

Literature, &c.

The British Magazines
FOR APRIL.From Hogg's Instructor.
INSTINCT OF CHILDHOOD.

BY JOHN NEAL.

A BEAUTIFUL child stood near a large open window. The window was completely overshadowed by wild grape and blossoming honeysuckle, and the drooping branches of a prodigious elm—the largest and handsomest you ever saw. The child was leaning forward with half open mouth and thoughtful eyes, looking into the firmament of green leaves for ever at play, that appeared to overhang the whole neighbourhood; and her loose, bright hair, as it broke away in the cheerful morning wind, glittered like stray sunshine among the branches and blossoms. Just underneath her feet, and almost within reach of her little hand swung a large and prettily covered bird-cage, all open to the sky! The broad plentiful grape leaves lay upon it in heaps—the morning wind blew pleasantly through it, making the very music that birds and children love best—and the delicate branches of the drooping elm swept over it—and the glow of blossoming herbage round about fell with a sort of shadowy lustre upon the basin of bright water, and the floor of glittering sand within the cage.

Well, if ever! said the child; and then she stooped and pulled away the trailing branches and looked into the cage; and then her lips began to tremble, and her soft eyes filled with tears.

Within the cage was the mother bird, flitting and whistling—not cheerfully, but mournfully—and beating herself to death against the delicate wires; and three little bits of birds watching her, open-mouthed, and trying to follow her from perch to perch, as she opened and shut her golden wings, like sudden flashes of sunshine, and darted hither and thither, as if hunted by some invisible thing—or a cat foraging in the shrubbery.

There, now! there you go again! you foolish thing, you! Why, what is the matter? I should be ashamed of myself! I should so! Hav'nt we bought the prettiest cage in the world for you? Hav'nt you had enough to eat, and the best that could be had for love or money—sponge-cake—loaf sugar, and all sorts of seed? Did'nt father put up a nest with his own hands; and hav'nt I watched over you, you ungrateful little thing, till the eggs they put there had all turned to birds, no bigger than grasshoppers, and so noisy—ah, you can't think! Just look at the beautiful clear water there—and the clean white sand—where do you think you could find such water as that, or such a pretty glass dish, or such beautiful bright sand, if we were to take you at your word, and let you out, with that little nest full of young ones, to shift for yourselves, hey?

The door opened, and a tall benevolent-looking man stepped up to her side.

Oh, father, I'm so glad you came. What do you think is the matter with poor little birdy?

The father looked down among the grass and shrubbery, and up into the top branches, and then into the cage—the countenance of the poor little gittle girl growing more and more perplexed and more sorrowful every moment.

Well, father, what is it? does it see anything?

No, my love, nothing to frighten her; but where is the father bird?

He's in the other cage. He made such a to-do when the birds began to chirp this morning, that I was obliged to let him out, and brother Bobby, he frightened him into the cage and carried him off.

Was that right, my love?

Why not, father! He wouldn't be quiet, you know; and what was I to do?

But, Moggy, dear, these little birds may want their father to help to feed them; the poor mother bird may want him to take care of them, or sing to her.

Or, perhaps, to show them how to fly, father?

Yes, dear. And to separate them just now—how would you like to have me carried off, and put into another house, leaving nothing at home but your mother to watch over you and the rest of my little birds?

The child grew more thoughtful. She looked up into her father's face, and appeared as if more than half disposed to ask a question which might be a little out of place; but she forbore; and after musing a few moments, went back to the original subject. But, father, what can be the matter with the poor thing? you see how she keeps flying about, and the little ones trying to follow her, and tumbling upon their noses, and toddling about as if they were tipsy, and couldn't see straight.

I am afraid she is getting discontented.

Discontented! How can that be, father? Hasn't she her little ones about her, and everything on earth she can wish? and then, you know she never used to be so before.

When her mate was with her, perhaps?

Yes, father; and yet, now I think of it, the moment these little witches began to peep-peep, and tumble about so funny, the father and mother began to fly about in the cage, as if they were crazy. What can be the reason? The water, you see, is cool and clear; the sand bright; they are out in the open air, with all the green leaves blowing about them; their

cage has been scoured with soap and sand; the fountain filled; and the seed-box—and—and—I declare I cannot think what ails them.

