

## Literature, &amp;c.

## THE SPIRIT OF THE MAGAZINES.

## ROBIN REDBREAST.

A CHILD'S SONG.

Good-by, good-by to Summer!  
For Summer's nearly done;  
The garden smiling faintly,  
Cool breezes in the sun;  
Our thrushes now are silent,  
Our swallows flown away—  
But robin's here, in coat of brown,  
And scarlet breastnot gay.  
Robin, robin redbreast,  
O robin dear!  
Robin sings so sweetly  
In the falling of the year.

Bright, yellow, red, and orange,  
The leaves come down in hosts;  
The trees are Indian princes,  
But soon they'll turn to ghosts;  
The leathery pears and apples  
Hang russet on the bough;  
It's autumn, autumn, autumn late,  
'Twill soon be winter now.  
Robin, robin redbreast,  
O robin dear!  
And what will this poor robin do?  
For pinching days are near.

The fireside for the cricket,  
The wheatstack for the mouse;  
When trembling night-winds whistle  
And moan all round the house;  
The frosty ways like iron,  
The branches plumed with snow  
Alas! in winter dead and dark  
Where can poor robin go?  
Robin, robin redbreast,  
O robin dear!  
And a crumb of bread for robin,  
His little heart to cheer.

From Chambers's Journal for October.

## JOHN SINGER'S STORY.

BEFORE midnight, the noise in the steerage had died away, and the whole of the emigrants were probably buried in sleep. The mate came on tiptoe down to our cabin-door, and listened to ascertain if any of us were awake. The breathing of the children deceived him and he returned to the deck, where he immediately signalled the lowering of the boats. The whole crew were but too ready to assist at this service; three of them sprang into the boat at the side, which touched the water the next minute; and then the long-boat was hauled towards the slings, and was in the act of being suspended, when I felt the moment was come, and, rushing out, presented myself to the astonished crew.

'They paused in their work, and glancing silently at one another, began to gather round me.

'What is the matter, Singer?' said the captain. 'You seem alarmed; has anything disturbed you?'

'I had taken my station against the bulwarks under the slings, before I replied.

'I am not a man to be alarmed without reason,' I said. 'You know whether I speak truth when I tell you there is reason enough now.'

'You are dreaming,' he returned; 'but I have no time to parley with you; be so good as to return to your cabin.'

'That's of no use, captain,' I replied; 'pray understand at once that I know everything. I don't intend to go to the bottom with my wife and children, so long as a chance remains. You don't lower that boat unless you take my family on board.' As I spoke, I tapped twice on the side-rail, and Betsy came out on deck with the girl and seven children, as I had bidden her. 'Refuse my demand,' I went on, 'and we raise the passengers, and let them know the truth.—Who will escape then, you can tell better than I.'

'Again the men looked at each other, and though several of them made as if they would speak, each checked himself, and for a minute not a word was uttered. At last an old seaman stepped forward. 'It's no use talkin' and disputin' now,' he said. 'Mr Singer's right; and it can't be expected for him to do no otherwise. We must have the family with us, and leave the provisions behind, and trust to being picked up; that's what it is, cap'n, accordin' to my pinion.'

'There is nothing else to be done,' was the captain's answer. 'Be quick, boys; put in the children, and lower away.'

Two or three barrels, as many bags, and a large hamper, were hastily removed from the boat. My wife and children were put into it as it hung over the side; two seamen followed, and it was lowered into the water, the sea being fortunately calm. The boat at the stern was not lowered at all; it was in fact but a mere creakle-shell, and would have been of little use. The captain distributed the remainder of the crew between the two boats, so that the long-boat carried fifteen in all, and the other seven. Myself and the captain were the last who left the vessel. Notwithstanding the terrible anxiety of the moment, I could not help pitying that miserable man as he lingered and lingered on board, and seemed to be inventing one excuse after another for delaying the final abandon-

ment of his ship. The mate in the long-boat called to him several times, but he seemed as though he did not hear, and continued pottering about among the rejected articles with which the deck was strewed, as if in search of something, though he knew not what. More than once he sat down on a coil of rope, and buried his face in his hands, until I began to doubt whether he would quit the vessel at all, and had not made up his mind to remain and share the miserable fate of the castaways. But he, like myself, had a wife and children dependent upon him; the thought of them no doubt tugged at his heart-strings, and urged him to self-preservation. The last thing he did was to go and withdraw the bolt which fastened down the grating over the steerage; and then, signing to me to slip down the side, he said in a whisper: 'They are awake; I heard them talking. The Lord have mercy upon them! They will never see the day.'

