

LITERATURE, &c.

The British Magazines.

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 never 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 wholly passions swell,
As that melody of nature—
That subdued, subduing strain,
Which is played upon the shingles
By the patter of the rain.

From the London People's Journal.

THE SACRIFICE AND THE REWARD.

BY ELIZABETH O'HARA.

MAGDALEN and Clara Forrester were mother and daughter; though from the very youthful appearance of the latter, they were frequently taken for sisters, while they seemed equally to require the surveillance of Miss Hooper, Mrs. Forrester's maiden aunt, who had brought her up from infancy, and seemed only to live to worship her. Clara was a widow—a young, beautiful and wealthy widow, released from what was to her the matrimonial shackles. Can we imagine a happier being?

The late Mr. Forrester married his young wife when she was a child in mind and feelings while he was a stern old man—older than her father, primmer than her governess. She loved him because she was told to do so, and because, though harsh to all, he was ever gentle to her. But there was no congeniality between them, no interchange of thought; she was his petted darling not his wife; theirs was not the affection which survives death, which defies oblivion—theirs was not love. And when Mr. Forrester died, Clara, though properly shocked, wept but little more than when duty, some years previously, summoned him from his infant and his wife, and sent him into the remotest parts of India, while they remained in strict and dignified seclusion near Calcutta. Born and bred in that enervating clime, Clara, though naturally amiable, was a true specimen of the Asiatic. Her mind, like her body, had always listlessly reposed; her bearers carried her about; her doting aunt thought and acted for her. Her first joy was her child, her first grief was parting with her when the physician's words banished her to a more temperate clime. Clara supplicated for permission to accompany her treasure, but her husband was inexorable; he daily expected that he himself would soon be enabled to return to England, and would not allow his young wife to precede him. Year by year dragged on and still the Forresters were scattered about when death by claiming one united the others. The widow, then but thirty, hastened to complete her Indian affairs, and at length was restored to her beautiful Magdalen, then almost sixteen, and old enough to be companion and friend to her enraptured mother. It was thus we found them when we opened our story; and we hope this short preface will excuse them from blame, even when we own that their felicity; they might now be said to be enjoying perfect happiness.

Yes, even in this 'working day world' of ours there are moments of perfect unalloyed happiness; fleeting perhaps, but oh how sweet!—how their memory lingers with us, and throws a tinge over sadder moments! In joy we think not of sorrow to come; in our deepest misery, our severest trials, when struggling in poverty, when death, or the world and our own evil passions, have severed us from our nearest and dearest, still we

love to recall past scenes of enjoyment ere grief fell on us. Are we sufficiently grateful for this—for the antidotes a beneficent Creator has so beneficently scattered in our path. Still, enduring happiness is not the lot of man. Even in this case the storm was gathering to burst on their heads, the cloud was now but a speck on the horizon, while mother and daughter were equally unconscious of its approach. Miss Hooper, too, that careful guardian, where was she? Alas! even Argus once slept; and Miss Hooper was but an unsophisticated, unworldly maiden aunt.

This peril-fraught cloud rose in the person of Gerald Deane, a young and handsome man, a distant connection of Mr. Forrester, and as such, a constant visitor at his widow's. Clara loved society, but she was too happy, and, shall we say, too indolent to seek it; those who came were doubly welcome, and Gerald was soon domesticated in the family—a dangerous inmate, an intimacy fraught with perils to all. How was Gerald to encounter two lovely and agreeable women without yielding to their fascination, or, worse still, were they to meet him daily and familiarly, and yet not feel his influence? With him there really was safety in numbers; he sang with Magdalen or played chess with her mother as she lolled on her couch and indolently toyed with that scientific game, and scarce knew which employment was preferable. With all man's thoughtlessness in these matters, he yielded to the enjoyments of the moment, and cast not a thought beyond; with them it was very different. These are the cases in which woman bears a double portion of the curse; Magdalen could not blend her voice night after night with Gerald's, and feel his rich notes melt in hers, without danger to her peace of mind. What so seductive as music! You papas who demur at a waltz, and deprecate the proximity of polking, be assured there is far more to be feared from a duet. A flirtation trips on and off in a ball-room, and leaves a track as light as if on a sandy shore—the next wave washes it away, the next comer confuses it; but when we lean over the same instrument, when our voices and ideas have seemed to mingle, whatever happens, those cherished strains must recall that hour when, though but for a space, we were as one. Music is indeed a great bond. Chess, too, is dangerous; and Clara played oftener with Gerald than is quite safe for a pretty widow, even though she have a grown up daughter, when, as was the case with our friends, there were but very few years between the adversaries.

