

## Literature, &amp;c.

The British Magazines  
FOR JANUARY.

From Hogg's Instructor.

## A JOURNEYMAN'S RETURN.

It was evening; the furious wind moaned around the houses and whistled through the door-chinks, whirling clouds of fine and hardened snow against the window panes; while the sombre twilight of winter darkened the deserted street, along which hurried an occasional passenger; closely enveloped in his cloak. No sound was heard save the noise of the storm, interrupted at intervals by the dead-end rumbling of a cart over the snow-covered pavement, as Herman the joiner returned to his home for the evening.

After many hours of hard labour, he anticipated the sweets of repose and the pleasure of his family. His children welcomed him with joy and fond caresses; and while, at the request of his wife, he changed his dripping garments for dry and warm clothing, his daughter Catherine ran to push the oaken chair in which her father loved to sit nearer to the stove.

'Now, father,' cried little Franz, 'what shall we do to amuse ourselves while mother gets supper ready? Shall we play at horses or hot-cockles?'

'At horses! Yes, yes, at horses!' exclaimed Wilhelm. 'I will be horse directly; shall I not, father? You are willing, and will swing me at a gallop.' While he spoke, the youngster lifted his little leg, and tried to pass it over his parent's knee; but Herman said, 'No horse to night my children: I have worked till I am weary; and want rest.'

'If father would tell us a story,' said Franz, 'a pretty story—that would give him no fatigue at all, would it?'

'Oh yes, father, pray, pray,' exclaimed Catherine and Wilhelm both together, 'a pretty story! Hagar in the desert and her poor child dying of thirst,' added the little girl.

'No, no,' interrupted the youngest, 'I should like to hear about Daniel in the lions' den.' 'No, no,' cried Franz quickly trying to climb on the elbow of his father's chair; 'I want the story of the black hunter and the seven magic bullets; that is the prettiest of all.' Then, without waiting for an answer, the three little supplicants repeated their requests in louder tones.

'Silence there,' said Herman, in a mild but firm tone; 'silence, I shall not say a word until you are all agreed.'

'Well, whichever you like best,' said Catherine, after a little effort over herself; and the two boys, influenced by her example, repeated also in their turn—'Yes, father, whichever you please.'

'I shall get my stool,' cried Catherine, running to the other end of the room, 'and sit down at your feet; but, when opposite the window, the little girl stopped, her attention attracted by something passing in the street.

'What are you looking at sister? Come here,' come here called Franz impatiently; 'Come quickly, father is going to begin.'

'Oh,' replied Catherine, intent on what she saw without, 'there is a poor man yonder who seems to be in trouble; he carries on his back a knapsack covered with snow, and looks as though he did not know his way, and his face is blue with cold.'

'He is a workman,' said Franz, running to the window, 'a journeyman tinker, just arrived; I see his tools hanging to his knapsack. But why does he stop in the street in such weather?'

'Do you not see,' answered Catherine, 'that he is a stranger, and nows not where to go? Father,' she added, turning to Herman, 'suppose I go down and ask him what he is looking for?'

'Go, my child,' answered the joiner, as he searched in his pocket and drew out a piece of money here, give him this; he is perhaps poor, as I was formerly; that will pay for his night's bed and a soup to warm him. Run, show him the journeyman's tavern at the end of the street.

The little girl waited not to be twice told, and descended the steps four at a time, followed by Franz, shouting—'We are coming back; don't begin the story without us.' At the end of some moments the children returned with their arms round each others neck. 'Oh, father,' said they joyfully, 'he is so happy! He has come far, very far, and did not know whom to speak to, for there is no one in the street.'

'I told him,' said Franz, 'that you were once such a poor journeyman as he; and that perhaps I shall be one in my turn.'

'Yes replied Catherine, 'and he shook my brothers hand while he said: "God bless your father and his good children." But he could scarcely speak, he was so cold.'

'Oh! it is very cold,' continued Franz, thrusting himself between his father and the stove; 'I am glad that the poor man is going to warm himself and sup as well as we.'

'But the story,' cried suddenly a little voice from between Herman's knees; 'are you not going to tell us the story now, father?'

'Oh, yes, father, if you please,' said Catherine, drawing her stool as close as possible to her parent's chair.

'I wonder,' murmured Franz, in a low voice, 'whether it will be Daniel or the Black Hunter?'

'Neither one nor the other,' answered his father; 'I am going to relate a history which

you have not heard, although it happened to one of my friends; it is called *The Journeyman's Return*.'

