

## Literature, &amp;c.

## THE SPIRIT OF THE MAGAZINES.

From the London Working Man's Friend.  
THE SOULS OF THE CHILDREN.

BY CHARLES MACKAY.

'Who bids for the little children—  
Body and soul and brain;  
Who bids for the little children—  
Young and without a stain?  
Will no one bid,' said England,  
'For their souls so pure and white,  
And fit for all good or evil,  
The world on their page may write?'

'We bid,' said Pest and Famine,  
'We bid for life and limb:  
Fever and pain and squalor  
Their bright young eyes shall dim  
When the children grow too many,  
We'll nurse them as our own,  
And hide them in secret places  
Where none may hear their moan.'

'I bid,' said Beggary; howling,  
'I'll buy them, one and all,  
I'll teach them a thousand lessons—  
To lie, to skulk, to crawl;  
They shall sleep in my lair like maggots,  
They shall rot in the fair sunshine;  
And if they serve my purpose,  
I hope they'll answer thine.'

'And I'll bid higher and higher,'  
Said Crime with his wolfish grin,  
'For I love to lead the children  
Through the pleasant paths of sin,  
They shall swarm in the streets to pilfer,  
They shall plague the broad highway,  
Till they grow too old for pity,  
And ripe for the law to slay.'

'Prison and hulk and gallows  
Are many in the land,  
'Twas folly not to use them,  
So proudly as they stand,  
Give me the little children,  
I'll take them as they're born:  
And I'll feed their evil passions  
With misery and scorn.'

'Give me the little children,  
Ye good, ye rich, ye wise,  
And let the busy world spin round  
While ye shut your idle eyes;  
And your judges shall have work,  
And your lawyers wag the tongue;  
And the jailors and policemen  
Shall be fathers to the young.'

'Oh, shame!' said true Religion,  
'Oh, shame, that this should be!  
I'll take the little children,  
I'll take them all to me.  
I'll rise them up with kindness  
From the mire in which they're trod:  
I'll teach them words of blessing,  
I'll lead them up to God.'

'You're not the true religion,'  
Said a Scot with flashing eyes;  
'Nor thou, said another scowling—  
'Thou'rt heresy and lies.'  
'You shall not have the children,'  
Said a third, with shout and yell:  
'You're Antichrist and bigot—  
You'd train them up to Hell.'

And England sorely puzzled  
To see such battle strong,  
Exclaimed with voice of pity—  
'Oh friends! you do me wrong!  
Oh, cease your bitter warring,  
For till you all agree  
I fear the little children  
Will plague both you and me.'

But all refused to listen;—  
Quoth they—'We bid our time;  
And the bidders seized the children—  
Beggary, Filth, and Crime;  
And the prisons teemed with victims;  
And the gallows rocked on high;  
And the thick abomination  
Spread reeking to the sky.'

From Hogg's Edinburgh Instructor.

THE PIT AND THE PENDU-  
LUM.

BY EDGAR A. POE

I was sick—sick unto death with that long agony; and when they at length unbound me and I was permitted to sit, I felt that my senses were leaving me. The sentence—the dread sentence of death—was the last of distinct accentuation which reached my ear. After that, the sound of the inquisitorial voices seemed merged in one dreary undetermined hum. And then there stole in my fancy, like a rich musical note the thoughts of what sweet rest there must be in the grave. The thought came gently and stealthily, and it seemed long before it attained full appreciation; but, just as my spirit came at length properly to feel and entertain it, the figure of the judges vanished, as if magically, from before me; the tall candle sunk into nothingness; their flames went out utterly; the blackness of darkness supervened; all sensations appeared swallowed up in a mad rushing descent as of the soul into Hades. Then silence and stillness, and night were the universe.