Gerald was seven or eight-and-twenty, an officer in the Indian army, returned on furlough. On his arrival in India he visited the Forresters rather frequently; and then Clara, in the dignity of her matronhood, treated the young ensign as a boy, and petted him as her kind husband's relative. Nor had she lost the habit when their respective stations were insensibly changed. She, from her quiet and luxurious life, had still preserved the freshness of her early beauty; and when Gerald was a man, and looked the veteran, and accomplished veteran, Clara was, in appearance and habits, a young woman. The disparity in their ages had disappeared; Gerald was now the protector, though each seemed unconscious of the change. So entirely so, that Magdalen, who had sprung forward with all the eastern precocity, never once dreamt that Gerald could look on her mother with a lover's eye; and thus she went on innocently forming an altar where he was enshrined and worshipped. Mother and daughter thus were rivals though innocently and unsuspectingly.

It is said that lookers on see most of the game; but then they must be both impartial and uninterested. Now Miss Hooper was far from this: with all woman's sometimes senseless self-devotion, her whole life had been spent in adoring Clara. Her only sister died in giving birth to this idol; and from the day when the aunt first clasped the infant darling in her arms, she had no thought but for her happiness—in this world, only alas! her mind soared no higher. She had refused numberless handsome offers that she might watch over her idol. In her narrow estimate of good, she had perhaps marred her fate. She it was who contrived this wealthy match for Clara; wealth and station were the first requisites with her, and now that her niece had secured these, her next was to gratify her heart, and not see her a second time married to one whom she could not love. She had been almost jealous of Clara's love for her baby, since it was a pleasure in which she could not share; and though Magdalen now was dear to her, it was only a reflection of Clara; Magdalen's interests must ever be subservient to her pampered darling's; and then Miss Hooper would again play the same self-sacrificing part for this younger Clara—again immolate herself before their shrine.

Gerald might at present, without disparagement to either party, almost be compared to a certain animal between two bundles of hay; and yet if he had a preference it was for Magdalen. She was better educated, and of a finer and higher tone of character than her mother; and yet so artless, enjoying everything so thoroughly. Now an enthusiastic woman, well-judging and eloquent; now a child, romping, literally romping with her dog; shouting with laughter amongst a band of merry children; or scrambling in the hedges for wild flowers; or dancing down a solemn partner in the polka. When such a girl does not degenerate into the tomboy, she is irresistible with most men; there is something so exhilarating in graceful activity! Who does not like to watch a kitten bound-

ing about, or a lamb frisking in the exuberance of youth and life? Gerald, therefore, though he sincerely admitted Clara, was more inclined to love Magdalen; and had not so guarded himself but that the latter was silently conscious of his preference. There is something delightful in that state of—no, not uncertainty—when we feel that we are loved though no avowal has passed; when we give ourselves up to our new feelings, well aware that they are reciprocated, though our secret is still unsuspected by others, and we are spared the torments of publicity. Then it is that we treasure up half-words, looks, tones, that cannot be repeated even to a mother, and yet are a confirmation as strong as holy writ to us, though perhaps in themselves nothing.

