Literature, &c.

British Magazines for February.

From the Metropolitan Megazine.

THE MARTYR MOTHER.

BY FRANCES ELIZABETH DAVIES CHILD of affluence and luxury! Thou who, surrounded by pleasure, hast no anxiety but to obtain fresh gauds and toys to garnish forth the ceaseless round of decoration and display! hast thou ever thought how many live obscurely—many as naturally gifted, nay, perchance, born to as proud a station, that, by some casualty of life, have been hurled from wealth to want, and left to struggle with the world, through unaccustomed hardships and most weary toils?

O, chosen child of Fortune! thou that baskest in the supplier of prosperity and makest to

in the sunshine of prosperity, and makest to thyself griefs from gladness—pause ere you cast aside the richly-embroidered robe, spare the costly wreath from the contemptaous spurnings of thy disdainful foot; pause, ere a new fancy please thee, to think upon the tears dropped from eyes as lovely as thine own, which may have bedewed and hallowed the creation of each mimic flower. Couldst thou but guess the anguished throes that rent the bosom of the artiste, or know the noble objects for which she labored, surely pity would spare some offerings remuneration, thy well-born country women from some portion of their ill-paid employments.

Hapless European slaves. Born in a land of boasted freedom, yet toiling unpitted in dim

chambers to create cheap luxuries for the richmore happy is the Negro, for he riots upon his ease and his freedom, procured for him by the munificent bounty of those, whose sickly sensibility faints over legendary tales of African enormity, while it suffers the delicate daughters of England, to wither and drop by thousands into the grave, dug for them by their unremunerative

Stroll with me, fortune's favorite! and I will show thee scenes in thy gay and gilded metro-polis, that were never pictured to thy glowing fancy—scenes that may make thee wise to un-derstand the value of thy superior destiny!

Or, thou favored of Heaven! thrice blest in possession of the wealth, that is as the handmaid to thy kind and bounteous heart. Faithful steward of a heavenly Lord, who layest up daily precious stores for a blessed hereafter, wouldst thou seek new objects for thy benevolence? then come with me. Not in lanes and alleys will we go, where fever dwells, and crime stalks triumphantly, and gratitude dies;—not among the loathed and loathsome will we walk; for there though we find sixty course. walk; for there, though we find misery conspi-cuous, it is not there that her incursions are the most fatal.

In such, the people, indeed, may want; but they can ask, and find relief,—their poverty is their passport to their richer neighbours. But far different is the fate of the well-born poor; to them each day brings the painful task to con-ceal their dire necessity; their's is a continual struggle to maintain the semblance of that com-petence, which is their's no longer, and, under a show of decency, to conceal their actual suf-ferings. ferings.

These indeed, are the truly poor,-these the real objects for well-chosen charity; for their resources are scanty in proportion to their former affluence. Would they seek help from former friends, the plague-spot is upon them; would they seek industrial occupation among arrangers, their gentle habits are held to incapa-citate them to all useful purposes! And so,thus doubly bereft of money, and the means to pro-cure it, what resource have they but that, which

alone is ready to receive them?—THE GRAVE!
Shall we follow yonder group of fragile girls,
whose pallid looks indicate failing health! See how they cling together as they hurry through the crowd!—they have not been used to jostle their way through the highways of busy life. They are sisters we may guess, from their strong family characteristics; well-born, from the noble contour of their chiselled features; young, too, but how care worn and haggard! How wistfully their eyes rest on the glancing carriages!
And see, a cab dashes towards them—its occupant is a young man of fashionable appearance -he peers curiously under the bonnets of the sters! Ha,—a flash comes up into his face! he draws back, and the cab flies on the quicker, and one of the fair girls has drawn her form an inch higher, and a proud look has come up into her face, while her eves have been as suddenly averted. But now the cab has turned into another street, and now the tears are gushing in torrents down her cheeks, and she is hanging more and more helplessly upon the support of her sympathising companions. Alas! here is a of blighted affection, of ruined hopes, of life welling itself to waste; here is a tale of woe that may be all unriddled by the threadbare mourning of the lady sisters. poor sufferer! pass to thy garret and thine em-broidery, thou hast many a sister of thine order in this city of wealth and palaces, but for thee the warmest home is provided by thy mother

O, Poverty ! hag of malice, why shouldst thou so relentlessly pursue talent and beauty? Alas! neither age, nor talent, nor beauty, nor goodness, can always shield from the evil eye of Poverty! she comes upon the many unawares, like a thief in the night,' and happy are they who, when she comes, have friends too firm to fly her presence; for too often, like the 'witch of the threshold,' she scares friends and happiness toge-

The daughters of professional men, above all others, are likely to prove this truth in all its bitterness. Educated to adorn the circle of an elegant home, they are little fitted to encounter those struggles of ordinary life, which await them

should mischance befal the parent whose posiion places them as magnates for adoring eyes, and whose ill-judging paternal love, expands upon their introduction to life that portion, which, wisely stored, had secured their perma-

nent independence.

