

Poetry,
Original and Select.

HOME.

(FROM BLACKWOOD'S MAGAZINE.)

O, Home! thou art in every place,
O'er all the boundless earth—
The centre of eternal space,
Where'er thou hast thy birth.

They say, "a thousand miles from Home,"
As from the dearest thing
That links our souls, the more we roam,
The more to it we cling.

What though ten thousand miles we run,
And add ten thousand! more,
There is a Home—'tis like the sun
That travels still before.

Though not for us—though all be strange,
Yet fondest hearts there be,
In all the world's unmeasured range,
No home elsewhere can see.

O'er peopled realms, or deserts vast,
There still One Voice was heard—
'Tis Home—Home there her lot hath cast,
Of man, or beast, or bird.

Within the forest's deepest shade,
Ten thousand depths around—
Home for each living thing is made
That creepeth on the ground.

Where life hath neither bed nor lair,
In silence and in gloom,
Home finds the lonely floweret there,
The worm within the tomb.

Home, Home---it is eternal love---
His presence and His praise---
O'er all, around, below, above,
Creation's boundless ways---

E'en in the poor defiled heart,
The present home of sin,
God said, Let wickedness depart,
And We will dwell therein.

Blest Spirit, thou that Home prepare,
Do thou make clean, secure,
Lest Love should seek his dwelling there,
His Home, nor find it pure.

Thou, when this earthly home shall fall,
As built on erring sands---
Me to that heavenly mansion call,
Prepared, not made with hands.

That Home of love, and joy, and peace,
No sorrow in the breast---
From troubling, where the wicked cease,
And were the wicked rest.

A CATASTROPHE: SPONTANEOUS COMBUSTION FROM GIN-DRINKING.—It was at the age of two years that a catastrophe took place which changed my prospects in life, and I must therefore say a little more about my father and mother, bringing up their history to that period. The propensity of my mother to ardent spirits had, as always is the case, greatly increased upon her, and her corpulence had increased in the same ratio. She was now a most unwieldy, bloated mountain of flesh, such a form as I have never since beheld, although at the time she did not appear to me to be disgusting, accustomed to witness imperceptibly her increase, and not seeing any other females except at a distance. For the last two years

she had seldom quitted her bed—certainly she did not crawl out of the cabin more than five minutes during the week—indeed, her obesity and habitual intoxication rendered her incapable. My father went on shore for a quarter of an hour once a month, to purchase gin, tobacco, red herrings, and decayed ship biscuit—the latter were my principal fare, except when I could catch a fish over the sides, as we lay at anchor. I was therefore a great water-drinker, not altogether from choice, but from the salt nature of my food, and because my mother had still sense enough left to discern that "Gin wasn't good for little boys." But a great change had taken place in my father. I was now left almost altogether in charge of the deck, my father seldom coming up except to assist me in shooting the bridges, or when it required more than my exertions to steer clear of the crowd of vessels which we encountered when between them. In fact, as I grew more capable, he passed most of his time in the cabin, assisting my mother in emptying the great stone bottle. The woman had prevailed upon the man, and now both were guilty in partaking of the forbidden fruit of the juniper tree. Such was the state of affairs in our little kingdom when the catastrophe occurred which I am now about to relate. One fine summer's evening we were floating up with the tide, deeply laden with coals, to be delivered at the proprietor's wharf, some distance above Putney-bridge; a strong breeze sprung up, and checked our progress, and we could not, as we expected, gain the wharf that night. We were about a mile and a half above the bridge when the tide turned against us, and we dropped our anchor. My father who, expecting to arrive that evening, had very unwillingly remained sober, waited until the lighter had swung to the stream, and then saying to me, "Remember, Jacob, we must be at the wharf-house early to-morrow morning, so keep alive," he went into the cabin to indulge in his potations, leaving me in possession of the deck, and also of my supper which I never ate below, the little cabin being so unpleasantly close. Indeed, I took all my meals *al fresco* and unless the nights were intensely cold, slept on deck, in the large dog-kennel abaft, which had been once tenanted by the large mastiff, but he had been dead some years, had been thrown overboard and in all probability had been converted into Epping suages, at 1s. 4d. lb. Some time after his decease I had taken possession of his apartment, and had performed his duty. I had finished my supper, which I had washed down with a considerable portion of Thames water, for I always drank more when above the bridges, having an idea that it tasted more pure and fresh. I had walked forward and looked at the cable, to see if all was right, and then, having nothing more to do, I lay down on the deck, and indulged in the profound speculations of a boy 11 years old. I was watching the stars above me, which twinkled faintly, and appeared to me ever and anon to be extinguished and then relighted.—I was wondering what they could be made of, and how they came there, when of a sudden I was interrupted in my reveries by a loud shriek, and perceived a strong smell of

something burning. The bricks were renewed again and again, and I had hardly time to get upon my legs when my father burst up from the cabin, brushed over the sides of the lighter and disappeared under the water. I caught a glimpse of his features as he passed me, and observed a fright and intoxication blended together. I ran to the side where he had disappeared, but could see nothing but a few eddying circles as the tide rushed quickly past. For a few seconds I remained staggered and stupified at his sudden disappearance, and evident death, but I was recalled to recollection by the smoke which encompassed me, and the shrieks of my mother, which were now fainter and fainter, and I hastened to her assistance. A strong empyreumatic thick smoke ascended from the hatchway of the cabin, and as it had now fallen calm, it mounted straight up in the air in a dense column. I attempted to go in, but as soon as I encountered the smoke, I found that was impossible—it would have suffocated me in half a minute. I did what most children would have done in such a situation of excitement and distress—I sat down and cried bitterly. In about ten minutes I removed my hands with which I had covered up my face, and looked at the cabin hatch. The smoke had disappeared, and all was silent. I went to the hatchway, and although the smell was still overpowering, I could bear it. I descended the little ladder of three steps and called "Mother" but there was no answer. The lamp fixed against the after bulkhead, with a glass before it was still alight, and I could see plainly in every corner of the cabin. Nothing was burning—not even the curtains of my mother's bed appeared to be singed. I was astonished—breathless with fear, with a trembling voice, I again called out "Mother" I remained for more than a minute panting for breath, and then ventured to draw back the curtains of the bed—my mother was not there! but there appeared to be a black mass in the centre of the bed, I put my hand fearfully upon it—it was a sort of unctuous pitchy cinder—I screamed with horror, my little senses reeled—I staggered from the cabin and fell down on the deck in a state amounting almost to insanity; it was followed by a sort of stupor, which lasted for many hours. As the reader may be in some doubt as to the occasion of my mother's death, I must inform him that very dreadful and peculiar manner, which does sometimes, although rarely, occur, to those who indulge in an immoderate use of spirituous liquors. Cases of this kind do indeed present themselves but once in a century, but the occurrence of them is but too authenticated. She perished from what is termed *spontaneous combustion*—an inflammation of the gasses generated from the spirits absorbed into the system. It is to be presumed that the flames issuing from my mother's body completely frightened out of his senses my father, who had been drinking freely; and thus did I lose both my parents, one by fire, and the other by water, at one and the same time.

SATURN'S RINGS.—The rings of Saturn must present a magnificent spectacle from those regions of the planet which lie above their enlightened sides as vast arches span-