

LITERATURE, &c.

From Hogg's Instructor.

TALK WITH TIME AT THE CLOSE OF THE YEAR.

BY MRS. SIGOURNEY.

TIME, old time with the forelock grey,
While the year in its dotage doth pass away,
Come sit by my hearth, ere the embers fail,
And hang the scythe on yon empty nail,
And tell me a tale 'neath this wintry sky
Of the deeds thou hast done as its months
swept by.

'I have cradled the babe in the churchyard
wide;
From the husband's arms I have taken the
bride;
I have cloven a path through the ocean's
floor,
Where many have sunk to return no more!
I have humbled the strong with their daunt-
less breast,
And laid the old with his staff to rest.

'I have loosen'd the stone on the ruin's
height,
Where the curtaining ivy grew rank and
driest;
I have startled the maid in her couch of
down,
With a sprinkle of white 'mid her tresses
brown;
I have rent from his idols the proud man's
hold,
And scatter'd the hoard of the miser's gold!

'Is this all? Are thy chronicles traced
alone
On the riven heart and the burial stone?
'No, love's young chain I have twined with
flowers,
Have awaken'd a song in the rose-crown'd
bower's;
Proud trophies have reared to the sons of
fame,
And paved the road for the cars of flame.

Look to yon child, it hath learn'd of me
The word that it lisps at the mother's knee;
Look to the sage, who from me hath caught
Intenser fire for his heavenward thought;
Look to the saint who hath nearer trod
T'ward the angel hosts near the throne of
God.

I have planted seeds in the soul that bear
The fruits of Heaven in a world of care;
I have breathed on the tear till its orb grew
bright,
As the diamond drop in the realms of light;
Question thy heart, hath it e'er confest
A germ so pure or a tear so blest?

But the clock struck twelve from the stee-
ple grey,
And he seized his hour-glass, and strode
away;
Yet his hand at parting I feared to clasp,
For I saw the scythe in its earnest grasp,
And read in the glance of his upward eye
His secret league with eternity.

From the Boston Waverley Magazine.

A TALE OF PASSION.

A MANUSCRIPT FOUND IN A RECLUSE'S
CAVE.

By George Wentworth.

How is it with me to day. Ten years
have passed since I last heard the voice of
man. Ten years since the day that decided
me to make this solitude my home. Since
then, at least I have been undisturbed. If a
sound comes up from those who occasionally
visit the lake below me, I shrink back to my
cave and hide from them. At night, when
the world sleeps, I climb these mountains or
wander along the shores of these waters, in
search of that which will sustain me through
the day. I seldom see a human face—I am
never seen, except by those wild animals that
frequent my mountain home. Well, another
ten years, or perhaps twenty, and then I shall
have followed on to the grave! I sometimes
think I would be buried by her side; but no!
the cavern which is my palace shall be my
sepulchre! What can the departed soul feel
then? Can it think or know what happens
to the flesh? Can it revisit those it leaves?
What is it that whispers in my ear when I
sleep—that hovers over me in my waking
moments? Is it the spirit of her—I am forbid-
den to speak her name—that comes to me in
the elements, and whispers of re-union, of
happiness, where storms reach not, and sor-
rows are unknown? Come, come, blessed
hope, we have long been strangers!

Ten years, I said, have passed, since I bade
adieu to the world, and came to this desolate
spot. But my memory stretches farther into
the past—my life began not there. Once I
was happy as the happiest, and gay as the
gayest. These white locks were dark as
night and flowed over an unwrinkled brow.
The heart that beat beneath—fresh and glo-
rious in life's unsullied morning, was all un-
clouded then.

She was a pure and beautiful being. I re-
member her as she was ere the blast of a too-
killing sorrow had blown rudely upon her.—
She was my sister—my only sister; and I
used to watch her in her early youth, and lis-
ten to her childish prattle, till my heart swel-
led with rapture. Her blue eyes were ever
pensive—sometimes I see them now in the
bright waters that glitter below me—and they
seemed to mirror the future. When I gazed
into them a sad visitor would knock at my

heart and warn me of the fate of the child.
Oh! how I loved her, and how bitter the blow
that robbed her from me!

She smiled amid her tears, when, long
years ago, I bade adieu to my home and hers,
to spend a season at a distant University. I
left my white haired father with the wife of
his old age, and their child. I asked myself
what would be the future of that young girl?
—how would she be placed when next we
met?—but I thought not hers would be a life
of other than of sunshine and joy.