My love, may it not be the very things you speak of? Things which you think ought to make them happy, are the very cause of all their trouble, you see. The father and mother are separated. How can they teach their young to fly in that cage? How teach them to provide for themselves?

But father, dear father! laying her little hand on the spring of the cage-door, dear father! would you?

And why not, my dear child? and the father's eyes filled with tears, and he stooped down and kissed the bright face upturned to his, and glowing as if illuminated with inward sunshine. Why not?

I was only thinking, father, if I should let them out, who will feed them?

Who feeds the young ravens, dear? Who feeds the ten thousand little birds that are flying about us now?

True, father; but they have never been imprisoned, you know, and have already learned to take care of themselves.

The father looked up and smiled. Worthy of profound consideration, my dear; I admit your plea; but have a care lest you overrate the danger and difficulty in your unwillingness to part with your beautiful little birds.

Father! and the little hand pressed upon the spring, and the door flew open—wide open.

Stay, my child! What you do must be done thoughtfully, conscientiously, so that you may be satisfied with yourself hereafter, and allow me to hear all your objections.

I was thinking, father, about the cold rains, and the long winters, and how the poor little birds that have been so long confined would never be able to find a place to sleep in, or water to wash in, or seeds for their little ones.

In our climate, my love, the winters are very short and the rainy season itself does not drive the birds away; and then, you know, birds always follow the sun, if our climate is too cold for them, they have only to go farther south. But in a word, my love, you are to do as you would be done by. As you would not like to have me separated from your mother and you—as you would not be imprisoned for life, though your cage were crammed with loaf-sugar and sponge-cake—as you—

That'll do father! that's enough! Brother Bobby! hither Bobby! bring the little cage with you; there's a dear!

Brother Bobby sang out in reply; and after a moment or two of anxious inquiry, appeared at the window with a little cage. The prison doors were opened: the father bird escaped; the mother bird immediately followed with a cry of joy; and came back and told her little ones forth among the bright green leaves. The children clapped their hands in an ecstasy, and the father fell upon their necks and kissed them; and the mother, who sat by, sobbed over them both for a whole hour, as if her heart would break; and told her neighbours with tears in her eyes.

The ungrateful hussy! What! after all that we have done for her; giving her the best room that we could spare; feeding her from our own table; clothing her from our own wardrobe; giving her the handsomest and shrewdest fellow for a husband within twenty miles of us; allowing them to live together till a child is born; and now, because we have thought proper to send him away for a while, where he may earn his keep—now, forsooth, we are to find my lady discontented with her situation!

Dear father!

Hush, child! Ay, discontented—that's the word—actually dissatisfied with her condition, the jade! with the best of everything to make her happy—comforts and luxuries she could never dream of obtaining if she were free to-morrow—and always contented; never presuming to be discontented till now.

And what does she complain of, father?

Why, my dear child, the unreasonable thing complains just because we have sent her husband away to the other plantation for a few months, he was idle here, and might have grown discontented, too, if we had not picked him off. And then, instead of being happier, and more thankful—more thankful to her heavenly Father, for the gift of a man child, Martha tells me that she found her crying over it, calling it a little slave, and wished the Lord would take it away from her—the ungrateful wench! when the death of that child would be two hundred dollars out of my pocket—every cent of it!

After all we have done for her too! sighed the mother.

I declare I have no patience with the jade! continued the father.

Father—dear father!

Be quiet, Moggy? don't tease me now.

But, father! and, as she spoke, the child ran up to her father and drew him to the window, and threw back her sunshiny tresses, and looked up into his eyes with the face of an angel, and pointed to the cage as it still hung at the window, with door wide open.

The father understood her, and coloured to the eyes, and then, as if half ashamed of the weakness, bent over and kissed her forehead—smoothened down her silky hair—and told her she was a child now, and must not talk about such matters till she had grown older.

Why not, father?