'Oh!' exclaimed all the children at once, opening their eyes widely; 'let us hear it, let us hear it; and while they listened in eager expectation, Herman began as follows:—

It was a beautiful morning in spring; the sun already showed his bright face above the peaks of the mountains; the young birds clamoured with open throats for their accustomed food; sheep were bleating in the fold; villagers and herdsmen were seen beginning their daily labours; while the insects, shaking their benumbed wings, recommenced their buzzing among the foliage. Upon the high road leading to one of the small towns of Switzerland, a young man walked briskly, carrying a heavy knapsack; his dusty boots showed that he had come far without resting, and his face, tanned to a dark brown, seemed to have been long exposed to a hotter sun than that of the mountains. He was a journeyman joiner, returning to his native country after seven long years of absence. Impatient to see his home, he walked all night and now the brightness of a June sun lit up with a golden tint all the objects that presented themselves to the eyes of the wayfarer; he saw already the spires of his native town, and his Swiss heart beat with gladness.

'Oh!' said the traveller, 'how beautiful the country in which I grew from infancy to boyhood, from boy to citizen. My feet have trod the soil of France, where the grape ripens, and of Italy, where grow the fig and the orange. I have reposed under the shelter of bowers of roses, and have seen the branches of the lemon tree covered with fruit, and perfumed flowers bending to meet my hand, during many nights, to the sound of guitar and castanet, have I taken part in the pastimes and dances of those people from whom noon is a season of repose and the departure of the sun a signal for festivity. Yes, I, a working son of Switzerland, have seen these things, and yet my heart has never said I wish to live and die here. Always have I remembered with a sigh of regret the pale rays of the northern sun, the rocky mountain steeps, the unchanging hue of the pines, the pointed roof of the humble dwelling, where yet young, I received the blessing of a dying father. While these and many other thoughts ran through the mind of the young traveller, his pace became more rapid, and his feet, wearied by his long journey recovered their activity. Suddenly a turn in the road revealed to his eyes the roofs of his native town, from which here and there arose slender columns of smoke. At this sight the wanderer paused, a tear wetted his sun-burned cheek, he took off his cap, and, joining his hands, spoke with faltering voice; 'I thank thee, Heaven, that thou hast permitted me to see these objects once more; and then, without turning his eyes from the scene before him, resumed his walk. "There," he said, "is the white terrace wall of the public promenade where I played so happily, and yonder is one of the arches of the old bridge, under which my companions and I went fishing on our holidays. Ah! I begin to see the leafy top of the old lime tree that shelters the church square; twenty paces from that, at the corner of a little street, stands the humble house where I was born, where I grew up, where I lost my father and sister, and go to meet my aged mother. If she was no longer living—if—"

The young man's heart sank at the thought, and his limbs trembled under him; but, hastening his step, he said, 'No, it cannot be; I heard from her scarcely three months ago, and then she was well, and impatiently expecting her son. He comes, good mother—comes to thee full of love and respect. Not in vain has he so long worked far away from thee,' he added, shaking the knapsack on his shoulders with a smile of honest pride; 'he brings what will repair thy cottage—the means of ease and gladness for thy aged days.' As the joiner spoke a little flower met his eye—it was a daisy that showed its crown of red and white above the green turf that bordered the road. He stooped to pluck it, and, continuing his route, picked off one after another, the little leaves. 'It was thus,' he said, smilingly, 'that on the eve of my departure, Gertrude gathered a daisy like this on the bank of the river, and bending her pretty face over the flower to hide the pain caused by my sorrowing farewell, she stripped it in silence, and pulling off the last leaf, said to me, with a timid voice, "Adieu, Herman. I will not marry before your return," and immediately ran quickly away, as though she feared having said too much.'

'Father' interrupted suddenly little Wilhelm raising his head from where he had placed it on his father's knee; 'the stranger, then, was named Herman, and he was a joiner, like you; his maiden's name was Gertrude, and so is our mother's. Is not that Droll?'

'Do not interrupt father,' said Catherine, who appeared to listen to the recital with the liveliest interest.

Herman smiled, and continued his narrative without reply. 'When I came to the church square' said the young traveller to himself, 'I shall hasten to look for a little window trimmed with a blue curtain, facing the old lime tree, on the side opposite to our house. Oh! if I should see Gertrude seated there at her wheel, as I saw her formerly! If, in passing, I could read the past regret in her eyes, and her pleasure at seeing me again! What a happy moment will that be when I can say to, "Gertrude, I have returned faithful to my promise as you have to yours (for I know she has kept her word). Come and share the competence that I have gained by my work; come and help me to make my old mother happy." Then when

with a blush, she says, "I am willing," I shall take the pretty cross of gold and the silk handkerchief which I have brought, and placing them in her lap; delight in her innocent joy.'

