

LITERATURE, &c.

The British Magazines.

From the London Family Economist.

THE BOY.

BY N. F. WILLIS.

There's something in a noble boy,
A brave, free-hearted, guileless one,
With his unchecked, unbidden joy;
His dread of books and love of fun,
And in his clear and ready smile,
Unshaded by a thought of guile
And unexpress'd by sadness—
Which brings to my childhood back,
As if I trod its very track,
And felt its very gladness.

And yet it is not in his play,
When every trace of thought is lost,
And not when you would call him gay
That his bright presence thrills me
most;
His shout may ring upon the hill,
His voice be echoed in the hall,
His merry laugh like music trill,
And I in sadness hear it all,—
For, like the wrinkles on my brow,
I scarcely notice such things now,—
But when, amidst the earnest game,
He stops as if he music heard,
And heedless of his shouted name,
As of the carol of a bird,
Stands gazing on the empty air,
As if some dream were passing there.

'Tis then that on his face I look,
His beautiful but thoughtful face,
And like a long forgotten book,
Its sweet familiar meanings trace,
Remembering a thousand things
Which passed me on those golden wings
Which time has fettered now,—
Things that come o'er me with a thrill,
And left me silent, sad, and still,
And threw upon my brow
A holier and a gentler cast,
That was too innocent to last.

'Tis strange how thoughts upon a child
Will, like a presence, something press,
And when his pulse is beating wild,
And life itself is in excess,—
When foot and hand, and ear and eye,
Are all with ardour straining high,—
How in his heart will spring
A feeling, whose mysterious thrall
Is stronger, sweeter far than all;
And on its silent wing,
How with the clouds, he'll float away,
As wandering and as lost as they!

From the London People's Journal.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE.

AN ILLUSTRATION.

By Clara Walbey.

ROSENFORD Lodge—built in the cottage style, though somewhat spacious, bright with the vermilion berries of the Indian thorn, and yet more sweetly decorated by a delicate bloom or two of the monthly rose—stood encircled with flower gardens, and shrubberies, on the brow of a gentle eminence, which by graceful sweeps and undulations descended to the lofty and threatening cliffs that guarded, in that portion of the western coast, the ocean, distant about a mile, and of which the parlor window commanded a fine view. Now, however, the crimson curtains were closely drawn, for it was a cold and wintery evening; the fire glowed with more than its wonted brightness, its brilliance reflected by the small polished urn placed on a small circular table at a comfortable proximity to the fire, and from which the hissing steam rose in tiny spiral clouds, a large lamp shed a subdued lustre through the pleasant apartment—mentally as well as physically pleasant, for no cold precision, no chilling absence of literary sustenance, repelled the hungering spirit; books, work, and writing implements were placed within reach of divers comfortable nooks or recesses, not littered in unbecoming confusion around; the piano stood open as if to invoke the presence and assistance of the breathing spirit of occult harmonies; and a small happy circle had drawn their chairs around the table, on which was spread the simple but inviting evening meal. Tea, coffee, preserves, cakes, and the finest bread and butter, formed the repast, for Miss Rosenford and her orphan nieces did not forget culinary accomplishments, though versed in others more refined; not indeed from any epicurean tastes—far from it; but from an inherent love of perfect nicety and cleanliness, and a benevolent wish to contribute to the comforts of others; neither their means or inclinations allowing them to keep a proficient cook, (too generally an extravagant and self-sufficient person); while they bestowed considerable annual sums in procuring employment and instruction for the necessitous, and those little luxuries and attentions for the sick which to them are virtually necessities.

Miss Rosenford was a fine, tall woman of nearly forty; no silver streaks marred the lustre of her raven hair, no cares or griefs had dimmed the serene radiance of her beautiful dark eyes; her lofty brow was still fair and but faintly traced by years, and her cheek brightly tinted by health and contentment. Gertrude, her elder niece, strikingly resembled her aunt, though the paler tint of her cheek, and the somewhat finer chiselling of her features and form, gave her a more classical appearance; while her sister, Amy,

was a perfect sunbeam of hope and happiness—flowers seemed to spring up around her path, perpetual spring to follow her footsteps. But just fifteen, the wreath of youthfulness glowed brightly and freshly on her fair brow, yet beneath all her volatility were hidden the deep founts of imperishable affection, and her aunt and sister were to her generous nature far more than self; the abstract principle of selfishness was unrecognised, the practice never resorted to, and she literally breathed, thought, and grew in the sunny atmosphere of reflected happiness.

