

## Literature, &amp;c.

## THE BRITISH MAGAZINES.

From Hogg's Instructor.

## AN HOUR ON A ROCK.

It was a beautiful evening in the month of August, 1851, that I was sitting listlessly on one of the high cliffs which overlook the wide expanse of the German Ocean, near to where its waters mingle with the wilder waves of the North Sea. The day had been excessively hot, but the evening was rendered more pleasant by the land breeze, which had already begun to blow. Before me lay the sea, calm and tranquil, its bosom studded with innumerable fishing-boats, with here and there a large sloop or schooner, whose white sails were scarcely filled by the gentle breeze; and careering among these, like a huge leviathan of the deep, came the Queen steamer, the bearer of her Majesty's mails from the Shetland Islands to the south. To the east and west, as far as the eye could reach, rose 'crag o'er crag, and fell o'er fell, showing a grim and weather-beaten front to the advances of old Ocean. Behind me, lay a country, bare and bleak in appearance, with scarcely a shrub or knoll on which to rest the eye. Farther inland, smoke might have been seen to rise from a few rude huts, built of loose stones and turf. The voice of rural labour was already hushed, and the labourer had retired to his humble abode, to seek the repose necessary to brace him for the exertions of the coming day. The sun was shedding a flood of golden light on the wide waters before me, and the northern sky displayed those gorgeous colors that are only seen by the inhabitants of the far north. There is something, to a lover of nature, so exquisitely beautiful in sunset on the waters—to see the sun, as it were, setting inch by inch in the sea—that I have often found myself a charmed spectator of the scene, when other duties were calling me hence.

On the evening, however, in question, I sat calmly and thoughtfully gazing on the departing orb, till the sound of approaching footsteps drew my attention to the intruder. I had looked so long and steadily at the bright, red sun, that it was with difficulty I could bring my sight to bear upon the individual now by my side. His grey hairs and weather-beaten countenance showed that he had seen much of life; and I at length perceived that my companion was one of the fishermen who lived in a small hut near the spot, and who had long braved the perils of the deep, but whom age and its attendant infirmities now prevented from sharing in the dangerous employment.

He had come forth to view the sea and the boats, which, he informed me was his constant practice before retiring to rest for the night. I had frequently met him in my evening rambles along the coast; and as there was something in his appearance which indicated that he had 'a tale to tell,' I entered frankly into conversation with him. I soon discovered from his speech, so much superior to the dialect of his class, that he had not spent all his life among the scenes which surrounded us. My frankness of manner induced him to be communicative; and, as he found me a willing listener with time on my hands, and not one bound to a wedding, like the individual to whom the Ancient Mariner in Coleridge's fine ballad told his tale, with my permission, he sketched me the 'story of his life.'

He had been a sailor in his youth and during the greater part of his maturer age. By good conduct and perseverance he had risen to the command of a small vessel, and in course of time had husbanded his earnings so well that he became owner of a schooner. He had married early in life as most of his class do, and, at the time when he became owner of the schooner was blest in the possession of a wife and two sons. He was a man of a warm and loving heart, and to be in the midst of his family was to him the greatest pleasure he enjoyed. When absent from them he felt gloomy and sad; and so strong did this feeling grow upon him that he resolved to take them to sea with him. Accordingly, after giving his sons an education to fit them for a life on the ocean, his family and household goods were transferred on board the schooner. The old man's eyes brightened as he recounted the happy days spent in the society of his wife and sons on board the vessel.

His affairs went on in this manner for a year or two. He was happy in his family and prosperous in his undertakings. But one night having sailed from a harbor on the north side of the Moray Firth, and a sudden storm, having arisen, his vessel was driven before the gale out into the open sea. All efforts to run her into a place of safety were in vain. The huge billows came rolling in from the northwest, sweeping stern and stern of the small vessel. Still the crew bore up bravely, and the small craft leaped from billow to billow like a thing of life. But a heavier sea swept the deck, making her masts almost touch the water, and carried with it the elder of his two sons. In the war of the elements, the noise of the winds and waves, it was some time before the father was aware of his loss; and, even, although he had known sooner, it would have been of little avail.

The vessel drove madly on, and was soon far from the spot where the sad catastrophe had happened. The storm still continuing, they were drifted in an easterly direction, and

the first land they espied was a portion of the rock-bound coast of Norway. Happily for them the schooner ran aground in a small bay.

