LITERATURE, &c.

The British Magazines.

From Hogg's Instructor.

THE EMIGRANT'S INVOCATION, ADDRESSED TO ANGLO SAXONS.

Who doth not in these latter dsys
The purpose dimly read,
For which was raised the Saxon race,
And England's might decreed ?
Or needs it an Archangel's ken
To glimpse the Almighty's plans,
Whose ways are not the ways of men,
Whose thoughts are not as man's.

From many lands a voice comes forth,
And ready answer gives,
From every corner of the earth
Where man degraded lives.
Hark to the low but deepening tones !
To Briton's sons they call,
To overflow earth's varied zones,
And rescue them from thrall.

From Sebir, bound in twofold chains,
Through clime and man's decree ;
From ancient China's teeming plains,
From sands of Tartary ;
From verdant isles, like emeralds, set
In ocean's crystal cup,
From shores unpaced by Saxons yet,
The earnest cry comes up.

Australian deserts, yet to bloom
With triumphs of your power,
Shout for reversal of their doom,
And yours shall be the dower !
Neglected Afric's sunny rills
Give back the stirring cry,
And Palestine's once fertile hills
In echoing throbs reply.

See giant Andes' snow-capp'd ranks
In answering accents move ;
While Maranon's prolific banks
And gorgeous woods approve
The loud appeal ; nor there it sleeps ;
The trumpet notes are rolled
From Western shores bestrewn with heaps
Of California gold.

'Twas yours my brethern to explore,
And bring new lands to sight ;
Now to deliver and restore,
With intellectual light.
Go forth, pass on, rend error's chain,
Smite superstition's force,
Till not a barrier remain
To stay the Gospel's course.

Till over all beneath heaven's blue,
Your banner be unfurled,
To raise, and peacefully subdue,
And Christianise the world ;
Till man, at war with man no more,
One brotherhood shall be,
One language speak, one God adore,
In Godlike unity.

Missionary pioneers
Nobly their work have done ;
Pushing their way through deaths and fears,
They fellow'd, one by one ;
Now thousands in their footsteps tread—
Thousands on thousands press—
And these, unwittingly, shall spread
Christ's Gospel-truth no less.

Though thoughtless of the holy aim
That fired the former hearts,
Each band the knowledge of His name,
Where'er it goes imparts.
His Word they bear abroad, as still
They scatter and disperse,
Unconscious workers of the Will
That rules the universe.

Men of the Anglo Saxon race,
Strong-hearted, frank and true,
Through every land your course we trace,
But much remains to do.
Come, then, my friends ! cross land and sea,
To earths's remotest end ;
Fulfil your noble destiny—
God calls—He will defend !

From Chambers' Edinburgh Journal.

CONFESSIONS OF AN ATTORNEY.

JANE ECCLES.

The criminal business of the office was, during the first three or four years of our partnership, entirely superintended by Mr Flint ; he being more *au fait*, from early practice, than myself in the art of prosecuting and defending felons, and I was thus happily relieved of duties which, in the days when George the Third was King, was frequently very oppressive and revolting. The criminal practitioner dwelt in an atmosphere tainted alike with cruelty and crime, and pulsating alternately with merciless decrees of death, and the shrieks and wailings of sentenced guilt. And not always guilt. There exist many records of proofs, incontestable, but obtained too late, of innocence having been legally strangled on the gallows in other cases than that of Eliza Fenning. How could it be otherwise with a criminal code crowded in every line with penalties of death, nothing but —death ? Juster, wiser times have dawned upon us, in which truer notions prevail of what man owes to man, even when sitting in judgment on transgressors ; and this we owe, let us not forget, to the exertions of a band of men who, undeterred by the sneers of the reputedly wise and practical men of the world, and the taunts of 'influential' newspapers, persisted in teaching that the rights of property could be more firmly cemented than by the shedding of blood—law, justice, security more effectually vindicated than by the gallows. I confess that I was also, for many years, amongst the mockers, and sincerely held such 'theorists' and 'dreamers' as Sir Samuel Romilly and his fellow workers in utter contempt. Not so my partner Mr Flint. Constantly in the presence of criminal judges and juries, he had less confidence in the unerring verity of their decisions than persons less familiar with them, or who see them only through the medium of newspapers. Nothing could exceed his distress of mind if, in cases in which he was prosecuting attorney, a convict died persisting in his innocence, or without a full confession of guilt. And to such a pitch did this morbidly sensitive feeling at length arrive, that he all at once refused to undertake, or in any way meddle with criminal prosecutions, and they were consequently turned over to our head clerk, with occasional assistance from me if there happened to be a press of business of the sort. Mr Flint still, however, retained a monopoly of the *defences*, except when, from some temporary cause or other, he happened to be otherwise engaged, when they fell to me. One of these I am about to relate, the result of which, whatever other impression it produced, thoroughly cured me—as it may the reader—of any propensity to sneer or laugh at the efforts of criminal law reformers and denouncers of the gallows.