'What did you mean, dear aunt,' said Gertrude, after the tea equipage had been removed, and they had comfortably settled around the fire for the evening, 'by saying this morning to Mr Weydon that philosophy and religion were more nearly assimilated than was generally supposed, and that the former was ever ruled by and consequent upon the latter?'

It must be explained that Mr Weydon, a benevolent neighbor, had called to make some enquiries respecting the character of an old servant of Miss Rosenford whom misfortune had rendered destitute, in order that he might procure her some situation if it appeared that she merited it.

'I meant, my dear, that there is no science or principle of science independent of, or inimical to, religion; formed from its immutable basis, each, as its truths are unveiled, contributes its glorious pillars to its support. Thus such compassion, forgiveness of injuries and self-sacrifices as are enjoined in the scriptures, however exaggerated they may appear to worldly eyes, cannot be unphilosophical; and no theories, however irradiated with earthly glory, can possibly be true that are inherently hostile to its inculcations.'

'I think I understand that,' said Amy; 'but you also spoke of certain passages in your own life which first drew your attention to this; might we ask you to relate them, dear aunt? I should like much to hear them.'

'So should I,' said Gertrude, 'if it would not be disagreeable to narrate them.'

'Not disagreeable, certainly, my bres, though perhaps a little painful; but I do not regard that, since it may be useful to you to trace the effects of circumstances on the mind of another. Nay, Amy, do not interrupt me; I had resolved to enter into this detail some time or other—so let us begin. My early life was passed, as you are already aware, at Esenton Park, which my father inherited soon after his marriage from a distant relative. Not seeing much of him—for he spent a considerable portion of his time from home—or of my brother, whose leisure hours, whenever he left school for a brief holiday, were generally monopolised by his father, who was exceedingly proud of his handsome features and classical attainments—my sole friend, companion, instructor, was my mother; and it was fortunate for me that I was thus confided entirely to her care by those then inscrutable decrees which deprived me of a father's affection; for she appears to me to have been all that was most amiable, self-sacrificing and high principled; and I cannot even now dwell upon her fate with composure. She died when I was seventeen, more I fear from grief than physical causes, and her parting injunctions and latest farewell were indelibly impressed, by the merciful hand of sorrow, upon my memory; but alas, they were soon disregarded, though never forgotten; and after some months of inconsolable grief, I flew to the other extreme, and endeavored to solace myself by a constant whirl of fashionable diversion, for we were then residing in London for the season. I became proud, coquettish and imperious, refusing several offers for my hand from my equals in rank and fortune merely because I aspired higher; a sister of my father's, who lived with us, all the while flattering and encouraging my fatal ambition) and among them one from a Mr Rosse, who interested me more than I dared to confess to myself, for he was inferior in the sordid estimate of worldly wisdom, though far superior in the sterling qualities of the mind. Yet I scorned him by look and word. Never shall I forget the proud yet patient grief depicted on his fine intellectual countenance as he listened to my haughty refusal. He left me without a word. I would even then have recalled him, for I dreaded to lose him entirely and forever, but I fancied something of pity was mingled with his last mournful gaze, and I could not brook that he should dare to express such a feeling for me; besides vanity and hope combined to flatter me that he would even yet return. But I saw him, heard of him no more, save that he had quitted England a few days after our last interview. The night that followed his wordless farewell was rendered remarkable by a dream that changed the current of my after life—not that I believe for an instant that there was anything at all supernatural in it; but because I consider that dreams, as well as other minute incidents and occurrences in our lives, may be instruments in the hands of an all-wise Creator for our instruction and improvement. For some time after I retired to rest, my anxious and half-remorseful feelings rendered it impossible for me to sleep; and when at last I sank into slumber, my mind appeared to be a perfect chaos of memory, hope and despondency. Now a heavy gloom, an atmosphere of sepulchral night, seemed to oppress me even to suffocation, from which looked forth the pallid, expressionless visages of the dead: now I listened to the approach of an awful tempest, the winds appearing mighty presences unshaped, undefined, careering with vengeance through the shadowy sky, guiding the levin that scorched and withered as it fell not material, but immaterial creations; not the flower, the tree, or the temple, but the affections, trusts and aspirations, and awaken

the echoes of the earthless thunder. Then a delightful spring-breeze, redolent with celestial perfume, and glowing with prismatic hues of heaven—a thought, a feeling of beauty—would pass over me, and voices of infantine sweetness and gladness float by.