Mrs. Clarendale was left a widow, with several unmarried daughters, precisely under such eircumstances; she had been accustomed to maintain an extensive establishment, and to see her home crowded with fashionable guests; while her daughters, who were till now esteem ed to be perfect arbiters in all matters of taste and elegance, were like herself, ill-prepared for the sudden withdrawal of their acquaintance. To comprehend at all their position, when explained to them by the single friend that remained to these novices in adversity, was a task of amazing difficulty, and though they deferred too much what he advised, yet there were many sacrifices to which they had still to learn the cruel necessity. Misfortune, however, is a stern teacher, who enforces her lessons with an iron rule; those lessons burn into the heart, searing out many a bright and lovely image and often calling forth unsuspected energies rousing the inert to super-human activity-more often they blot out energy and life together, and leave all—but as—a tale that is told.

As they saw the remnant of their store dim-

inished, Mrs Clarendale and her daughters rous ed themselves day by day, and gradually awaked. That which at first seemed no more than a horrid dream that would pass away, became hourly more distinct and real, until at last the past showed as the dream, and the present was actu-al, tangible! fact!—And what was that fact! Poverty in the immediate hour-Destitution in that which was advancing. Yet could they sur-render their station and work for bread?—Station! alas!-what was their station now? Station was lost when wealth departed! But what could their friends think? Friends! where are Proud egotists, they knew not those friends had forgotten their existence. And there was one, the affianced lover of the elder girl, had he too forgotten? No, he had not forgotten! but he wooed the beauty of the ball-room, his equal in station and fortune, not the sickly sempstress, whose labors must help to maintain the wants of the family—he adored the fashionable coquette, but he disdained the filial keroine; and who shall condemn him? for do not all the world do

Long and arduous were the struggles of the bereaved ones, to win by those arts which had once been amusements the meed for each day's necessity; but evening by evening, they might be seen gliding forth like spectres in the twilight, to find purchasers for some household comfort, painfully yielded to eke out the pittance of their hardworn toil—while their mother, in her brief respite from the needle, sat vacantly gazing from her window upon the busy crowds below, or tried in vain to find solace by turning her thoughts into metrical form, as had been her wont in happier days. But also! the verse came feebly from her altered muse, and was withal so sadly inharmonious, that she was ever fain to close it with a flood of tears.

FRAGMENT.
When life was bright and youth was mine,
I reigned it like a queen, Then lovers knelt before my feet
Of high and noble mien.

My looks, my thoughts, my actions all, Were still the sweetest, best, And trooping friends all welcomed me, A dear and honored guest. Envy concealed her arrows then

With Flattery's magic guile; And plumed heads bowed lowly down If then I deigned to smile.

But wealth passed by, and youth too fled, And then came harrowing care, And o'er the tablet of the past I weep fond records there.

My cheek is wan, mine eyes are dim, Mine hair is growing grey, Young faults are all corrected now; But friends-Ah, where are they?

Poor am I now, and friendless too, No pride sits on my brow; And I am changed, I'm sadly changed, Yes-yes, I'm chastened now. Gone is ambition! passion! hope! That flattered me erewhile, And rich plebeians flout and frown If I now dare to smile.

At last came the dreaded crisis,-her children's health was failing, her own energies were siaking, her former home had long been abandoned for one of meaner pretensions, and that was now in its turn dismantled, and about to pass from them. Want was present, in all its hideous deformity—for no food had passed their lips since the preceding day, and the mother knew she could rescue them from all by a word—could reverse the decree of their destiny, and give them back to station and the world. O it was a strong temptation that tore her heart as they sattogether in their cold hour, -worldless, but suffering, for their hearts had grown churlish in their misery, or perhaps each feared to increase the other's speaking of their own,—so they sat together,—talking of all things but that which was in all their thoughts—the frightful present. And she could rescue them,—their mother,—and did she dare to hesitate? O, the fearful horror of the penalty-could she endure it? No, she felt she could not-reason would break down, and life itself be lost in the vain struggle. But when at last a wild hysteric laugh burst from the lips of youngest child-the mother turned a piercing glance upon her pallid children and burst

into a passion of tears.

That sight brought a loving group around her,

and then the floodgates of grief were broken down, and they were weeping together in the luxury of a common sorrow.—all but one,—she, the eldest, had rushed from the chamber and

none marked her absence.