A tear glistened in the narrator's eye, and his voice was at times low and indistinct, while rehearsing this, the beginning of his misfortunes; but darker clouds were hanging over his head, and a severer loss awaited him. I am anticipating, however. The vessel was got off without much difficulty, and with very little damage, and in a short time was pronounced sea-worthy. With the first fair wind her owner again entered the Frith and traded as usual.

Years passed, and his grief for the melancholy fate of his son, although it had not escaped his memory, was softened down by the pious reflection, that 'Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.'

About four years after the events narrated above, in the gloomy month of November he was returning from a foreign port, when a violent storm from the north-east arose. It was with great difficulty that the vessel could be kept out to sea. As the crew were well acquainted with the wild and rugged nature of the coast, they knew that, were they cast upon it, nothing but certain destruction then awaited them. Knowing this, and night coming on, they strove, as men will do when it is a matter of life and death, to save themselves from being washed lifeless bodies almost to their own thresholds. They had cleared Buchanness, and in the darkening twilight could perceive the glimmering light on Kinnaird's Head. Shaping their course as well as they could by the light, obscured at times by the spray which was dashing around them, they gained the entrance of the frith. But here the full force of the tremendous billows rolling from the eastward completely overpowered them. The vessel in a short time became unmanageable, and was driven among the breakers; and in less time than I can tell it, said the old man, struck upon the cliff on the top of which we are now sitting.

With the exception of himself all on board perished; and such was the violence of the waves, that the stately vessel lay at the foot of the cliff, broken in a thousand fragments, each, said my companion, not heavier than a child might carry.

With his vessel he lost his all—family and fortune—and, cast upon the world without a home, and now advanced in years, he took up his abode near the spot where the sea still retained his wife and sons, and for a number of years had supported himself by fishing. He felt as if charmed to the spot, and he could not leave it. There was a love for it in his bosom, and when night drew her curtain over sea and shore, and the dim headlands looked grimly on the waters, it was his delight to resort to the cliff, and to gaze on that spot which held all that was dearest to him.

When my companion had concluded his narrative I thanked him, and pursued my journey homeward, musing on the mysterious workings of Providence, and his mighty wonders on the great deep. I parted from the old man wiser and better, and with a mind more fitted to endure the petty annoyances and trifles which daily arise in our journey through life, and which so often prevent us from enjoying and appreciating the many blessings around us. On my homeward way I strung together the following verses, and inserted them in my scrap book, from which I now transcribe them. They are entitled

## THE LAY OF THE MARINER.

'The sea, the blue, lone sea, hath one;  
He lies where pearls lie deep.'—*Hennans.*

Why this pleasing, wild emotion?

Why, uncall'd those gathering tears?

'Tis the sight, the sound of Ocean

Wakes again these hopes and fears.

Ocean, while a boy I loved thee;

Still that love knows no decay,

Bounding on thy breast, I've proved thee,

In life's morn, and in its day.

Thou hast been my home, a loved one,

Even in thy angry roar,

When thy foaming billows sped on,

Maniac-like to reach the shore,

And thou wert my home when lying

On thy bosom calm and clear,

Mirror'd in thy blue depths glancing,

When the moon and stars appear.

And I love thee, for thou keepest

Treasures rich and dear to me;

Far beneath thy blue waves slumber

Those I, frantic, gave to thee.

Wife, the loved one of my bosom,

Son, the noble, kind and brave—

Struggling with thy waves, I saw them;

Saw, but had not power to save.

Another went, and now I'm childless;

Yet I love thee all the more—

Love thee in thy strength and wildness,

Better now than e'er before.

And I would thy ripple lull'd me

To my nightly, quiet rest;

That each morning's dawning found me

Gazing on thy trembling breast.

Pastures green, and corn-fields waving

Cheer the honest country swain;

But the sea, the headland laving,

Warms the sailor's heart again.

There he feels, with sweet emotion,

Former pleasure, hopes and fears,

And the sight, the sound of Ocean

Wets his lyart cheek with tears.