This was Magdalen's position; she loved, she felt that she was loved, but the love on either side was unavowed; and unsuspected by Clara, who was beginning to feel a warm attachment for Gerald. It was the first time that she had thus been thrown into the society of a young and highly gifted man, and we must not wonder if she yielded to his influence. She little thought that Magdalen was her successful rival; and being accustomed from infancy to consider herself and her own attractions paramount, received his attentions with undisguised pleasure, believing them intended for herself; while he and her daughter supposed that she was actuated by other sentiments, and was countenancing their attachment. Miss Hooper was more clear sighted; she at length perceived the situation of the parties, and determined to put an end to their suspense. She accordingly one day, when alone with Magdalen, began by asking her if she had noticed the great change in her mother's looks.

'In mama's looks! Surely—no, my dear aunt—surely, surely you do not think she is ill?'

No, not ill, perhaps Magdalen at present; but I fear for her: her mind is very uneasy. Poor thing! her's has been a life of great trial!

'Of trial, aunt? I cannot, I do not understand you. I always fancied mama had been so happy, except in parting with me and losing dear papa; and now, surely we are all very happy. What can you mean, my dear aunt?'

'Yes—you, like others, Magdalen, only judge by appearance. Because your dear mother has been exempt from poverty, you conclude that she can never have known sorrow; and yet what has her life been? Look at her—a young and lovely woman, married when a child! Your father was a kind and good man, Magdalen; still he was many years older than his wife—no companion for her. But even his presence was denied her. Separated from him and from her child, she was condemned to a lonely life for many years; and now that she is at length entering into society for, which she is so well fitted, I begin to fear for her peace of mind.'

'Aunt!'

'Yes; you cannot be so blind as not see the impression Mr. Deane's attentions have made on her.'

'Attentions to mama!'

'And why not to your mother, my dear child. Is she not still very young and beautiful?'

'She is, indeed—but—but—I do not think that Gerald—Mr. Deane is paying her attentions.'

'Then for whom are they meant?—for me? I know enough of the world to feel assured that a young man like Captain Deane does not visit a house like ours daily without ulterior views. Were not your poor mother so unprotected, if she had any male relations this should be looked into. Something must be done; your mother's happiness must not be sacrificed. I can see that she is daily becoming more attached to Mr. Deane, and no wonder; he is a most delightful young man, and his attentions are unmistakable. But he does not declare himself; and I can see how Clara suffers from his silence. I must take some steps.'

'No, no; don't aunt; don't dear aunt,' Magdalen gasped out. 'Do not compromise mama's name by interference. If it be as you say, he will speak—but there must be some mistake.'

If there be a mistake, it is one that is killing your mother.'

Magdalen wept in agony. In her inmost heart she felt that Gerald loved her—that he had paid her mother no more attentions than were her due; still he had never said anything. She was young and inexperienced; could her vanity have misled her? But even if she were right in her conjecture—if Gerald did love her—then her mother's happiness was wrecked; for she must love him. Who could see him so often and not love him? Oh, it was misery, misery everywhere.

'It will kill your mother, Magdalen,' Miss Hooper repeated. 'She has never loved till now. I know her well: she is no child, fancying an attachment in every passing fancy: she loves. I know you have a sort of prepossession for Mr. Deane; but your feelings cannot equal your mother's in intensity. She has no suspicion of your penchant; if she had she would sacrifice herself to it and make Mr. Deane miserable; for, after all, you are quite unfitted for him; there is such a disparity of age between you—you are scarcely sixteen, he nearly thirty.' (Artful Miss Hooper! you understood addition and subtraction well.) 'Depend upon it, a marriage between you would be for the happiness of neither; and it is for that reason that I speak to you in time.'

These wily words rang like a knell in Magdalen's ears. How tell her aunt—that plain

spoken personage—that she loved Gerald better than life!—how doom her mother to hopeless misery! Her resolve was taken: Gerald had all but declared himself to her; she knew that that very evening was to have decided his fate—they were to have strolled to some favorite haunt; and she felt, with woman's intuition, that he would then say the words she so longed yet dreaded to hear. And now that those words must not be spoken, he must be led to her mother's feet. Her peace of mind must not be destroyed: come what may she must be spared.