'We were no sooner in the boat than the men pushed off and moved rapidly away, as if determined to get out of sight and hearing of the miserable beings left all unconscious of the fate that was fast approaching them. We made but little way, however, because our boat was too heavily loaded. The captain gave orders to have certain things thrown overboard, and some indispensable provisions transferred to the other boat, which was less crowded. These things delayed us for some time within a stone's throw of the 'Camden,' from which I could not withdraw my eyes for a moment. The moon shone so brightly that every rope of the doomed vessel was visible, and all the familiar objects on the deck which had been our home. Nearly all the sails were set, and shewed ghostly-white beneath the moon; but the vessel being without guidance, they flapped idly this way and that, like the wings of a wounded bird. Slowly the head of the vessel turned round, and, as she drifted before the wind, advanced towards the boats. Just then I saw a figure in a white night dress running frantically about the deck—now peering over the side, now, with hands clasped above its head, gazing up at the sky, but uttering not a word. Then it disappeared, and within a minute, from the hollow hull of the vessel came a tumult of voices—of savage execrations mingled with despairing cries and shrieks, as the forlorn and wretched creatures swarmed out upon the deck. They crowded to the little boat at the stern, fought savagely for the possession of it, and swamped it in the vain attempt to get it afloat—the most forward and furious of them perishing before the eyes of the rest.—And now that all were aware of the death that awaited them, the cries and the curses, and the long dismal howls and shrieks all mingled together, were most heart-rending and horrible to hear, and will ring in my ears to my dying day. They soon caught sight of our boats, as the men, panic-stricken by the awful sounds, paused upon their oars, and gazed as if fascinated by the fearful tragedy.

As the sinking ship lurched heavily nearer and nearer, we merely pulled a few strokes sufficient to maintain a safe distance, and then paused and gazed again. The poor doomed wretches, stretching their clasped hands towards us, prayed piteously for the help we could not afford them; and anon goaded to madness by our silence, for we answered them not a word, called down curses from heaven upon our heads. It was a dreadful and sickening thing to be obliged to fly from the distress which we would all have willingly risked our lives to alleviate. But alas! there was no help for it; and all we could do was to add in silence our bitter lamentations to their own. For more than two hours we sat the agonising spectators of this horrible tragedy. It must have been nearly three hours past midnight when the 'Camden' went down, and the last drowning cry of the wretched passengers rang in our ears. I prayed to heaven that night that no human eye might ever again behold such a spectacle; and I hope the Great Ruler of the universe will hear my prayer.

'The dead cold silence that followed struck more terror to my heart than all the agonising cries that had gone before. Then I heard the strong men sobbing like women; but at these sounds, the captain, who had hid his face from the dreadful spectacle of the wreck, roused himself, and in a calm severe voice ordered the men to pull away, himself taking charge of the rudder. I had been in a sort of maze all this time, incapable of doing any thing but stare fixedly on the poor sinking ship; but when the boat began to move, I was recalled to my proper senses, and then the thought of my family and the peril we were in, almost bewildered me again. I turned to my poor wife who was in a dead swoon, and as I afterwards found, had fainted the moment I had joined her in the boat, and had beheld nothing of the fearful sight which had unnerved us all. She lay in the arms of her niece, who was almost as helpless as herself. The two eldest girls were moaning with apprehension and terror; but I was glad to see that the younger children were fast asleep, and that the girl had covered them up close in the bottom of the boat. We were all huddled together with the captain at the stern and as the sea was quite calm, were fortunately warm and dry. I put a little brandy to Betsy's lips and chafed her hands and feet, and it was not long before she revived and looked round. The captain was very kind to

us, and so were the men, who bore me no malice for the part I had taken; on the contrary, they endeavored to encourage us by saying that we should be sure to be picked up, at the furthest, in a day or two, and that, unless we had rough weather, all would be well.

