

## LITERATURE, &amp;c.

## THE BRITISH MAGAZINES.

From Hogg's Instructor.

## WORK ON.

BY CHARLES SWAIN.

Attend, O man!

Lift up the banner of thy kind,  
Advance the ministry of mind,  
The mountain height is free to climb,  
Toil on—man's heritage is time!  
Toil on!

Work on and win!

Life without work is unenjoy'd,  
The happiest are the best employ'd!  
Work moves and moulds the mightiest birth,  
And grasps the destinies of earth!  
Work on!

Work sows the seed!

Even the rock may yield its flower;  
No lot so hard, but human power,  
Exerted to one end and aim,  
May conquer fate and capture fame!  
Press on!

Press onward still!

In nature's centre lives the fire  
That slow, though sure, doth yet aspire:  
Through fathoms deep of mould and clay,  
It splits the rocks that bar its way!  
Press on!

If nature then

Lay fame beneath her weight of earth,  
When would her hidden fire know birth?  
Thus man, through granite fate must find  
The path, the upward path, of mind!  
Work on!

Pause not in fear;

Preach no desponding servile view—  
Whate'er thou wilt, thy WILL may do!  
Strengthen each errand nerve to bend  
Truth's bow, and bid its shafts ascend:  
Toil on!

Be firm of heart!

By fusion of unnumber'd years,  
A continent its vastness rears;  
A drop 'tis said, through fount will wear—  
Toil on, and nature's conquest share!  
Toil on!

Within thyself,

Bright morn, and noon, and night succeed;  
Power, feeling, passion, thought and deed;  
Harmonious beauty prompts thy breast—  
Things angels love, and God hath blest!  
Work on!

Work on and win!

Shall light from nature's depth arise,  
And thou, whose mind can grasp the skies,  
Sit down with fate, and idly rail?  
No. Onward! Let the truth prevail!  
Work on!

From Chambers's Edinburgh Journal.

## AN OLD WOMAN'S STORY.

I WAS born in a little town not very far from this. My father was a tradesman, with a large family, and I was his youngest and likewise his favorite child, perhaps because my mother died just when I was born, and left me, her last, to his care. Even in the early years of my childhood I was of a proud, obstinate, overbearing temper, and fathers, brothers and sisters, rather than see my tiny frame convulsed with passion, yielded at all times to my will. I was considered a pretty child; and when I was about six years old, my beauty and smartness caught the attention of a lady who lived in the opposite house. She was neither young nor married, and in a fit of generosity proposed to adopt me as her own. My father overcame his unwillingness for what he considered my advantage; my sisters were not sorry to loose their daily torment; and I was nothing loathe to go. It might have been an advantage to me had the lady been as judicious as she was good natured; but was nervous and irritable, and during the nine years I spent under her roof, petted and teased me by turns in a manner that would have ruined any temper, and certainly did not benefit mine. When I was sixteen, my patroness died; and as her income died with her, I returned to my father's house with the trifle she left me, a vain, foolish girl, too proud for my own station, and too low and ignorant for any other. I had indeed learned a little of almost everything. A thousand plans had been commenced in my education, and dropped as hastily; but this I must say (though not to justify myself), that no one ever took rational means to curb me in my pride and passion: the former gratified the lady, the other passed unchecked except by a reproof as passionate. The only thing for which I had imbibed a taste was novel-reading. My adopted mother was a slave to it: nothing was so strange, nothing too horrible or absurd for her; and I think I must have read to her every production of the Minerva press before she died. Night and day I read to her, partly because I loved her, but principally because I loved the employment much better. I pursued the same course on my return home, and with increased greediness my mind devoured its sickly food. All the books I read were of the meaner sort. I had not taste or learning enough to discriminate; and my mind became a confused mixture of false and distorted ideas, and was indeed like the troubled sea, casting up mire and dirt. I read of high-spirited hero-

ines, whose pride was the cause of all their happiness; I read of vanity as an amusing propensity, and of passion as a thing to jest about; and I formed my own character accordingly. Thus the time passed till I was eighteen; and, as I could be affectionate and good natured, nay, even generous when my own particular wishes were not thwarted, I was the acknowledged queen of the little circle in which I moved. It was my misfortune always to get people who would bow down to me: even my father, whom I dearly loved, dared not refuse submission to my will, because he disliked to witness the uncontrolled outbursts of a temper that was growing more violent as I grew older.