Saddenly and mysteriously, for none had observed his entrance, a muffled stranger stood amidst the weeping family. Mrs. Clarendale started and a low shriek escaped her.

'Shall a mother's heart be closed to the claims of her children? asked the stranger.

'Spare me, spare me—Your—'
'Remember!' interposed the stranger, with

admonitory emphasis. 'I would but say, Sir,' replied the agitated lady, that we can endure still'—and Mrs. Clarendale, hid her face, shuddering upon the bosom of her younger child.

"Tis fit, madam, gravely responded the visitor, that I apprise you that your decision must be made to-night,—to-morrow affairs of—of—moment demand that another be select-

'To-night-so soon-stay'-for he had turned to depart. 'Yet—no—go—go—now as ever—I refuse—I—I cannot!' and with grinding teeth and clenched hands she sank closer closer to her trembling daughter.

'Then, madam, you condemn your children to penury when they might live in affluence but I have done-'tis for your sake !-

'Stay, stay!'—exclaimed the cruelly agitated woman. 'Go not yet—my children—affluence—poor spectres, faded ghastly beings as ye are—how these dim eyes reproach me? And while she spoke, she put her daughters from her, and gazed on each wildly, then for the first time conscious of the abscence of the eldest, 'Julia,' she gasped, 'where is she't my own! my first-born!' and a frantic horror darted through her brain, and a piercing shriek burst from her lips. 'My Julia!—my Julia! I shall see my child no more?' and she fell back fainting in the stranger's outstretched arms

At that instant a pale girl rushed frantically into the chamber, and flung herself down be-

fore the feet of her mother.
'Here,' she cried, 'eat, mother! all of you ! have brought food in plenty:'-and she heaped rolls and cakes into her mother's lap. answer, the half-recovered parent fell upon her neck and covered her face with kisses. And then a motly crowd broke into the room, with oaths and imprecations, strange to the ears of the inmates And a policeman's grasp was on the shoulder of the kneeling girl, and they called 'thief,' and rude young tongues joined the cry; yet none comprehended the scene but the stranger, and the accused. She was pale and rigid as a marble figure, and a tear was on the stranger's cheek; but the pass-key to the hu-man heart was in his hand, and presently gold was glittering in many palms, and the intru-

ders were gone.

Then it was that Mrs. Clarendale understood the scene which had been acting around her. Her beautiful, accomplished Julia, driven to desperation, had stolen bread for her destitute relatives. The thought acted like magic—it nerved her to self-sacrifice, and a look of beaming gratitude rewarded the interference of the noble stranger.

'Henceforth,' said she, 'accept my services as the willing offering of one bound for life to demonstrate her gratitude.'

'To-morrow, madam,' said the stranger, I will await your decision, which must be the result of reflection.'

'It needs not, sir,' said she impressively; 'I accept your offers.'

'If I did but dare—if I thought you could be happy—no effort should be spared—'

'Doubt it not—fear it not. To-morrow I devote myself to your service.'

'To-morrow, then, and for ever, be your happiness my care.'

happiness my care.'

And the stranger was gone; -and with him went humiliation and temptation, and all the fearful trials that lead to crime and punishment, for he left behind him a richly filled purse. And on the morrow all was changed—habita-tion—all. Friends found again their memory, and levers their affection; and the inconstant sued again, but sued to be rejected: for the proud and loving girl could not forget past scorn for the memory of it had eaten away her loving heart, that could never again be given as an early affiance. So, while her younger sisters married richly and happily, she alone remained the companion of her changed but still beautiful mother, who moved among society self-absorbed and abstracted, a shadow of her past self.

Worlds would Julia have given to have shared the secret care that were scattering snow among her mother's ebon ringlets; but dared not seek to penetrate the mysteries that were so steraly locked within the parental

Dace only she had unconsciously approached the sacred veil-it was when on the occa-sion of illness she had at a late hour entered her mother's apartment to seek a restorative, when the confused murmur of voices caused her to pause-the hour was too late for the presence of a stranger-yet again incoherent mutterings eaught her ear; -she listened-the sounds came from an adjoining chamber-and in a moment more her mother, pale and gasping, rushed through a concealed door, and sank

breathless into a chair beside her. Shocked and startled, Julia hastened to offer her aid, but was answered by a look of inquiry, and a command to retire. In vain would she have offered apologies for her presence, Mrs. Carendals coldly waved her from the room. Yet, as Julia turned with deprecating looks, the maternal heart relented, and a word of tenderness escaped her.

'You are ill, agitated, dear mother,' sighed

Julia. No, no, my child! heed it not; it will pass away-'tis over now.' And shudderingly she

dashed away the cold dews that stood thickly on her brows. 'I am often thus—very often.'