I had swooned; but still will not say that all of consciousness was lost. What of it there remained I will not attempt to define, or even to describe; yet all was not lost. In the deepest slumber—no! In delirium—no! In a swoon—no! In death—no! even in the grave all is not lost. Else there is no immortality for man. Arousing from the most profound of slumbers, we break the gossamer web of some dream. Yet in a sound afterward (so frail may that web have been), we remember not that we have dreamed. In the return of life from the swoon there are two stages; first, that of the sense or mental or spiritual; secondly, that of the sense of the physical existence. In the return of life from the swoon there are two stages, we could recall the impressions of the first, we should find the impressions eloquent in memories of the gulf beyond. And the gulf is—what? How at least shall we distinguish its shadows from those of the tomb? But if the impressions of what I have

termed the first stage are not, at will, recalled, yet, after long interval, do they not come unbidden, while we marvel whence they come? He who has never swooned, is not he who finds strange palaces and wildly familiar faces in coils that glow; is not he who beholds floating in mid-air the sad visions that the many may not view; is not he who ponders over the perfume of some novel flower—is not he whose brain grows bewildered with the meaning of some musical cadence which has never arrested his attention.

Amid frequent and thoughtful endeavours to remember—amid earnest struggles to retrace some token of the state of seeming nothingness into which my soul had lapsed, there have been moments when I have dreamed of success; there have been brief, very brief periods when I have conjured up remembrances which the lucid reason of a later epoch assures me would have had reference only to that condition of seeming unconsciousness. These shadows of memory tell, undistinctly, of tall figures, that lifted and bore me in silence down—down—still down—till a hideous dizziness oppressed me at the mere idea of the interminableness of the descent. They tell also of a vague horror at my heart, on account of that heart's unnatural stillness. Then comes a sense of sudden motionlessness throughout all things; as if those who bore me (a ghastly train!) had outrun, in their descent, the limits of the limitless, and paused from the wearisomeness of their toil. After this I call to mind flatness and dampness; and then all is madness—the madness of a memory which bustles itself among forbidden things.

Very suddenly there came back to my soul motion and sound—the tumultuous motion of the heart, and, in my ears, the sound of its beating. Then a pause in which all is blank. Then again sound, and motion, and touch—a tingling sensation pervading my frame. Then the more consciousness of existence, without thought—a condition which lasted long. Then, very suddenly, thought, and shuddering terror, and earnest endeavour to comprehend my true state. Then a strong desire to lapse into insensibility, then a rushing revival of soul and a successful effort to move. And now a full memory of the trial, of the judges, of the sable draperies, of the sentence, of the sickness, of the swoon. Then entire forgetfulness of all that followed; of all that a later day and much earnestness of endeavour have enabled me vaguely to recall.

So far, I had not opened my eyes. I felt that I lay upon my back, unbound. I reached out my hand, and it fell heavily upon something damp and hard. There I suffered it to remain for many minutes, while I strove to imagine where and what I could be. I longed, yet dared not to employ my vision. I dreaded the first glance at objects around me. It was not that I feared to look upon things horrible, but that I grew aghast lest there should be nothing to see. At length, with a wild desperation at heart, I quickly unclosed my eyes. My worst thought, then, were confirmed. The blackness of eternal night encompassed me. I struggled for breath. The intensity of the darkness seemed to oppress and stifle me. The atmosphere was intolerably close. I still laid quietly, and made effort to exercise my reason. I brought to mind the inquisitorial proceedings, and attempted from that point to deduce my condition. The sentence had passed; and it appeared to me that a very long interval of time had since elapsed. Yet not for a moment did I suppose myself actually dead. Such a supposition, notwithstanding what we read in fiction, is altogether inconsistent with real existence; but where and in what state was I? The condemned to death, I knew, perished usually at the *auto-da-fé*, and one of course had been held on the very night of the day of my trial. Had I been remanded to my dungeon, to await the next sacrifice, which would not take place for many months? This I at once saw could not be. Victims had been an immediate demand. Moreover, my dungeon, as well as all the condemned cells at Toledo, had stone floors, and light was not altogether excluded.

A fearful idea now suddenly drove the blood in torrents upon my heart, and for a brief period I once more relapsed into insensibility. Upon recovering, I at once started to my feet, trembling convulsively in every fibre. I thrust my arms wildly above and around me in all directions. I felt nothing; yet dreaded to move a step, lest I should be impeded by the walls of a tomb. Perspiration burst from every pore, and stood in cold big beads upon my forehead. The agony of suspense grew at length intolerable, and I cautiously moved forward, with my arms extended, and my eyes straining from their sockets, in the hope of catching some faint ray of light. I proceeded for many paces; but still all was blackness and vacancy. I breathed more freely. It seemed evident that mine was not, at least, the most hideous of fates.