'The day was now beginning to dawn, and there was soon light enough to reveal the horizon on eastern side. Two sails were visible, they said, though I could not see them; but they were too far off to catch sight of any signals we could make, and none were attempted. All that day we rowed on in an easterly course, looking anxiously for some relieving vessel.—Whether the captain felt the confidence he expressed with regard to our being picked up, I do not know; but in the afternoon he caused an account to be taken of whatever provisions were on board the boats; had them fairly distributed according to the numbers in each; and put us all upon an allowance, which, he said, would last for five days, with water for three days more. The sweet biscuits and the spirits in my possession were added to the general stock—the latter to be used only for cases of sickness or exhaustion. I had little inclination for food myself; but it distressed me to hear the complaints of the children at the scanty meal allotted them that day, and it went to my heart to be obliged to quiet them by reproof; what grieved me still more was that my wife would not touch her allowance, but shared it with the youngest children.

'Towards evening, a sail appeared to the northward, at the distance of five or six miles. We hoisted a shawl on an oar for a signal, and turned our boats towards her, and at one time had good hopes that she had seen us, as she altered her course as if to meet us; but she veered off on another tack shortly after, and disappeared in the distance and dusk of the evening. This disappointment came like a fresh calamity, and cast a dismal gloom on us all; but now a worse thing alarmed us—the weather became overcast, and though there was not much wind, the billows rose and fell in long black walls of water, now heaving us aloft on their tops, now plunging us down in the gloomy furrows. The boat lay very deep in the water. The captain signalled the other boat, to know if they could relieve us of a part of our weight; but all they could do was to take one of the water-casks, which they hauled on board with a rope. We threw over a few of the articles which could best be spared, and thus lightened the boat a little. Meanwhile, the weather grew worse—the billows began to break in foam, and the spray dashed over us in showers. With the aid of hammer, a saw, and a piece of sail-cloth, we managed to rig up at the stern a rude bulwark against the breakers, which would else have swamped us. It now began to rain, and that in a way that promised a continuance of wet for some hours at least. In a few minutes we were all drenched to the skin—and all more than ever impressed with the extremity of our misery and peril. My wife scarcely spoke a word, unless it was to quiet and comfort the children, who now cried bitterly and would not be consoled. The men no longer talked hopefully, but I could see them straining their eyes through the darkness, as it descended rapidly upon us, in search of some passing vessel.

'I think we all tasted the bitterness of death many times that night. Had the swell of the sea, as we expected, increased and brought the wind in its track, nothing could have saved us from sinking. It pleased God, however, to compassionate our distress, and limit the fury of the waves; and the rain ceasing an hour after midnight, the moon struggled fitfully from the clouds, and shewed us, O happy sight! a large vessel bearing full down upon us not half a mile in our rear. The men of both boats saw it together, and raised a shout with combined voices. Apparently this was not heard, and the captain called to me to fire my gun, which I had mechanically brought with me, and which he had prevented me from throwing overboard when I offered to do so. I did as he desired, and a minute after, we had the inexpressible rapture of seeing a flash on board the ship, and hearing the responding report of their gun. I cannot tell you the feelings which now rushed into my breast—the gladness and the gratitude of such a time they only know who, having been long in the very jaws of death, are suddenly snatched from its horrors to peace and safety.

'The good ship which had saved us was 'La Pucelle,' a French vessel, bound for Cherbourg from New York. Except the captain, none on board could speak much of the English tongue; but they understood our wants, and supplied them with a kindness and hospitality not to be surpassed, and seemed pleased beyond measure of their good-fortune in finding us. We continued with them five days, at the end of which time they spoke an English brig bound for Cardiff, to which, with many hearty good-wishes and farewells, they transferred us. We arrived safely, in three days more, in the Bristol Channel, and I was allowed to land at Swansea, where a relative of my wife's received us hospitably after the fearful perils we had escaped.