Gerald came—his lingering hesitation dispelled. Full of Magdalen, he found her, cold, haughty, coquettish; while her mother was still unchanged. For the first time, she assumed the air of the heiress and beauty; and her lover thought that she wished to try her power. Never had she been so disagreeable, nay, almost impertinent. Clara was surprised, and, almost hurt at this new manner, strove to atone for it by renewed kindness to its victim. It became indeed a relief to him to turn from the capricious Magdalen to the kind and gentle Clara.

Miss Hooper, too, played her part with consummate art. She invited a distant relation, a titled and rich man, to the house, with whom Magdalen appeared to be wholly occupied; while Gerald stood aloof in indignant jealousy. This was the severest trial to the poor girl. She wished that he should cease to love her, but to respect her, no. Was it not hard for her to look on unmoved, to hide her real feelings, to assume another character, and see her mother daily winning from her the heart she had so gloried to call her own? Yet she bore all this, and smiled on and on, while those around thought her happy and envied her lot. Ah, we know our own trials: how little do we guess the unspeakable sufferings others undergo.

At length Clara became Gerald's bride. Magdalen bore up to the last; she heard Gerald take that solemn vow which once she thought would have bound him to her; she offered her cheek to his paternal embrace while it still glistened with her mother's tears—then her strength gave way.

'Love me; pray, pray love me!' she murmured, as they bore her senseless from the room. Some called this affection, others praised her warmth of feeling; few dreamt of the meaning of those bitter words, her mother least of all; she followed her in great agitation, begging her husband to assure their child that she must always be their dearest daughter—that her mother could never loose her affection for her in her new ties.

Now that all was over, and Clara's wishes satisfied, Miss Hooper had leisure to think of the gentle, uncomplaining sufferer, and none could be kinder or more earnest in their sympathy than she.

Time and change of scene do wonders; the very feeling that an evil is irrevocable resigns us to it; and Magdalen's mind and spirits were in some degree returned to their former tone when she was once more summoned to her mother's side. Clara was ill—a little stranger was expected; she was fond, very fond of her daughter, though she was now no longer her first object; and Gerald—his whole thoughts were centered in his wife and her hoped-for child. Perhaps it was all well; for Magdalen, finding herself so entirely a secondary object, gradually ceased to regret her loss, while her mother's evident happiness was her best reward.

At last a day of joy and suffering, of anxiety and pride, arrived—an heir was born to Gerald Deane; and as Magdalen clasped the tiny, precious form in her arms, and saw even the father's triumph lost in the husband's emotion, not one regret crossed her. She kissed her baby-brother, and felt she had acquired a new tie in the world—that she had another being to love.

We have seen her sacrifice, where was her reward?—in her mother's joyous looks; in that happy home; in her aunt's increased affection; in her own approving conscience. Her trial was great, her reward was unutterably sweet. But, to those who look for worldly rewards also, for poetical justice (alas! too often poetical!) we will just say that Magdalen is now herself a joyful wife and mother, in a rank far more elevated than her mother's, and mistress of far greater wealth. Still, she will never forget her first great trial, nor the recompense that ever attends a self-sacrificing spirit!

A TOUCHING INCIDENT.

I went one day to see a comedy. The chief actor was a favorite one, and the theatre was very crowded. The curtain drew up, and amid a burst of applause, the hero of the piece made his appearance. He had hardly uttered twenty words when it struck me that something strange was the matter with him. The play was a boisterous comedy of the old school, and required considerable spirit and vivacity in the actors to sustain it properly; but in this man there was none; he walked and talked like a person in a dream; his best points he passed over without appearing to perceive them; and altogether he appeared quite unfitted for the part. His smile was ghastly, his laugh hollow and unnatural; and frequently he would stop suddenly in his speech, and let his eye wander vacantly over the audience.

Even when, in his character of a silly husband, he had to suffer himself to be kicked about the stage, by the young rake of the comedy, and afterwards to behold that careless individual making love to his wife, and eating his supper while he was shut up in a closet, from whence he could not emerge, his contortions of ludicrous wrath, which had never before failed to call down plenty of ap-