Meanwhile the distance diminishes under the feet of the traveller, he is approaching the town, where his eyes already distinguish the public gate. As he advances, his look interrogates the faces of those whom he meets, eager to find a friendly glance—a trace of the past, from each passenger his eye demands a shake of the hand, or some words of welcome. At length, as he passed under the gate, he saw a man walking slowly backwards and forwards with a pipe in his mouth, and hands crossed on his back, it was the toll-gatherer of the town-gate. Herman looked at him attentively, and at the first glance recognised Randolph, his former playmate, his school-companion, and oldest friend. What pleasure!

Herman was about to run to him, to seize his hand, and say, 'Here I am,' but at that instant the tollman, turning in his walk, passed close to him, measuring him with a look from head to foot with cool indifference, and paced on, leaving behind a cloud of smoke. Poor journeyman! the sun of the south has shone too long on thy face, and made thee a stranger to the eyes of those who love thee—thy best friend would not recognise thee! Herman felt faint at heart; after a few moments struggle with himself, he recommenced his walk, but not without giving utterance to a sigh. A few paces farther he stopped, at the entrance of the first street, where stood a new building the walls of which were finished, but many workmen were still busy on the wood-work and carpentry, overlooked by an elderly man, who from the street directed the fixing of the window-frames. At the sight of the overlooker, Herman felt again delighted.

The man is his old master, whose advice and regard made him a skillful workman—he to whom, in his heart, he refers the success which has crowned his efforts; more than that he is the father of Gertrude. 'Ah,' said Herman to himself, 'here is one who will know me again without difficulty; youth is little observant; its impressions are lively but fugitive. Rodolph may have forgotten the features of his playmate, but the master will not have lost the remembrance of him to whom he so long shewed kindness; he will open his arms to me.' While talking thus to himself, the young workman drew nearer the old man, stood before him, and taking off his cap, begged him, in a respectful tone, to tell him of a joiner's shop where he might find immediate occupation. The master looked at him for a moment in silence; Herman's heart beat quickly, but he retained his composure. 'Come to my house at noon answered the overlooker, quietly; 'we will look at your certificates; there is no lack of work for those who know how to do it; then turning to his master he resumed his interrupted directions. Alas! the sun of the south has shone too long on the bronzed features of the wanderer, and made him a stranger to his best friends, even the father of his Gertrude knows him not again.

'What! sighed Herman, sadly, 'as he left his old master, 'am I then so different from my former self, that my features reveal not the slightest remembrance? If Gertrude—but no, I deceive myself; she who could distinguish me at a hundred paces in a crowd, will easily discover her Herman under the tan which darkens his skin. Besides, should she hesitate an instant, will not her heart exclaim, It is he—it is Herman!'

He strode rapidly along the street which separated him in the square; he was soon near the church, in sight of the old lime-tree with its rustic bench, and of the great fountain, surrounded as usual by washerwomen; farther, is a little house, which the young man examines with eager look. There it is the window decorated as formerly with the blue curtain, and garnished with pots of pinks. What happiness! A young woman who appears to be spinning, is seated at the casement. Herman's heart leaped in his bosom; he flew across the square, and stood still at ten paces from the dwelling of his Gertrude. There full of lively emotions, he remained gazing on the young maiden, admiring the change which seven years of absence had produced. Instead of the light and slender girl of sixteen whom he had formerly left behind, he saw a young woman in all the charms of her beauty—her eyes brighter, her cheek more deeply tinged, than when he went away, while her hair fell in thicker tresses on her rounded shoulders. 'How beautiful she is!' half murmured the journeyman. Gertrude did not distinguish the word, but the voice that gave them utterance reached her ears; she turned her head quickly to the side whence it came, and saw, opposite the window, in the middle of the street, a traveller poorly clad, his eyes earnestly fixed upon her. 'It is a foreign workman,' she said, after looking at him for a few moments; 'he is perhaps poor—let us have pity on him. Heaven bless you, young man!' she continued, as, stretching out her arm, she threw a small coin on the pavement, then, without longer delay, she rose, and, laying her staff aside, closed the window, and disappeared from the eyes of her lover. Alas! the sun of the south has shone too long on the tanned face of the wanderer—his best friends cannot recognise him, his beloved herself calls him a foreigner!

At this point of her father's tale a sigh broke from little Catherine. Herman smiled, took the child's hand in his own, and continued his narration.