Why not? Why, bless your little heart! suppose I were silly enough to open my doors and turn her adrift, with her child at her

breast, what would become of her? Who would take care of her? who feed her?

Who feeds the ravens, father? Who takes care of all white mothers, and all white the babes we see?

Yes, child—but then—I know what you are thinking of; but then—there's a mighty difference, let me tell you, between a slave mother and a white mother—between a slave child and a white child.

Yes, father.

Don't interrupt me. You drive everything out of my head. What was I going to say? Oh! ah! that in our long winters and cold rains, these poor things who have been brought up in our houses, and who know nothing about the anxieties of life, and have never learned to take of themselves—and—

Yes, father; but couldn't they follow the sun, too? or go farther south?

And why not be happy here?

But, father—dear father! How can they teach their little ones to fly in a cage?

Child, you are getting troublesome!

And how teach their young to provide for themselves, father?

Put the little imp to bed, directly; do you hear?

Good night, father! Good night, mother! Do as you would be done by.

From Lyrics and Miscellaneous Poems.
MY CHILDHOOD TUNE.

BY FRANCIS BROWN.

And hast thou found my soul again,
Though many a shadowy year hath past
Across its chequered path since when
I heard thy low notes last?

They come with the old pleasant sound,
Long silent, but remembered soon—
With all the fresh green memories wound
About my childhood's tune!

I left thee far among the flowers—
My hand shall seek as wealth no more—
The lost light of those morning hours
No sunrise can restore.

And life hath many an early cloud
That darkness as it nears the noon—
But all their broken rainbows crowd
Back with my childhood's tune!

Thou hast the whisper of young leaves
That told my heart of spring begun,
The bird's song by our hamlet eaves
Poured to the setting sun.

And voices heard, how long ago,
By winter's hearth or autumn's moon!—
They have grown old and altered now—
All but my childhood's tune!

At our last meeting, Time had much
To teach, and I to learn; for then
Mine was a trusting wisdom—such
As will not come again.

I had not seen life's harvest fade
Before me in the days of June;
But thou—how hath the spring time stayed
With thee, my childhood's tune!

I had not learned that love, which seemed
So priceless, might be poor and cold;
Nor found whom once I angels deemed
Of coarse and common mould.

I knew not that the world's hard gold
Could far outweigh the heart's best boon;
And yet thou speakest as of old—
My childhood's pleasant tune!

I greet thee as the dove that crossed
My path among Time's breaking waves,
With olive leaves of memory lost,
Or shed, perchance, on graves.

The tree hath grown up wild and rank,
With blighted boughs that time may prune—
But blessed were the dew drops drank
From thee—my childhood's tune!

Where rose the stranger city's hum,
By many a princely mart and dome,
Thou comest—even as voices come
To hearts that have no home.

A simple strain to other ears,
And lost amid the tumult soon;
But dreams of love, and truth, and tears,
Come with my childhood's tune!

From Chambers' Edinburgh Journal.
SUMNER ON TRUE GLORY.

CHARLES SUMNER, whose essay on War was noticed by us some years ago, has added to his reputation by an address on 'Fame and Glory,' delivered before the Literary Societies of Amherst College, August 11, 1847, a copy of which, printed at Boston, has just reached us. Mr Sumner's address appears in England at an appropriate time. When a portion of the people, misled by a pretended fear of the score of military defences, would force the country into what would virtually be a war, such a discourse must have a peculiarly useful tendency. Too long has the world been deluded with the glitter and pomp of

military array. It is time that the 'fame and glory' usually accorded to warlike exploits were set down at their true value.

We cannot, in these limited pages, follow Mr Sumner through his comprehensive Orations, but confining ourselves chiefly to a few prominent points, we shall present, as far as possible, a condensed view of his line of reasoning.