Many times were my gloomy hours at
school beguiled by a kind letter from my
home. They came, laden with love, and I
drank in every word. But at last, after a
long silence which continued till I shuddered
with a shadowy presentiment, a letter arrived.
The large black seal gave confirmation to my
fears, and as I opened it, my hands shook
with terror. Great God! what a shock!
Even now, when my blood flows sluggishly
in my withered veins, the thought of that
hour makes it boil! The letter was from my
parents, telling me that Ellen, my sister El-
len, had suddenly disappeared from her home,
and that, though every search had been made,
no tidings could be obtained of the lost one.
They knew she was dead, at least they knew
hers was no voluntary flight, for she had
never been more gentle, never more affec-
tionate. The letter concluded by urging me
to return to my now desolate home, to soothe
the agony of the bereaved ones.

I stood again at the threshold of that home,
which, but a brief season before, I had left
so joyous and happy. How changed was
everything now. There was no cheerful
voice to bid me welcome, no ringing laugh
resounded through the halls. I arrived but
just in time to follow a broken-hearted mother
to her last long home. And the old man lin-
gered not long. For a time his tottering steps
were heard, but soon he followed the partner
of his old age to the grave. I wept not when
I saw the cold clod cover him, for I knew he
had exchanged the woes of a too-sorrowful
existence, for the rest of the weary and the
heavy laden.

I left my home, and sought to drown my
sorrows in the excitements of a city life. Fal-
lacious hope! Each splendor was a bauble,
each hope a mockery. A year had I thus
spent when one bitter cold night I found my-
self passing up N— Street. Soon I arrived
opposite Tammany Hall. There were sounds
of gaiety within. It was the night of a pub-
lic ball. I paused for a moment, the sleet
driving furiously into my face, when I heard
an exclamation near me. I turned, and saw
beneath the shadow of the building a misera-
ble woman, with a child in her arms. I
was passing, when she exclaimed:

'Oh God! will he not speak to me?
Perhaps she is suffering thought I; it
would be wrong to leave her. I turned and
offered her my purse.

'No, no,' she cried, 'I am not a beggar.
I would ask another favor—go with me to
my home. I have much to say to you—
much of bitterness, of horror—and then, per-
haps you will learn to pity.'

Tears choked her utterance—she could
say no more. I was strangely interested in
the poor woman, and buttoning my coat high
in the neck, I bade her lead the way. I al-
most repented of my resolution, when she
turned towards one of the most degraded sec-
tions of the city; however, I decided to go
on. In a few moments she paused before
the door of a wretched hovel, and leading the
way, bade me follow.

I seated myself on the only stool which the
miserable room afforded. The woman re-
moved her bonnet, and then, turning towards
me, said:

'You do not know me, then! Alas! am I
so changed?

I looked again. A terrible idea seized my
mind. Could it be—was I deceived? She
spoke again—it was but a syllable—Great
God! it was my Ellen!

It was indeed my sister, but oh! how
changed. Sorrow and suffering had done its
work. The vermilion of her cheek was
gone—they were pale and sunken. Her eyes
still sparkled, but with an unnatural light.
She gazed wildly at me for a moment, and
then exclaimed:

'Brother! brother! will you not speak to
me?'

'Yes! Ellen—sister—lost, but still loved
sister, come to my arms once more, and let
me clasp you as I did in better, brighter, and
happier days.'

I attempted to kiss her but she gently
motioned me away.

'No, no,' she cried, 'touch me not. I am
indeed your lost Ellen, whom you used to
call your sister, but I am not the Ellen of
those happy days. Scorn me, brother, curse
me, for I am lost!

Great God! what chilling words. My brain
reeled—my blood rushed madly through my
veins—I grew dizzy, and had almost fallen.
Long my parched tongue refused to speak,
and when at last I found utterance, it was
only a hoarse and discordant croaking.

'No, no, Ellen—sister. Do not say that.
Anything—anything but that,' I said, striv-
ing to shut out the horrible thought from my
mind.

'Yes, I am a creature of shame and infamy;
and this poor child is the offspring of my
sin.' The child moaned faintly, as if to at-
test the terrible truth. 'Now, brother, you
know me. Curse me if you will—I can bear
it all.'

'No, Ellen. I will not, I do not curse you,
sinful though you may have been; let me
clasp you to my heart, and think of you on-
ly as the sister and companion of my child-
hood.'

I could say no more. The flood-gates of

my soul were let loose, and he who seldom
wept, bowed down in the weakness of tears.
We were long silent, and she was the first
to speak:

'Brother,' she said. 'I feel I am dying.—
The span of my life is brief—my breath is
growing shorter.—But tell me before I go,
are our poor parents yet alive, and do they
ever think of me?'

