire was out. But I did not awake of myself; it was Macdonald who aroused me. He did the same to the others. He had thrown himself on his bed, and spoke in a whisper, which, however, as our heads were close together, was audible to all. 'Brothers,' said he 'listen; but for your lives make no noise, and, above all, do not speak. From the first moment we arrived at this house, I feared that all was not right; now I am sure of it. It seemed odd to me that two solitary women should inhabit so large a house; that the girl should have been so ready, or rather so anxious to receive us; that she should show no fear of six young men, all strangers to her; and I said to myself, 'She and her grandmother do not live here alone; she depends upon aid, if aid be necessary, and that aid is not far off.' Again, I am used to read the character in the countenance, and, despite her beauty, if ever treachery was marked on the human face, it is on hers. Then make us all sleep in one room? If the others are empty, our beds would be as well on the floor in them as in this one. However, all that was mere suspicion. But there is more. You saw me examine the windows during supper. I could then open the outside

shutters; they have since been fastened; and, what is more, the door is locked or barred on us, and will not yield. But, what is most important, my ear, which is very quick, caught the sound of steps in the passage— heavy steps, though taken on tiptoe—steps, in short, of a man, or rather, I should say of men, for there were at least two. I stole to the door, and I distinctly heard whisperings. Now, what do you think of all that? Speak one at a time, and low.' 'Bah!' whispered the Frenchman, 'I think nothing of it. It is quite common to fasten the shutters outside; and, as for the door, your friend and I were rather free with the girl last night, and she may have locked us in for her own security, or she may be afraid of our decamping in the morning without paying the reckoning. As for the footsteps, I doubt if you can distinguish a man's from a woman's; and the whisperings were probably the girl and the old woman conversing. Their voices, coming along the passage, would sound like whisperings.' This explanation was so plausible, that all expressed themselves satisfied with it.—But Macdonald resumed, and this time he spoke in a whisper so terrible—so full of mysterious power, that it went straight to every heart, and curdled all our blood. 'Brothers,' he said, 'be wise in time. If you will not listen to common sense, take warning of a supernatural sense. Have you never had a dim presentiment of approaching evil? I know you have. Now, mark. I have at this moment the sure certitude of coming evil. I know, I know, I know, that if you continue to lie here, and will not listen to my words, neither you nor I will ever see another sun. I know that we shall all certainly die before morning. Will you be advised? If not, your blood be on your own heads! As for mine, I forgive it you. Decide!—Resolve! These words, the tones in which they were uttered, and our knowledge of the speaker, produced a profound impression. As for me, I shuddered; but it was less at the idea of the threatened material danger, than at that of an occult influence hovering round us, inspiring Macdonald, and filling the place with its mysterious presence. Laurenberg was the first to speak, or rather to whisper. 'Macdonald,' said he, 'I yield myself to your guidance.' I immediately said, 'and I.' The others followed the example. Macdonald immediately took the command to himself. 'Rise,' said he, 'but make not the slightest noise. Collect yourselves and pay attention to the slightest thing. Leave your shoes; take your swords.—I should tell you my young friend,' said the pastor, addressing me, 'that in those days students wore swords, especially when they travelled. And they were not such swords, Justus, as you fight your absurd duels with—not slim things, that you can bend double, and of which only a foot or so is sharp—not playthings to scratch each other's faces with; but good steel blades, meant for thrusting as well as cutting—blades not to be trifled with when wielded by a skilful and strong arm. But where was I? I remember. 'Take your swords,' said Macdonald.—'As it is dark, there will probably be confusion. We must have watchwards, therefore. Let them be Jena and Göttingen. Also, to avoid our blindly encountering each other, let each of us, if it comes to a fight, keep calling, *Burschen! Burschen!* I believe the attack I apprehend will come from the door. Let us range ourselves three on each side of it. We from Göttingen will take the right side, you from Jena the left. When they open the door, we will rush into the passage. I will lead my file, and do you brother,' said he to the Frenchman, 'lead yours. When you hear me cry *Burschen!* follow me, and, remember, you strike for your lives.' All this was said in the lowest whisper, but at the same time so distinctly and deliberately, that we did not lose a word.—We took the places assigned us, grasping our bare swords. For a time—it seemed an interminable time—so we stood silent, and hearing nothing. Of course, we could not see each other, for the place was quite dark.—At last our excited ears heard footsteps cautiously approaching. Some one came to the door, and was evidently listening. In about a minute, we heard the listener whisper to some one in the passage.—'They must all be asleep now. Tell Hans to cut loose! Our hearts beat quick. There was a pause of some minutes; then suddenly we overheard a cracking sound among the furze bushes which composed the roof of the room, and the next instant something fell to the ground with a crash so tremendous that the whole house seemed to shake.—Then we heard a bolt withdrawn, then a key was turned. The door began to open. '*Burschen!*' cried Macdonald, as he dashed it wide ajar, and sprang into the passage. '*Burschen!*' cried the Frenchman, and the next moment he was by our comrade's side. '*Burschen!*' cried we all, as we made in after them. '*Die Burschen sollen leben!*' (Students forever!) exclaimed Justus, in a state of no little excitement.

(Concluded in our next.)

THE U. S. M. STEAMSHIP ARCTIC.

The curiosity of the good people of Halifax has at length been gratified by a sight of one of Collins' line.—The Arctic entered the harbour on Friday morning last, and immediately the town rang with the interesting intelligence. We found our way along with others to the wharf, and after a pretty lengthened survey of her outer works got shipped on board. We there received every courtesy, and explored to our heart's content. We confess to being much disappointed. The Arctic is a very large vessel, has mammoth engines, and is magnificently furnished. No more can be said in her favour. A more unwieldy ship, we have seldom seen on the water, constructed, seemingly to hold the engines, and be driven by them, not to sail upon the sea. The want of a bowsprit, the great disproportion of hull above water mark, and the extent to which the tapering system is carried at both ends, deprive her of all claims to architectural beauty. She seems to have a very imperfect hold of the water. Her cutwater is formed by the two sides of the vessel meeting in a very acute angle, the consequence of which, we should suppose, will be to drive her through