Fame and Glory may, for the present purpose, be considered synonymous. They are the expression of a favourable public opinion on certain actions, but any value to be attached to this opinion must depend on the degree of enlightenment and conscientiousness of those who express it. "In early and barbarous periods, homage is exclusively rendered to achievements of physical strength, chiefly in slaying wild beasts, or human beings, who are termed enemies. The feats of Hercules, which fill the fables and mythology of early Greece, were triumphs of brute force. Conquerors of the Nemean lion and the many-headed hydra, slayer of the giant Antæus, illustrious saviour of the Argive ships, grand abater of the nuisances of the age in which he lived, he was hailed as a hero, and commemorated as a God. And at a later time, honour was still continued to mere muscular strength of arm. One of the most polite and eminent chiefs at the siege of Troy, is distinguished by Homer for the ease with which he hurled a rock, such as could not be lifted even by two strong men in our day. And this was glory in an age which had not yet learned to regard the moral and intellectual nature of man, or that which distinguishes him from the beasts that perish, as the only source of conduct worthy of enlightened renown."

In after times, in Greece, glory was gained by expert wrestling and chariot-driving, and contests of this kind, as vulgar as modern horse-racing, were the frequent theme of the Greek poets. Rome did not improve on the Grecian notions of glory. The much prized crowns of honour were all awarded to the successful soldier. The title to a triumph, that loftiest object of ambition, was determined by the number of enemies destroyed. Founded and perpetuated in military aggression, without a single redeeming instance of justice, the Roman Empire finally sunk under the vengeance which it had provoked. The successful robber was in turn a prey to the spoiler. The same tale may be told of all the nations of the middle ages. The glorification of animal strength and courage was universal. Chivalry was only polished brutality. "The list of the valiant Céspedes, a Spanish knight of high renown, by Lope de Vega, reveals a succession of exploits which were the performances of a rude nature gaudied at will. Savage rivalry and inhuman harshness were his honourable pursuit. With a furious blow of his clenched fist, in the very palace of the emperor at Augsburg, he knocked out the teeth of a heretic—an achievement which was hailed with honour and congratulation by his master, Charles V., and the duke of Austria. Thus did a Spanish gentleman acquire fame in the sixteenth century."

The 'glories of chivalry' are matched by states of society a knight would have selected to despise. "The North American savage commemorates the chief who is able to hang at the door of his wigwam a heavy string of scalps, the spoils of war. The New Zealander honours the sturdy champion who slays, and then eats his enemies. The cannibal in the Feejee islands—only recently explored by an expedition from our shores—praised for his adroitness in lying, for the dozen men he has killed with his own hand, his triumphant capture in battle of a piece of tapa cloth attached to a staff, not unlike that of our flag; and when he is dead, his club is placed in his hand, and extended across his breast, to indicate in the next world that the deceased was a chief and a warrior. This is barbarous glory." But how little does all this differ from the frantic eagerness of knights to capture the flag of an enemy, or the glory of being commemorated in stone, with the legs crossed, and the body clothed in armour. What a mob of fools mankind have been in all ages and countries.

Carrying his eye over the present condition of society, Mr Sumner admits that a love of fame or glory—that is, a love of approbation carried to an extreme length—is neither a moral or blameable when directed to those acts which promote human happiness. At the same time this species of personal ambition detracts from the bounty even of good works. In our opinion the man who does not do good in his power, without regard to the man applause, is not entitled to be called great. The popularity to be aimed at, according to the correct definition of Lord Mansfield is, that which follows, not that which is run after; it is that popularity which sooner or later never fails to do justice to the pursuit of noble ends by noble means.

Mr Sumner is next led to draw a comparison between fame derived from the pursuit of peaceful and useful arts and that from successful war. "It is from the lips of a successful soldier, cradled in war, the very pink of false heroism of battle, that we are taught to appreciate literary fame, which, though less elevated than that derived from disinterested acts of beneficence, is yet truer and more permanent far than any bloody glory. I include to Wolfe the conqueror of Quebec, who has attracted perhaps a larger share of romantic interest than any of the gallant generals of English history. We behold him yet, years in years, at the head of an adventurous expedition, destined to prostrate the French empire in Canada—guiding and encouraging the firmness of his troops in unaccustomed duties—awakening their personal attachments by his kindly suavity, and their ardour of