One forenoon, during the absence of Mr Flint in Wiltshire, a Mrs Margaret Davies called at the office, apparently in great distress of mind. This lady, I must premise, was an old, or at all events an elderly maiden, of some four and forty years of age—I have heard a very intimate female friend of hers say she would never see fifty again, but this was spite—and possessed of considerable house property in rather poor localities. She found abundant employment for energies which might otherwise have turned to cards and scandal, in collecting her weekly, monthly and quarterly rents, and in promoting, or fancying she did, the religious and moral welfare of her tenants. Very barefaced, I well knew, were the impositions practised upon her credulous good nature in money matters, and I strongly suspected the spiritual and moral promises and performances of her motley tenantry exhibited as much discrepancy as those pertaining to rent. Still deceived or cheated as she might be, good Mrs Davies never wearied in what she conceived to be welldoing, and was ever ready to pour balm and oil into the wounds of the sufferer, however self inflicted or deserved.

'What is the matter now ?' I asked, as soon as the good lady was seated, and had untied and loosened her bonnet, and thrown back her shawl, fast walking having heated her prodigiously. 'Nothing worse than transportation is, I hope, likely to befal any of those interesting clients of yours ?'

'You are a hard hearted man, Mr Sharp,' replied Mrs Davies between a smile and a cry ; 'but being a lawyer, that is of course natural, and, as I am not here to consult you as a Christian, it is of very little consequence'

'Complimentary, Mrs Davies ; but pray go on.'

'You know Jane Eccles, one of my tenants in Bank Buildings : the embroidress who adopted her sister's orphan child.'

'I remember her name. She obtained if I recollect rightly, a balance of wages for her due to the child's father, the mate of a vessel, who died at sea. Well, but what has befallen her ?'

'A terrible accusation has been preferred against her,' rejoined Mrs Davies ; 'but as for a moment believing it that is quite out of the question. Jane Eccles,' continued the warm-hearted lady, at the oame time extracting a crumpled newspaper from the miscellaneous contents of her reticule—'Jane Eccles works hard from morning till night, keeps herself to herself ; her little nephew and her rooms are always as clean and nice as a new pin ; she attends church regularly ; and pays her rent punctually to the day. This disgraceful story, therefore,' she again added, placing the journal in my hands, '*cannot* be true.'

I glanced over the Police News : 'Uttering forged Bank of England Notes, knowing them to be forged,' I exclaimed. 'The devil !'

'There's no occasion to be spurting that name out so loudly, Mr Sharp,' said Mrs Davies, with some asperity, 'especially in a lawyer's office. People have been wrongfully accused before to day, I suppose.'

I was intent on the report, and not answering, she continued—

'I heard nothing of it till I read the shameful account in the paper half an hour agone. The poor girl was, I daresay, ashamed to send for me.'

'This appears to be a very bad case, Mrs Davies,' I said at length. 'Three forged ten-pound notes changed in one day at different shops each time, under the pretence of purchasing articles of small amount, and another ten pound note found in her pocket. All that has, I must confess, a very ugly appearance.'

'I don't care,' exclaimed Mrs Davies, quite fiercely, 'if it looks as ugly as sin, or if the whole bank of England was found in her pocket. I know Jane Eccles well : she nursed me last spring through the fever ; and I would be upon my oath that the whole story from beginning to end, is an invention of the devil.'

'Jane Eccles,' I persisted, 'appears to have been unable or unwilling to give the slightest explanation as to how she became possessed of the spurious notes. Who is this brother of hers, of such 'highly respectable appearance,' according to the report, who was permitted a private interview with her previous to the examination ?'

'She has no brother that I have ever heard of,' said Mrs Davies. 'It must be a mistake of the papers.'