Suddenly, however, my thoughts became concentrated. I found myself in a gorgeous minster—ethereal music was wafted high above; banners waved over the ancient tombs; flashes of lightning seemed to penetrate the obscurities of time, and reveal the history of the illustrious dead; while the awful voice of the reverberating thunder appeared to call them forth from their echoing vaults. Slowly and silently a tomb opened as I gazed, and a female figure stepped forth robed in the garments of the dead. Soundlessly and with solemn pace she advanced; and as she raised her head towards me, I recognised my mother! Her face was pale and shrunken as when I last beheld her; her eye as lustreless, and her whole mein bore the indescribable, unmistakable aspect of death. With a convulsive sob of anguish I was hastening towards her, when a gesture forbade my approach. She spoke; and her voice, though scarcely audible, almost stunned me with its intensity of meaning; while each word seemed to occupy at least a minute in pronunciation, and to resound in unnumbered echoes:—

'Thou hast loved me, but hast thou listened to my counsels? How many hours, days, years, have passed away; yet what treasures hast thou stored for an approaching eternity?—solemnly and swiftly time treads his allotted and limited course.'

Again the music, which had ceased when she first opened her lips, swelled in mournful and unearthly anthems of the past. The banners waved, the lightnings gleamed broadly, the thunders rolled, and the minster grew dimmer and dimmer, until it faded from my vision, and I found myself on a vast plain. An everlasting, dissolving, and renewing panorama surrounded me, encompassing me entirely, while I yet seemed independent and invisible. On one side was a rugged, sterile spot, where nothing save phantoms of misery and contagious mortality were gliding recklessly about, without purpose, without hope. On another a mighty city arose in splendour and in pomp: statues were being erected, crowns of fame worn, and paeans sung to the spirit of earthly happiness. Farther from the centre of my viewless position, glowed a circle of tranquil and bewitching loveliness; where the sun-beam loved to tarry, the zephyr to revel in perfume: where the rose loved to lift its beauteous head, and the honeysuckle to twine its fairy wreaths; and where Peace delighted to linger, entranced in holy contemplation. Yet farther appeared an ocean, whose vengeful and thunderous billows seemed to sweep the clouds in their ungoverned fury. But even while I gazed the scene changed, the flowers drooped and withered, the sun-beam passed behind a cloud, the Boreas blast that had invoked the ocean tempest swept on to the devoted haunt of beauty, leaving the troubled-deep to a fitful and dreamy repose, strewn as it was with the mortal relics of destruction. I turned to the magnificent city:—its statues were defaced, its pillars shattered, its temples crumbled beneath the touch of Decay, who waved exultingly his dank green pennons over each stately dome and tower, while a rival city lifted its haughty crest in insulting proximity! My eyes sought again the barren and dismal plain. Sterile it was still, and dreary and repulsive; but instead of victims of want, suffering and death, angels of joy and hope seemed to inhabit it. They bore a snow-white standard, as they marched onwards over the rugged hills, the marshy moors, through the black ravines and mountain gorges, wading the brooks, and stemming the floods; and on this banner was inscribed, in woven in living light, the words FAITH, OBEDIENCE, ETERNITY: and as they progressed steadily I could see that their gaze was intently, immovably fixed on a bright line in the horizon; which, as I continued to gaze, expanded and brightened until I could see a land of indescribable, unimaginable glory! At the same moment the air seemed teeming with choral voices of inexpressible sweetness. And strange to relate, the words even now linger in my mind that went floating on in a silver stream of harmony:—

Weave a coronal meet for Hope!
No blooms of the perishing earth,
No gems of evanishing worth,
Twine in its boundless scope!

Seek gems of fathomless soul—
Wherever Compassion hath wept,
And Sin in its penitence slept,
And pride learned a prouder control;

And Duty victorious striven,
Resignation smiled over her woes,
And Patience endured to the close,
And the fetters of crime have been riven.

And Faith then shall hallow the wreath,
And Time shall pass o'er it in vain;
And Decay with his myriad train
Never herald the footsteps of Death!

With the last sound I awoke. The sun was shining brilliantly through my windows; but the remembrance of my dream had cast a shadow over my mind; and I wept bitterly and regretfully—feeling that I had rejected the only friend who would have sympathised with my awakened griefs and troubled and undefined aspirations for the future—who would have assisted to nurture and rear to perfection my new-born anticipations of excellence.