About this time a young man in my own sphere of life came to live in our town. We soon became acquainted, and he was evidently struck by my beauty; for I was very beautiful then. Every one said so, though it may seem unlikely now, with my withered face and my gray hairs. Yet I am not what they call very old, nor is my head covered with the soft silver which becomes the old so well; but with the hard iron-gray to which remorse has turned it. But at that time it was dark and glossy, and these sunken eyes sparkled with a lustre that flashed back upon me from my looking-glass the conviction that what people told me was true.

As I was saying, this beauty caught the fancy of William Sealy, and in all our walks and parties, which he constantly joined, I was the sole object of his attentions. At first my vanity was gratified, for he was a handsome, good humored fellow; and then I began to love him with all the violence of my nature, though I treated him according to the admirable system laid down in my books—sometimes with undue familiarity, sometimes with capricious disdain. But another stranger appeared among us, a young lady—for she was a lady—who came as governess to a school mistress in the neighborhood. I never shall forget the first night of her appearance in the circle where I carried it with such a high hand. The moment I saw her I felt I had a rival. My black eyes were always lightened with impetuous feeling of some kind; hers were soft and gray, and full of a holy innocence that I could never throw into mine. Instead of the warm color that burned on my cheek, hers wore a delicate flush, that changed with every word she spoke; and she had a mouth like a rose leaf, and a winning smile, and, singing or speaking, the sweetest voice I ever heard. Her gentle manner and that low soft voice were tacit reproaches against my loud laugh and boisterous speech. My ill-regulated mind was accustomed either to love fervently or hate bitterly; and despite all her attempts at conciliation I hated her cordially.

This hatred increased to intensity when I saw William Sealy gradually drawn away from me; and it was no wonder he should be won by loveliness as great a contrast to my bold beauty as a quiet moonlight night to a red and stormy sunset. No wonder, indeed! for she was good and clever, and had filled her mind with knowledge, though she shrunk so modestly from notice. Every one loved her, and that was bad enough; but that I should lose him for her sake was unbearable. I laid the blame of his estrangement entirely on her, forgetting that he had witnessed one or two of my habitual fits of passion, and that none but a madman would have taken such a firebrand into his household. One night after he had been unusually attentive to Ellen Mansfield (for that was the young girl's name), I sought him alone, and bitterly reproached him with his unfaithfulness. He stared, as well he might; but my vain reading had divested my mind of all maidenly modesty on the subject. When he found me getting more and more outrageous, he told me plainly that I had never had his love; and that I was not the woman to make any man's hearth happy; and that Ellen should be his wife so surely as they both lived. He was as good as his word. In a few weeks Ellen was his happy bride; and I, to show that my spirit was at least unbroken, gave my hand, without my heart, not long after to another.

My husband was a dark, distant man; but he was kind to me, till one unfortunate day, in a rage which some trifle had provoked, I laid bare my heart to him. He saw that he had no place there, and I lost his affections forever. From that time he treated me with a strange forbearance. He gave way to me on all possible occasions; but I saw that he only did so lest his own quiet should be disturbed, and the conviction deeply mortified me. I had other troubles too. The Sealy and I seldom met; but the sight of Ellen's happy face every time she passed the window withered my heart with envy. Besides, she had a large family, and I had none. I prayed that I might call a child my own or die; and God gave me my heart's desire; but, rebel that I was, I used his good gift to my own destruction. Yet I was humbled and softened down the morning that I first held a living son in my arms, and many a promise and resolution I made of controlling my temper for the future. But that soft mood passed away like the morning cloud or the early dew. My very nature required to be changed first. I had yielded to it too long to govern it then, and I was too proud to ask assistance even from Him who alone could give it. Therefore, when my child's little face was become too familiar to act as a check, the power of the demon returned. My husband became every day more unlovable, and more estranged, as I grew more irritable. He drowned his cares in the wine cup, and sank into the drunkard's grave before my son had passed his early boyhood.