## SINGING AT AN EVENING PARTY.

The process of singing at an evening party may be thus described. The young lady, on being led to the piano, first throws a timid glance around the room—ostensibly, to evince a gentle confusion—in reality, to see who is looking at her. She then observes to the mistress of the house 'that she has not a very good voice, having a slight cold,' which she confirms by a faint sound, something between a sigh, a smile, and a single-knock cough. The hostess replies, 'Oh, but you always sing so delightfully.' The young lady answers, 'that she is certain she cannot this evening; to strengthen which opinion she makes some young gentleman exceedingly joyous by giving him her bouquet to hold; and, drawing off her gloves in the most approved style, tucks them behind one of the candlesticks, together with her filmy handkerchief, in such a manner that its deep-laced border, or embroidered name, may be seen to the best advantage.

The top of the piano, which has been opened for the quadrilles, is then shut down by an active gentleman, who pinches his fingers in the attempt; the musicians form a series of dissolving views, no one knows where nor ever will, and the young lady takes her place at the piano; and as she plays the chords of the key she is about to luxuriate in, everybody is not perfectly silent, so she finds the music stool is too high, or too low, or something of that kind, and the pedals appear exceedingly difficult to be found. At length, everything being still, she plays the symphony again, and then, smiling at the hostess, saying, 'that she is certain she shall break down,' brings the opening note of a recitative, which makes the drops of the chandelier vibrate again, and silences a couple who are whispering all sorts of soft nothings on a causeuse in the drawing room.—*Natural History of Evening Parties.*

## FIRST IMPRESSION MADE BY AN EARTHQUAKE.

Before we quit this great phenomenon, we must advert to that indescribable, deep, and peculiar impression which the first earthquake that we experience makes upon us, even when unaccompanied with subterranean noises. The impression is not, I believe, the consequence of any recollection of destructive catastrophes presented to our imagination by historical narratives. That which seizes upon us so wonderfully is the disabuse of our innate faith in the firmness of the solid and sure-set foundation of the earth. From infancy, we are accustomed to the contrast between the moveable element of water, and the immutability of the soil on which we stand—a belief confirmed by the evidences of our senses. But, when the ground suddenly rocks beneath us, the feeling of an unknown mysterious power in nature coming into action, and shaking the solid globe, arises in the mind. The illusion of our early life is instantaneously annihilated. We are undeceived as to the repose of nature—we feel ourselves transported to the realm, and subjected to the empire, of destructive, unknown powers. Every sound—the slightest rustle in the air—sets attention on the rack, and we no longer trust the earth on which we stand. The unusualness of the phenomenon throws the same anxious unrest and alarm over the lower animals. Swine and dogs are particularly affected by it; and the very crocodiles of the Orinoco, otherwise as dumb as our lizards, leave the trembling bed of the river and rush bellowing into the woods. To man, the earthquake is something unlimited and all-pervading. We can remove from the active crater of the volcano; we can escape from the flood of lava that is pouring down upon our dwelling; but with the earthquake we feel that whithersoever we fly we are still over the hearth of destruction.—*Humboldt.*

## THE IMPORTANCE OF THE BEAUTIFUL.

A man lies hid, in a little, dirty, smoky room for twenty years of his life, and sums up as many columns of figures as would reach half round the earth, if they were laid at length. He gets rich; and what does he do with his riches. He buys a large, well-proportioned house. In the arrangement of his furniture, he gratifies himself with all the beauty which splendid colors, regular figures and smooth surface can convey; he has the beauties of variety and association in his grounds; the cup out of which he drinks his tea is adorned with beautiful figures; the chair in which he sits is covered with smooth shining leather; his table-cloth is of the most beautiful damask; mirrors reflect the light from every quarter of the room; pictures of the best masters feed his eyes with all the beauties of the imagination. A million of human creatures are employed in this country in ministering to this feeling of the beautiful. It is only a barbarous, ignorant people that can ever be occupied by the necessities of life alone. If to eat, to drink, and to be warm, were the only passions of our minds, we should all be what the lowest of us are at this day. The love of the beautiful calls man to fresh exertions, and awakens him to a more noble life, and the glory of it is, that, as painters imitate, and poets sing, and statuaries carve, and architects rear up the gorgeous trophies of their skill, and, as everything becomes beautiful, and orderly, and magnificent, the activity of the mind rises to a still greater height and to better objects. The principles of justice are sought out, the powers of the ruler and the rights of the subjects are fixed; man advances to the enjoyment of rational liberty, and to the esta-

blishment of those great moral laws which God has written in our hearts to regulate the destinies of the world.—*Sydney Smith.*