'That is not very likely. You observe of course that she was fully committed—and no wonder.'

Mrs Davies's faith in the young woman's integrity would not be shaken by any evidence save that of her own bodily eyes, and I agteed to see Jane Eccles on the morrow, and make the best arrangements for the defence—at Mrs Davies's charge—which the circumstances and the short time I should have for preparation—the Old Bailey Session would be on in a few days—permitted. The matter so far settled, Mrs Margaret hurried off, to see what had become of little Henry, the prisoner's nephew.

I visited Jane Eccles the next day in Newgate. She was a well grown young woman of about two or three-and-twenty—not exactly pretty perhaps, but very good looking. Her brown hair was plainly worn, without a cap, and the expression of her face was, I thought, one of sweetness and humility, contradicted in some degree by rather harsh lines about the mouth, denoting strong will and purpose. As a proof of the existence of this last characteristic, I may here mention that when her first overweening confidence had yielded to doubt, she, although dotingly fond of her nephew, at this time about eight years of age, firmly refused to see him, 'in order,' she once said to me, and the thought brought a pallor to her face, 'in order that, should the worst befall, her memory might not be involuntarily connected in his mind with images of dugeons and disgrace and shame. Jane Eccles had received what is called in the country 'a good schooling,' and the books Mrs Davies had lent her she had eagerly perused. She was therefore to a certain extent a cultivated person ; and her speech and manners were mild, gentle, and, so to speak, religious. I generally found, when I visited her, a Bible or a Prayer Book in her hand. This, however, from my experience, comparatively slight though it was, did not much impress me in her favor—devotional sentiment so easily, for a brief time, assumed, being in nine cases out of ten a hypocritical deceit. Still she, upon the whole, made a decidedly favorable impression on me, and I no longer so much wondered at the bigotry of unbelief manifested by Mrs Davies in behalf of her apparently religious, amiable and grateful protegee.

But beyond the moral doubt thus suggested of the prisoner's guilt, my interviews with her utterly failed to extract anything from her in rebutment of the charge about which she was to be arraigned. At first she persisted in asserting that the prosecution was based upon manifest error ; that the impounded notes, instead of being forged, were genuine Bank-of-England paper. It was some time before I succeeded in convincing her that this hope, to which she so eagerly, so desperately clung, was a fallacious one. I did so at last ; and either, thought I, as I marked her varying color and faltering voice, 'either you are a consummate actress, or else the victim of some frightful delusion or conspiracy.'

'I will see you, if you please, to-morrow,' she said, looking up from the chair upon which, with her head bowed and her face covered with her hands, she had been seated for several minutes in silence. 'My thoughts are confused now, but to-morrow I shall be more composed ; better able to decide if—— to talk, I mean, of this unhappy business.'

I thought it better to comply without remonstrance, and at once took my leave.

When I returned the next afternoon the governor of the prison informed me that the brother of my client, James Eccles, quite a dashing gentleman, had had a long interview with her. He had left about two hours before, with the intention he said of calling upon me.

I was conducted to the room where my conferences with the prisoner usually took place. In a few minutes she appeared much flushed and excited, it seemed to be alternately with trembling joy and hope, and doubt and nervous fear.

'Well,' I said, 'I trust you are now ready to give me your unreserved confidence, without which, be assured, that any reasonable hope of a successful issue from the peril in which you are involved is out of the question.'

The varying emotions I have noticed were clearly traceable as they swept over her telltale countenance during the minute or so that elapsed before she spoke.

'Tell me candidly, sir,' she said at last, 'whether, if I owned to you that the notes were given to me by a—a person, whom I cannot, if I would, produce, to purchase various articles at different shops, and return him—the person I mean—the change ; and that I made oath this was done by me in all innocence of heart, as the God of heaven and earth truly knows it was, it would avail me ?'

'Not in the least,' I replied, angry at such trifling. 'How can you ask such a question ? We must *find* the person who, you intimate has deceived you, and placed your life in peril ; and if that can be proved, hang him instead of you. I speak plainly Miss Eccles,' I added in a milder tone ; 'perhaps you may think unfeelingly, but there is no further time for playing with this dangerous matter. To-morrow a true bill will be found against you, and your trial may then come on immediately. If you are careless for yourself, you ought to have some thought for the sufferings of your excellent friend Mrs Davies ; for your nephew, soon perhaps to be left friendless and destitute.'