That sin rests upon my soul with all the

others. My father, too, was dead, and none remained to love me but my son. Oh how I loved that only child! My affection for him was in my heart as a green spot of solid land on a tossed and troubled sea. I fastened my very heartstrings round him—thought of no one else all day, and slept only to dream of him. In the loudest storm of anger I would listen to his voice when it was ever so childish, and for twenty four years no word of mine ever entered his ear that was not steeped in tenderness—for I dreaded the loss of his love as the worst that could befall me. Even when a child, Louis gave tokens of a noble nature; and mere strangers passing him in the street would stop to praise his beauty; and all said there was a promise of genius shining in his bright eyes, and written on his fine broad forehead.

I was in very straitened circumstances; but I toiled night and day, rose early and sat up late, that my child might be fed, and clothed, and taught like that of the best gentleman in the town. I kept him to myself as much as possible, for I feared to lose my influence over him; but, as if Ellen Sealy was always to come between me and my purpose, the very first friendship he formed at school was with her son. I tried to fill his mind with my own prejudices, but he argued, if the mothers were enemies it was only fair that the sons should be friends. God forgive me! I did all I could to make them rivals; but the boys had generous hearts, and gloried in each other's triumphs. In the play-ground and school-room they were always together, and shared in common the applause of the boys and their masters. My child chose to be an architect, and with no small striving did I fit him for it; but I was well repaid by the talent he showed. Surely he was a son that any mother might have been proud of; for he grew up the most good natured, handsome, clever young man in the town—not alone in my eyes, for all the neighbors said so too. And the gentry of the place noticed him, and praised his sense and intelligence, and promised to open fine prospects before him. Often and often has my heart throbed proudly when I saw him talking amongst them, looking as grand as the very best of them. Surely all the good of his nature was the work of God's own finger, for it could not have come of my training. His friends saw no fault in him; but I, who knew him best, knew that if once roused, his passion was desperate while it lasted. He had some of his mother's high spirit, though it was nearly smothered by the kindness that gushed up in his heart like a clear spring well. To me he was all that was loving and dutiful, and he always put his earnings into my lap with a face glowing with affection. The only thing which at all displeased me in his conduct, was, that he would not stay away from William Sealy's house. After a while, his visits grew longer, till nearly all his leisure hours were spent there. For a long time I ascribed it all to his affection for the son, forgetting that the daughter was a far more dangerous acquaintance. She was their youngest child, and so very beautiful, so very sweet and winning in her manner, that it took much brooding over what I called my wrongs before I could harden my heart against her. But she was her mother's image: the same light brown hair, and soft twilight gray eyes, the mild delicate features: she was her namesake too; and that was enough to make her odious in my sight. But somehow I never thought of the matter till some whispering among the neighbors opened my eyes; and then I vowed to myself that she should feel, as her fair mother had made me feel, the anguish of rejected love; that her dainty lip should drink of the same burning cup if I could possibly put it into her hand.

When my son came home that night I reproached him with more warmth than ever I had done; and to my consternation was answered with assurances that he loved her as his own soul, and would as soon give up his life as her love. I did not know that it had gone so far; I was too selfish to bear any rival in his affections; but the thought that the daughter of my old enemy should be loved more than myself was utterly insupportable. In vain he described her as all that was gentle and beautiful; one whom any mother might covet for her son: in vain he declared that to afford me a comfortable home would be his and Ellen's most anxious wish. I answered him with impatient scorn; for mortification at my want of influence—pride offended at his low choice, when he might have done so much better—long cherished prejudice—and a fierce thirst for revenge—were all together strong enough to conquer for the time even the deep love I bore him. He was firm to his purpose; and I, who had been used to carry my point by violence, provoked by his determination, worked myself up into such a frenzy of passion, that I scarcely knew what I was saying or doing. I cursed his love and its object, with her father and mother before her; I mocked at his horror, and vowed, while my limbs trembled with rage, that he should either promise to give up the hated girl that very moment, or leave my house forever, for that I would not sleep another night under the same roof with a disobedient child—and snatching a Bible from a book-shelf, I kissed it with my unholy lips in ratification of the oath. He gave me one look—a look of reproach, and horror, and fixed resolution—and all at once tumbled away and left the house.