## SILENT LOVERS.

An eminent clergyman one evening being the subject of conversation, a wonder was expressed that he had never married. 'That wonder,' said Miss Porter, 'was once expressed to the reverend gentleman in my hearing, and he told a story in answer which I shall tell you; and perhaps, slight as it may seem, it is the history of other hearts as sensitive and delicate as his own. Soon after his ordination, he preached, once every Sabbath, for a clergyman in a small Village not twenty miles from London. Among his auditors, Sunday after Sunday, he observed a young lady, who occupied a certain seat, and whose close attention began insensibly to grow to him an object of thought and pleasure. She left the church as soon as service was over, and so it chanced that he went on for a year without even knowing her name; but his sermons was never written without many a thought how she would approve of it, nor preached with satisfaction unless he read approbation in her face. Gradually he began to think of her at other times than when writing sermons, and to wish to see her on other days than Sundays; but the weeks stepped on, and though he fancied she grew paler and thinner, he never brought himself to the resolution to ask her name or to speak to her. By these silent steps, however, love had worked into his heart, and he made up his mind to seek acquaintance and marry her, if possible; when one day he was sent for to minister at a funeral. The face of the corpse was the same that had looked at him Sunday after Sunday, till he had learned to make it a part of his religion and his life. He was unable to perform the service, another clergyman officiated; and after she was buried, her father took him aside, and begged his pardon for giving him pain, but he could not resist to tell him, that his daughter had mentioned his name with her last breath, and he was afraid that a concealed affection for him had hurried her to her grave. "Since that," said the clergyman in question, "my heart has been dead within me, and I look forward to the time when I shall speak to her in heaven."

## AN INTERESTING INCIDENT.

Mr Joseph Leavitt, one of our citizens, returned from California, in speaking of sights and scenes in California, made mention of the following highly interesting incident, which speaks eloquently of the true humanity of hearts even in California, where selfishness and passion are supposed to reign with unwelcome force.

During the raging of the cholera in California, a young man from the State of Mississippi, Jesse Cook, about twenty-three years of age, who was engaged in the laborious work of mining, chanced to meet with a family from Missouri, consisting of husband, wife and two children, one of them an infant. Disease had attacked one of the children, a little boy, and he was soon stricken down by cholera and laid by the sorrowing parents in a little grave dug on the bank of a river. Soon after the father of the child died, leaving only the mother and her infant daughter. Her grief was great. She was in a strange land. The husband of her youth, and the first born son of her hope, had departed to the land of spirits and their remains were lying in their graves in the quiet vale of a river. Her earthly support had failed, and yet she clung to life for the sake of her infant daughter. Strangers proved kind, and the hand of benevolence provided for her wants, and the voice of kindness greeted her ears. But disease preyed upon her and death tore her away from her tender infant, and by stranger hands she was buried. The sweet loving eyes of an infant looked up confidently into the face of young Cook, and a smile wreathed its beautiful face and its delicate little hands stretched forth fondly. No female was there to caress and care for it, and the young miner with a swelling heart, and with a trust in God and his own resources, took the nameless infant, then only seven months old, in charge, and provided for it with all a father's care and a mother's love. He daily fed and washed and dressed it, and gave it the fond name of her mother, Mary; by day cradled it near him in his toils, and at night cuddled it as an angel child to his bosom. After a while he made application to various families at Sacramento city, to have the child taken care of, and offered to pay five dollars a week, but none were disposed to undertake the care of it; and he abandoned mining and resolved to proceed to Oregon and there take up land for a farm, and make a home for the little orphan. The simple unadorned facts in this case are sufficiently touching and suggestive, without any comments from our pen.

## THE PURPOSES OF EDUCATION.

The object of education is to instil principles which are hereafter to guide and instruct. Facts are only desirable so far as they illustrate these principles. What can we, then, think of a system which, reversing this evident order, overloads the memory with facts, and those of the most doubtful description, while it leaves us entirely in the dark with regard to the principles which alone could render this heterogeneous mass of any advantage or avail? Learning without knowledge is but a bundle of prejudices—lumber of inert matter set before the threshold of the understanding, to the exclusion of common sense.