For some years after this time long and

difficult was the struggle between my ancient pride and the dawning of religious feelings; but by degrees the good triumphed over the evil, and I began to perceive the comprehensiveness of revelation; that it extends to every thought, feeling, motive, action; that no days, hours, moments, can be independent of it; no avocations, no beliefs; and that true philosophy consists in the practice of referring everything to, and ruling everything by, its decision, interpreted alone by humble and obedient lips.

Months passed away at the lodge with the same ever recurring routine of pleasant duties, and the same noble thirst for improvement that ever engrossed and characterised minds that can soar above the present; though not that Fame may claim them as her adopted children, not that Ambition may present the cup that ever excites the thirst it endeavors to quench, not that Wealth may bestow its double-edged sword of power; but that in the bestowment of time, and talent, and worldly riches, they may stand acquitted of indolence and evil in the sight of the Omnipotent Ruler of all creation. No misfortunes had marred the sweet serenity of their mental course—no gems of fortune had decorated their physical existence.

The month of June had set in with almost unparalleled heat and sultriness; when about three o'clock one morning the family were awakened by loud and reiterated peals of thunder, now awfully rolling in stupendous waves of sound, as from horizon to horizon—now in the very zenith terrifically exploding, and echoing among the distant reverberating cliffs.

Incessantly and fiercely the lightning gleamed over sea, rock and sky, irradiating them with wild, unearthly brilliancy; while mournfully and imploringly, at every brief cessation of the elementary war, came the faint roll of minute guns, sounding like a voice of death from the ocean sepulchres. Shocked at the thought of the imminent peril that must threaten the vessel, Miss Rosenford and her nieces were soon prepared and on their way to the neighboring village, attended by a man servant who slept in the house, to endeavor to procure assistance for the unfortunate passengers and crew of the apparently devoted ship. The early grey of the morning had just reached the heavens, while the downs still looked dark and gloomy between the electric flashes, which gradually grew less and less frequent as they proceeded.

The large rain drops fell heavily but thinly, and the wind evidently began to abate as they reached the village, which was situated very near the cliffs and under the shelter of a shelving declivity.

The one neat, though small, street was thronged with anxious inhabitants, all speculating on the probable fate of the vessel, for no boat had yet ventured out. The manifest assuaging of the winds and waters, however, in a degree restored the confidence of the boatmen; and they stood irresolute and undetermined, wishing, yet fearing to push off, when Miss Rosenford arrived.

The loan of a boat which she kept on the spot in readiness for such contingencies, stronger and better fitted for the arduous undertaking than their own, which had seen long and hard service, with a few words of encouragement, joined to the promise of an ample reward if they succeeded in rescuing the imperilled voyagers, quickly decided them; and the boat rowed off amidst the enthusiastic cheers of the assembled crowd.

Slowly and anxiously passed the time before the boat could possibly return with its living freight; but as the vessel had fortunately struck near the shore, ere very long they had the inexpressible satisfaction and comfort of seeing the boat re-appear, laden with passengers from the distressed ship. In its second transit the boat was again filled; and the men being now inspirited by success, in a comparatively short period the whole of the passengers, officers, and crew, were safely landed—the vessel almost immediately going to pieces. One only of the passengers accepted Mrs Rosenford's invitation to save whatever of their property might be washed on shore by the heaving surges.

This person was scarcely English in appearance, though his voice and pronunciation proclaimed him to be such, so darkened and tawnyed was he by the suns and services of the south; which, however, could not conceal the intellectual expression of his countenance. Above the standard height, his form was yet unbending; and his erectness typified the unbending spirit within. He appeared taciturn from long habits of observation and reflection; and, happily, on the present occasion from choice. He spoke but little on the way, merely uttering a monosyllabic reply or two to unevadable questions or remarks; and as soon as he arrived, declining all refreshments, he begged to be allowed to rest himself for a few hours. Many hours, however, elapsed, and still he appeared not. The evening had tracked its way of light over the glistening waters, and had sunk beneath the horizon-waves; and night appeared enrobed like a bride in her pale mantle and myriad sparkling gems. Miss Rosenford gazed long and admiringly at the beautiful pageant of nature; but at length, with some anxiety respecting her guest, whom she still felt reluctant to disturb, retired to rest. Immediately afterwards her maid brought her a note from the stranger, somewhat vague in its expression of thanks and apologies, and expressing his intention of passing her house on his way to a neighboring seaport in a short time, and of then thanking her in person for her hospitali-