'Alas! no,' I replied, 'your mother sank
immediately after you left her, and your fa-
ther survived her but a short time. They
sleep together in the grave. But, sister, they
are happier than we, and it is wrong to
mourn them. And now,' I continued, 'tell
me how you came to leave your home so
strangely, and why you are in this wretched
place.'

'I will answer you, my brother, and Hea-
ven give me strength to do it. It is a sad
tale—a tale of sin and its reward.—Do you
remember the little lake hard by our home?
I was sailing there one day in my little boat,
when it was overturned by accident, and I
was precipitated into the water. I should
certainly have been drowned, but for the ef-
forts of a young man who was passing at the
time, who flew to my rescue, and at the haz-
ard of his life saved mine. Oh that he had
left me to perish in the beautiful lake, rather
than to have reserved me for these tortures.'

'My preserver was beautiful and noble, and
instinctively I learned to love him. I could
not have done less. He never visited our
house, although I frequently urged him to do
so. He preferred to meet me away, and so
yielding to his earnest entreaties, I met him
clandestinely. I knew not my own danger
till I was already lost—then the terrible truth
burst upon me. In my anguish I begged
him to make me his wife. He could not do
it then, but promised marriage before my
shame should be known.

'Soon after this, my lover left our village,
and returned to his home in this city. Find-
ing concealment longer impossible, I deter-
mined to follow him. Oh, 'twas a bitter
night when I arrived—and I knew I was
alone and friendless. Had some pitying an-
gel guarded me then, I might still have been
saved.

'I knew not where to search for my be-
trayer, but despair added energy to my labor.
I found him, and on my knees implored him
to save me. He received me kindly, and re-
newed his promise to wed me before the child
was born, with the horrid stipulation that in
the mean time I should be his mistress. God
forgive me! I was lost.

'But why continue this dread recital?—
Why tell you how, in my hour of anguish, I
was left alone—how my poor child clung to
its mother's breast, seeking in vain for nour-
ishment—and how, at last, in the phrenzy of
hunger, I sold myself for a morsel of bread.
O blood-bought morsel! It was still precious,
for it saved the life of my child.'

* * * * *
The poor girl said no more. The tale of
infamy was told. I know not how it was
that I listened so calmly—for even now,
after long years of self-taught endurance, I
cannot think of it without a shudder. But
'tis all over now.

Briefly I inquired why she was in the street
at the hour when I met her near the ball-
room.

'I had followed my betrayer, for I loved
him still—to that place. He is one of the
gayest in the dance, he thought not of her
whom he had destroyed. He is there still—
go to him and beg him to come to the bedside
of his dying Ellen.'

'His name?' I gasped half audibly.

'Henry Wakefield.'

'Then heaven hear me. He is a wretch—
a vile wretch, a—villain!' I cried. 'And
I swear to pursue him—to blast, destroy.'

'O no, no, do not swear. Take back
that oath. 'Tis the last request of your dy-
ing sister. Harm not a hair of his head.'

I promised.

* * * * *
They sleep side by side in our village
church-yard—the father, the mother, and
their erring child. The poor shame-born in-
fant died in the arms of its mother. I saw
them buried. 'Tis just ten years since
I visited their graves, and there vowed to for-
sake a world which had been so cruel to me
and mine.

Mine is a self-imposed task. When these
pages are full, and the records of one man's
sorrow is complete, then for some other di-
version. No eye but mine will ever read
those melancholy lines—they will only serve
to soothe me, perhaps, when memory shall
have veiled the past forever.

Last night, when I laid me down on my
rude straw couch, I thought a mild but sor-
rowful face looked into my cave, and smiled
gently upon me. Perhaps it was her spirit—
her whom I so loved—so wronged. Her for-
whose happiness I would have borne more
than I dare to tell, and yet to whom I prayed
only a plague—a pestilence. She loved me,
though; for even when her voice was lifted up
to curse me, the words faltered on her lips,
and melted into sobs. Oh how I wronged
thee, Mary, and how have I repented in sack-
cloth and ashes.

By why should I think of her? I must
write of others—her memory shall close the
scene.

* * * * *
A week after the burial of my sister, (fif-
teen years have passed away since then, yet
it seems to me but a day) I stood on the
shore of this very lake. Ugh! how the storm
howled then. Tornado swept along this
mountain, tearing up huge trees and hurling
them far below into the water. The loud
thunder shook these old hills, and the oak

that had withstood the storms of centuries
creaked and groaned with terror. It was a
terrible scene—the storm, the lightning—and
it awoke the whirlwind in my own bosom.
I called aloud to the lightning to strike me
down—the next breath a great tree over my
head was shivered into splinters, and torn
from its roots, and yet I was unharmed. I
was blinded for a moment, and ere I recover-
ed myself, a loud, discordant laugh rung close
to my ear. I turned, and the next flash re-
vealed the form of a man standing close be-
side me.