'Thus, my poor mother!—but let me—'
'Jalia,' exolaimed Mrs. Clarendale, 'as you value my life!—nay, more, as you value my honor!—let all my conduct pass unquestioned; be satisfied I have a duty to perform, which none may share—seek not to penetrate it, dare not to question it—it must pass on my path alone—haply, that path may be shortened.'

'And can we not return to obscurity?' Return to temptation—to become a eriminal, Julia! have you quite forgotten that pover-

ty is crime?' 'No, mother, I remember all, but-'Go, -go, Julia, -sleep in peace: and while praying that we enter not into temptation, for get not to be thankful that when we are tempted, there is ever still a way left to escape the tempter.

And from that time Julia pondered no more on her mother's actions; for she knew her 10

be dedicated to a lofty purpose.

But at last came a period when the wasted frame of Mrs. Clarendale bowed before the fell Messenger of Eternity, and no sooner had the physician's fiat been made known to her, than the fevered patient scrawled a few hasty lines, which having carefully enveloped and sealed,

she placed in her daugeter's hand.
'Julia,' she said, 'to your honor I cenfide this; it must reach its destination through your hands only-it contains the clue to my secret. But I am dying, and I must communicate w him to whom this is addressed .- Time will not admit, or I could have wished another waybut you will be secret—will you not?'
'As the grave, mother!,

'Then haste; this token will bring you to his presence,' and she took from her desk a small parcel; and bid him come quickly-but his entrance must be secret-

'I will provide for that.'

'No, no, -not that way-this house-communicates-with-with-the river-

intelligence in the control of the c

'Ha-the pannel-yes, yes-mother, I col prehend,'—and as she spoke, Julia pressed the knob on which her hand was resting, the wain-scot flew back, and Latin. scot flew back, and Julia glanced within and shuddered; it was but the glance of a single instant, yet the secret was but partially revealed, and Julia's very heart sickened at what she

'No, no -net there,' shrieked the dying woman, 'there is nothing there; enter not there, I command you—yonder is the door I spoke of?' and she pointed impatiently to

distant corner.

'Blood! blood! blood!' gurgled an awfel voice, and with super-human strength Julis dashed to the pannel, shutting out eyes that gazed into her brain, and an object at sight of which her life-blood seemed turned to ice. 'Girl-girl-have you seen it?' shrieked the

Be composed, dear mother, I entreat you

'Blood! blood! blood!' reiterated the voice; but the pannel was closed, and the excited invalid was crouching beneath her bed clothes, and urging in frenzied tones her daughter's de-

Obedient to her mandate, the fear-winger girl sped upon her mysterious mission, and soil stood within a sumptuous chamber, where with pale lips she poured forth her tale of terror to an attentive and distinguished auditor. And an attentive and distinguished auditor. And soon that proud and noble personage was standing by the death-bed of the widow, whisperior promises and consolations into her failing ears; nor left he that melancholy station until Julia had been borne fainting from the chamber of

her departed mother.

That night, as the erphan sat alone in mouth ful vigil, the heavy tramp of footsters, minging with the marmur of 'Blood! blood! blood! rang heavily through the house, and then in s few mements all was still

By the death of her mother, Julia found her self possessed of considerable personal property, and but few days clapsed before she received, through the post, a munificent donation from the same princely hand. To the daughter of Mrs. Clarendale, he wrote, it need not be said that she has at command the life services of the writer includes the unservices of the writer, justly due to the un-blemished integrity of her excellent parent; and to the daughter of such a mother, still less needit be said that it is need it be said that it is advisable that an entire oblivion should fall upon the past. Silence and acceptance will ensure the writer's gratitude.

And it was in silence that Miss Clarendele obeyed, for she know that

obeyed, for she knew that in so doing lost mother; and with excellent fact she immediately advertised by mother; and with excellent tact she immediately advertised her town residence, as preparatory to her departure to the continent which she received so ample a remuneration, that she could not but guess that the getter patron of her family had something to do with the transaction.

She is still a resident among our continental neighbours, where, with an ample fortune, she is enabled to indulge her love for the elegant arts; and though now merging to her autumnal quarter, still lives quarter, still lives a personal refutation of all the slanderous jests, that are so maliciously and witlessly hazarded, upon those who have coar-age to live in single blaces.

age to live in single blessedness.

And it is now many years since, a quiet winter's morning, the early risers of a quiet seaport on the southern coast of Ireland hyge amazed by discovering on their pier a misshapen mass, which on examination provides the provided of th formation, and so fearful an aspect, that but for the indefinite outline the indefinite outline of a face, and an inarticulate attempt at speech, it could scarcely have been recognized as bearing the likeness man.

That it had been deposited there by other volition than its own was evident, for locometive power it possessed not; and if it had either