Such was Singer's account of his first sea-voyage, narrated to us eleven years after its occurrence. One would have thought that such an initiation in the fearful contingencies of sea-life would have sickened him of voyaging, and

made him content to try his fortune once more in his native land. His friends took this for granted, and when, within a few weeks of his return, he began making inquiries for another ship, accused him of tempting Providence to his destruction. John looked on the matter in a different light—felt convinced, in fact, that he was not destined to a watery grave—and made up his mind to follow his original intention.—But he took better precautions this time in the choice of a vessel—embarked his family in a first-class merchantman, and, after a speedy and prosperous passage of five weeks, arrived in safety at New York, whence he set out at once for the land of promise in the far west.

As a settler, Singer did well. He bought land on the boundary lines of civilisation, and shrewdly squatted a considerable tract in addition. He had the address to conciliate a wandering tribe of Indians by his generosity in their time of need, and thus converted the usual enemies of the settler into friends and defenders.—As his family grew up, they proved valuable and productive capital, and paved his way to competence and independence. His success drew many of his old friends after him, and he renewed, in the forests of America, the associations and friendships of his youth in Wiltshire. In ten years, John had grown a man of substance and authority, looked up to and respected by the population of a whole district. At that time, his wife's father died, leaving a considerable property to be divided equally among his children. Then it was that John Singer came over to assist in the settlement of the business, and to receive his own legacy; and then, too, it was that we heard the lamentable story of the loss of the 'Camden' from his own lips. This was twenty-seven years ago, and we have not heard of the sturdy settler since. If he be yet alive he is no doubt honoured as a patriarch, for the snows of nearly fourscore winters have by this time settled on his head.

## THE JAPANESE.

We are indebted to the London Weekly Times for the following deeply interesting account of the mission of Lord Elgin to Japan, taken from a private journal.

The following very interesting letters have been forwarded to us for publication.

We arrived at Nagasaki upon the 3rd inst.—It is one of the most beautiful places I have ever seen, the land high and precipitous, some of the hills rising 1,500 feet, covered with fine trees and vegetation of all kinds, the most common tree being not unlike a magnificent Scotch fir. The outer harbour is formed partly by islands, partly by the main land, the islands rising perpendicularly out of the sea. From the outer there is no appearance of the inner harbour, till you are almost at the head of the former, when the inner one suddenly opens to the view round some wooded islets, the town of Nagasaki lying at the farther end, built in a valley formed by two hills, up the sides of which a few temples and houses have crept. Nagasaki is the port at which the Dutch have been settled for 200 years, on a small island connected with the town by a small bridge; the island is only about 400 yards long by 300 broad, and, till within the last few years, the Dutch were kept rigorously to it, never being allowed in the town or country. They, as well as all foreigners, are now allowed to walk at pleasure about the town and into the country. Everywhere foreigners are received with the greatest civility by the people. There are two Emperors of Japan, one the spiritual, the other the working one. The former lives at Miaco, and is the descendant of the old race who were turned off the throne by the ancestors of the reigning Emperor. The spiritual Emperor has nothing to do with governing the country and is partly looked up to as a heavenly being, one condition of which is that everything he wears or uses is destroyed each night, and new clothes supplied the next morning. It is to prevent any one using the sanctified garments. The reigning Emperor lives here, and is elected, but in what manner I am not sure, but I believe by the princes. It appears a mere nominal election, for the son regularly succeeds the father, and has done so since his ancestor usurped the throne. I believe the descent of the spiritual Emperor can be traced, names and dates, with many of the branches of his family, for 2,500 years. The country is held by princes, who owe feudal duty to the reigning Emperor, who obliges them to reside for six months in the year at Jeddo, with their families; during the other six months he allows them to visit their estates, but keeps their families hostages in Jeddo. This restrains them, and the practice is intended to prevent the princes from obtaining too much influence over the people. It is difficult to discover what the military system of the empire is, but that it must have the power of bringing an immense number of men into the field is beyond doubt—they have numerous and well appointed batteries.

Nagasaki, and everything Japanese, bears a striking contrast to everything Chinese. You cannot be five minutes in Japan without seeing it is a progressive nation—the country towns, houses, and people all show this. The streets are wide and paved in the centre, houses open throughout on the ground floor, with matting formed in frames fitting neatly all over the rooms. On this they sit, sleep and eat, and everything is kept scrupulously clean. Behind each house is a small garden, with a few green