My headstrong violence had carried me farther than I intended; I did not think he would take me at my word so suddenly. I had hoped to see him yield in some measure, and my first impulse was to run to the door and call him back; but my cruel pride restrained

me, though the lessening sound of his footsteps fell heavily on my heart. I sat down, and spite of all I could do to keep my anger alive, better feelings would come into my mind. I thought of the time I had nursed him a little baby, when I had taught him to call me mother; then of the days when I used to watch him on his way to school till he was out of sight, and feel that my sunshine was departed till his return; when I used to hear him his lessons, and look at his drawings, with such proud and joyful hopes. Oh how brightly had they been fulfilled. And as I looked back through his whole life, I could not remember one unkind word against him: the man had been as dutiful as the boy. Even that evening I had not the excuse that he had answered passion with passion; and, overwhelmed with these recollections, I began to repent, and to long for his return that I might ask his forgiveness. Not but that I was as determined as ever not to receive Ellen as a daughter; but for the future I would persuade, implore, do anything but revile him as I had done. It never struck me that he would really mind my wrathful declaration (because once over, I minded it so little myself), until the striking of the clock reminded me that it was past his usual hour for coming home. Could it be possible that he would not return? It seemed so absurd that my command in such a matter would have any weight. Was not the honor his own? Had he not filled it with comforts for my use? Had he not rather the power to bid me leave it if he chose? I could not believe it in his nature to be deeply offended with me for a few angry words—the first—the very first that I had ever used to him. I who had worked for him in health, and watched by him in sickness—and could an angry breath efface the remembrance of the devoted love of years? Thus I reasoned with myself for another and another hour; but he did not come in; and my alarm increased to such a height, that I wrapped a cloak around me, and went out to seek for him.

It was in the middle of November: I have bitter reason to remember the time: it was piercingly cold, and a blinding mist falling through the thick darkness. I knew that he always spent part of his evenings at the Sealy's: should I go there? Bad as I was, the struggle was short between my pride and my maternal anxiety. Their house was shut up: I knocked with a trembling hand, and William Sealy put his head out of a window. For many years we had not spoken together; and with a heart almost bursting with a tumult of contending feelings, I faltered out my enquiries for my son. Louis had not been there at all that night. I turned away with a sinking heart; I ran to every place where I thought it possible he could be, but no one had seen him; besides, nearly everybody was in bed.

Returning homewards in a state of distraction, yet with the faint hope that I might find him by this time in the house, I moved my head, I knew not why, to look again at William Sealy's windows. The mist was partially dispersed, and a vague formless spot of light indicated the moon's place in the sky. By this faint illumination I saw something in a nook of the street commanded by the windows. It resembled a human figure. It was a human figure, and in a sitting posture. I did not rush towards it. I did not scream with joy when I saw it was my son. I approached it as if my limbs were frozen. My heart quaked for a moment, and then ceased to beat; and it was with a gasp, as if for life, that I looked into his face. He was sitting bolt upright upon a stone, his back resting against the wall, and his eyes staring up at the windows. He was dead—dead—dead—dead.

What became of me after that I do not know. I have a confused notion that he came to life again, and that I laughed so loud and long as to terrify even myself. To say the truth—but this is a secret—I think I was mad. After a time they told me he had been drinking deep during the night; but that is not true, for Louis, taught by his father's fate, had a horror of the vice. Or if he did drink, for the first and last time, it was his mother who drove him to the bottle. But the cold was enough: he was not the sole victim of that fearful night—the night I selected for driving forth my only son from his own home.

William Sealy's wife had come to me in my trouble, and generously nursed me through my long illness; and when the first stupefaction of her grief was over, poor Ellen came too, that we might mingle our tears together. She did not know that my hand had dealt the blow; but I told her, and every one, that I might relieve her memory from the slightest shadow of reproach. Even then she did not shrink from me, but bore her own grief patiently, that she might minister to the agony of my remorse. What I would have given then to see Louis her living husband! But she, too, had seen him dead, and the shock had sunk into her soul; besides, she never ceased reproaching herself for being the cause of contention between us; and every one noticed that she was growing paler and thinner—gradually wearing away. A delicate girl like her could not pass through such a trial and live. I was beside her when she died; and those soft eyes, whose light I had so hated, brightened into a look of forgiveness for me at the last. Surely if ever any learned of Him who paid back hatred with love and mercy, that gentle and beautiful creature had been taught the lesson. Bitter were the tears I shed over her early grave, but not such as I wept for her lover; for God had sent to her the holy Dove with its olive