I have often endeavored to describe him
whom I met for the first time that night, but
I can never do it. He looked then more than
terrible. His hair, black and crisp, hung
over his forehead. His eyebrows were large,
and nearly concealed two bright eyes, sunken
in their sockets. A deep scar on his right
temple disfigured his features. He scanned
me closely for a while, and then, in low, gut-
tural tones, addressed me.

'Young man, look at that lightning. It
rends where it falls; it shows no mercy, and
yet it comes from heaven. Receive the les-
son it would teach you. Go and blast those
who have wronged you and yours, even as it
blasts. Be merciless—cruel. Spare not. Be
as the lightning, crush and destroy.'

'Who are you,' I asked, 'that can read my
thoughts thus?'

'It matters not. What I am I have not al-
ways been. I was one who loved and wept,
as others love and weep. I am one insensible
to love, to friendship, to all—all save re-
venge.'

'But—but—'

'I know what you would say, young man,
he continued; 'I know you pant for ven-
geance. A sister's wrongs are not soon for-
gotten. I know the promise won from your
unwilling lips when you stood by her when
she was dying. I know her seducer, his vil-
lainy, his crimes. Go and redress a sister's
wrongs.'

'Sir,' I replied, 'I know you not, and your
knowledge of all this is unaccountable. But
your advice meets a response in my breast. I
would follow him to the end of the world,
but I remember my promise to his victim. I
will not take his life, and vengeance short of
that would be too tame for me.'

'Ha, ha,' he replied; 'nobly said, but mon-
strous silly. What is a man's life—nothing.
Can one feel after death? No; it is but a
momentary pang. Pierce yourself with a
pin, prick a vein, pull a tooth, torture your-
self, is that enough for vengeance? And
yet death is no more.'

The man raved. I did not interrupt him,
and he continued:

'You promised not to touch one hair of his
head. Therefore you must strike a deadlier
blow. His carcass would be of no use to you.
Carrion is worthless.'

His words sank to my soul with a strange
power. I drank them in with a sense of plea-
sure. They were refreshing. The slumber-
ing fires within me were aroused. The torch
was lighted, and was already blazing.

'How shall I proceed?' I asked. 'How
may vengeance do its work and leave him
unharm'd?—for, remember I will not lift a
hand against him.'

'If you knew the world, you would not
ask that. Go and make a hell on earth for
him, if you cannot send him to the hell be-
low. If he loves, turn his love to bitterness;
if he hopes, let him grasp those hopes, and
then turn them to ashes. He has parents—
make him kill them with sorrow for his
crimes. He has a sister—blast her as he has
blasted yours!'

'I'll do it. I'll do it.' I yelled with frantic
eagerness, falling on my knees and lifting my
hands towards heaven; and in the name of
Him who hurls the thunderbolt I swear to do
it.'

'Good. Grand. Glorious, shouted my
mysterious companion. 'And by all the me-
mories of the lost, by all the hopes that I
have felt, I, too, will witness the revenge.'

A crash of thunder, so awful, rattled thro-
ugh the air, that I fell insensible. When I re-
covered the stranger had left me, and I was
alone.

That very day I set out to accomplish my
vengeance. Assuming another name, I was
introduced into the family of him whom I so
hated. I assumed a smile when I addressed
him, though my soul burned within me. Un-
suspectingly he presented me to his gray-
haired father and his younger sister. I was
received with distinguished favor by the fa-
mily, and my scheme of vengeance promised
well.

Eliza Wakefield was a strange creature.
I believe I might have loved her if she had
not been the sister of him who had des-
troyed mine. She was an enthusiast. When
the refined and exquisite feelings of her soul
were aroused, her cheeks would flush and
her eyes kindle with excitement. She was a
delicate girl, tall and elegant in figure, grace-
ful and full of dignity. Her forehead was
very high, and white as snow.

I almost reproached myself when I thought
of blasting that young girl. But when I fal-
tered in my work, it seemed that I saw the
sweet pale face of my dead sister, and so I
was urged on.

One day I was seated in the parlor of the
Wakefields, alone with him who had robbed
me of my peace. Conversation turned from
one topic to another, till at last we spoke of
Eliza.

'She is a wild young creature,' I remarked,
'and seems very happy. Her spirits are
fresh and buoyant. She has known little
sorrow, I suspect?'

'Indeed, sir, you are right,' replied Henry
'She has always been our pet, and no wish