'Oh, spare me, spare me !' sobbed the unhappy young woman, sinking helplessly into a seat. 'Have pity upon me, wretched, bewildered as I am !' Tears relieved her, and after a while she said, 'It is useless, Sir, to prolong this interview. I could not, I solemnly assure you, if I would, tell you where to search for or find the person of whom I spoke. And,' she added, whilst the lines about her mouth of which I have spoken grew distinct and rigid, 'I would not if I could. What indeed would it, as I have been told and believe, avail, but to cause the death of two deceived innocent persons instead of one ? Besides,' she continued, trying to speak with firmness, and repress the shudder which crept over her and shook her as with ague—'besides, whatever the verdict, the penalty will not, cannot I am sure— I know, be—be'——

I understood her plainly enough, although her resolution failed to sustain her through the sentence.

'Who is this brother, James Eccles he calls himself, whom you saw at the police office, and who has twice been here, I unnderstand —once to day ?'

A quick start revealed the emotion with which she heard the question, and her dilated eyes rested on me for a moment with eager scrutiny. She speedily recovered her presence of mind, and with her eyes again fixed on the floor, said in a quivering voice 'My brother ! Yes, Sir—as you say—my brother.'

'Mrs Davies said you have no brother,' I rejoined.

'Good Mrs Davies,' she replied in a tone scarcely above her breath, and without raising her head, 'does not know all of our family.'

A suterfuge was, I was confident, concealed in those words ; but after again and again urging her to confide in me, and finding warning and pursuasion alike useless, I withdrew discomfited and angry ; and withal as much concerned and grieved as baffled and indignant. On going out I arranged with the Governor that the brother, if he again made his appearance should be detained till my arrival. Our precaution was too late : he did not reappear ; and so little notice had any one taken of his person, that to advertise a description of him with a reward for his apprehension would be hopeless.

A true bill was found, and two hours afterwards Jane Eccles was placed in the dock. The trial did not last more than twenty minutes, at the end of which an unhesitating verdict of guilty was returend, and she was duly sentenced to be hanged by the neck until she was dead. We had retained the ablest council practing in the court, but, with no tangible defence their efforts were merely thrown sway.

Upon being asked what she had to say why the sentence of the law should not be carried into effect, she repeated her previous statement—that the notes had been given her to change by a person in whom she reposed the utmost confidence ; and that she had not the slightest thought of evil or fraud in what she did. That person, however, she repeated once more, could not be produced. Her assertions only excited a derisive smile ; and all the necessary forms of the court having been gone through, she was removed from the bar.

The unhappy woman bore the ordeal thro' which she had just passed with much firmness. Once only, while sentence was being passed, her high-strung resolution appeared to falter and give way. I was watching her intently, and I observed that she suddenly directed a piercing look towards a distant part of the crowded court. In a moment her eye lightened, and the expression of extreme horror which had momently darkened her countenance, passed away, and her partial composure returned. I had instinctively, as it were followed her glance, and thought I detected a tall man enveloped in a cloak engaged in dumb momentary communication with her. I jumped up from my seat, and hastened as quickly as I could through the thronged passages to the spot and looked eagerly around, but the man, whosoever it might be, was gone.

The next act in this sad drama, was the decision of the Privy Council upon the recorder's report. It came. Several were reprieved but amongst them was *not* Jane Eccles. She and nine others were to perish at eight o'clock on the following morning.

The anxiety and worry inseparable from this most unhappy affair, which, from Mr Flint's protracted absence, I had exclusively to bear fairly knocked me up, and on the evening of the day on which the decision of the council was received, I went to bed much earlier than usual, and really ill. Sleep I could not, and I was tossing restlessly about, vainly endeavoring to banish from my mind the gloomy and terrible images connected with the wretched girl and her swiftly coming fate, when a quick tap sounded on the door, and a servant's voice announced that one of the clerks had brought a letter which the superscription directed to be read without a moment's delay. I sprang out of the bed, snatched the letter, and eagerly ran it over. It was from the Newgate chaplain, a very worthy, humane gentleman, and stated that on hearing the result of the deliberations of the Privy Council, all the previous stoicism and fortitude exhibited by Jane Eccles had completely given way, and she had abandoned herself to