'It instead of fleeing from the gaze of the

traveller, Gertrude had remained at the window, she would doubtless have remarked the tokens of his sorrow, and perhaps have discovered under the tanned face and dusty garments the friend whose return she had so long hoped for. The young joiner, however after remaining some moments as if nailed to the place on which he stood, mastered his emotions, and bent his steps towards the paternal roof. But his whole bearing had undergone a change. He was no longer animated and cheerful, as when, shortly before he hastened along the streets unconscious of fatigue and of the weight of his knapsack; now, with head bent down, he dragged himself forward at a slow and melancholy pace; the last disappointment appeared to have at once destroyed all his hopes, and sadly he trod the soil which a few hours before, was the object of his fondest anticipations and wishes. In vain the old lime-tree with its majestic shadow, and the ancient grotesquely-ornamented fountain, recall a host of boyish recollections; Herman was deaf to their voice, his wounded heart sees around him nothing but sorrow and misfortune. Meanwhile he drew near his home; fifty paces at most separate him from the old walls, the scene of his earliest days. While passing the cathedral, he looked with a distracted eye at the antique porch at the steps leading to the venerable pile. At this moment an aged female, leaving the chapel, appeared at the door. She descended the stair with a tottering step, leaning on a staff. It was the mother of Herman who had just been praying for the safe return of her only son. 'Oh, how she is changed!' said the weary artisan mournfully to himself, 'alas how could I hope that her feeble eyes would recognize her child, when mine scarcely distinguish my mother in this form worn out with age!' At this instant, the old woman, now but a few paces distant, raised her head and looked at him—'My son, my son,' she cried, 'my Herman!' and fell with sobs of joy, into the arms of him whom she loved so well. 'Mother,' replied the young man, with a trembling voice, as he pressed her to his breast, 'mother, you at least have not forgotten me.'

The effects of travel and exposure, fatigue, increase of years, deceive not the eyes of a mother. In vain has the sun of the south made the features of the wanderer strange to his sincerest friends—even to his beloved; one glance sufficed her from whose breast he drew his nourishment. 'My son!' she said; 'Heaven be praised my son has come back to me!'

Herman ceased to speak. After a short silence, Wilhelm cried, impatiently, 'And what then, father?'

'Yes, father, what next?' said Franz; 'What became of the poor journeyman?'

'The journeyman,' answered Herman, 're-entered his home with his aged mother, when he said, "Look mother, this is what I have earned; you will now live with me in comfort and quiet. And to her latest day the good mother thanked Heaven for the return of her son."

At these words, Herman raised his moistened eyes to the corner of the apartment, where a distaff, yet covered with flax, hung upon the wall. A wreath of dried amaranths decorated the modest trophy, preserving the cherished memory of a much-loved mother. The children's looks followed those of their father, and for some moments a respectful silence was maintained. At last Franz remarked, in a low tone, 'So poor Gertrude had neither the cross of gold nor the pretty silk kerchief!'

'And it served her right,' cried Wilhelm; 'why did she not take a better look at the journeyman? and why did she shut her window so quickly?'

'Who knows,' half-whispered Catherine, looking timidly at her father, 'who knows whether she did not open it again afterwards?'

Herman seized the little girl in his arms, and kissed her, while he said, 'Yes, my Catherine, you have guessed it; and it was between the young joiner and his Gertrude that the aged parent ended her days, blessing them both with her latest breath.'

At this instant, the door of the kitchen opened; a female, still young and good-looking, entered with the invitation, 'Come to supper.' The two little boys clung playfully to their mother's apron, crying, 'Supper, supper!' Their father followed, carrying Catherine in his arms. As soon as the little girl could reach her mother, she passed an arm round her neck, and with a merry laugh, the party seated themselves at the table, where the happiness of the present mingling with his recollections of the past, Herman felt proud and grateful for the lot which had been shared with his Gertrude.

## EDITOR'S CARES.

The preparation of a constantly recurring periodical work, especially if conjoined with other duties is a sure means of making time fly fast. There is no cessation—no pause; the task is never done; the mind never unoccupied. 'I'll leave it till to-morrow' cannot be said; pleasant offerings must not be hoped for; it is on, till the account is closed; and so the years end come along before they are looked for. An editor's duties, even in a case comparatively unimportant are onerous and unthankful; those he praises 'loves him less than their dinner,' and those he finds fault with hate him 'worse than the devil.' If he stop out manfully, he can scarcely avoid treading on somebody's toes who will make a point of never forgetting it; while those on whom he may bestow commendation, even if nothing more substantial, will quietly place it all to their own merits.—*The Builder*.