And now, as I still continued to step cautiously onward, there came thronging upon my recollection a thousand vague rumours of the horrors of Toledo. Of the dungeons there had been strange things narrated—fables I had always deemed them; but yet strange, and too ghastly to repeat, save in a whisper. Was I left to perish of starvation in this subterranean world of darkness; or what fate, perhaps even more fearful awaited me? That the result would be death, and a death of more than customary bitterness, I knew too well the character of my judges to doubt. The mode or the hour were all that occupied or distracted me.

My outstretched hand at length encountered some solid obstruction. It was a wall, seemingly of stone masonry—very smooth, shiny, and cold. I followed it up: stepping with all the careful distrust with which certain antique narratives had inspired me. This process, however, afforded me no means of ascertaining the dimensions of my dungeon; as I might make its circuit, and return to the point whence I set out, without being aware of the fact; so perfectly uniform seemed the wall. I therefore sought the knife which had been in my pocket, when led into the inquisitorial chamber; but it was gone; my clothes had been exchanged for a wrapper of coarse serge. I had thought of forcing the blade in some minute crevice of the masonry, so as to identify my point of departure. The difficulty, nevertheless, was but trivial; although, in the disorder of my fancy, it seemed at first insuperable. I tore a part of the hem from the robe, and placed the fragment at full length, and at right angles to the wall. In groping my way around the prison, I could not fail to encounter this rag upon completing the circuit. So, at last, I thought; but I had not counted upon the extent of the dungeon, or upon my own weakness. The ground was moist and slippery. I staggered onward for some time, when I stum-

bled and fell. My excessive fatigue induced me to remain prostrate; and sleep soon overtook me as I lay.

Upon awaking and stretching forth an arm, I found beside me a loaf, and a pitcher with water. I was too much exhausted to reflect upon this circumstance, but ate and drank with avidity. Shortly afterward, I resumed my tour around the prison, and with much toil, came at last upon the fragment of the serge. Up to the period when I fell, I had counted fifty-two paces, and upon resuming my walk, I had counted forty-eight more—when I arrived at the rag. There were in all, then, a hundred paces; and admitting two paces to the yard, I presumed the dungeon to be fifty yards in circuit. I had met, however, with many angles in the wall, and thus I could form no guess at the shape of the vault; for vault I could not help supposing it to be.

I had little object—certainly no hope—in these researches; but a vague curiosity prompted me to continue them. Quitting the wall, I resolved to cross the area of the enclosure. At first, I proceeded with extreme caution, for the floor, although seemingly of solid material, was treacherous with slime. At length, however, I took courage, and did not hesitate to step firmly, endeavouring to cross in as direct a line as possible. I had advanced some ten or twelve paces in this manner, when the remnant of the torn hem of my robe became entangled between my legs. I stepped on it, and fell violently on my face.

In the confusion attending my fall, I did not immediately apprehend a somewhat startling circumstance, which yet, in a few seconds afterwards, and while I still lay prostrate, arrested my attention. It was this: my chin rested upon the floor of the prison, but my lips, and the upper portion of my head, although seemingly at a less elevation than the chin, touched nothing. At the same time, my forehead seemed bathed in a clammy vapour, and the peculiar smell of decayed fungus arose to my nostrils. I put forward my arm, and shuddered to find that I had fallen at the very brink of a circular pit, whose extent, of course, I had no means of ascertaining at the moment.

Groping about the masonry just below the margin, I succeeded in dislodging a small fragment, and let it fall into the abyss. For many seconds I hearkened to its reverberations as it dashed against the sides of the chasm in its descent; at length, there was a sullen plunge into water, succeeded by loud echoes. At the same moment, there came a sound resembling the quick opening, and as rapid closing of a door overhead, while a faint gleam of light flashed suddenly through the gloom, and as suddenly faded away.

I saw clearly the doom which had been prepared for me, and congratulated myself upon the timely accident by which I had escaped. Another step before my fall, and the world had seen me no more. And the death just avoided, was of that very character which I had regarded as fabulous and frivolous, in the tales respecting the inquisition. To the victims of its tyranny, there was the choice of death with its direst physical agonies, or death with its most hideous moral horrors. I had been reserved for the latter. By long suffering my nerves had been unstrung, until I trembled at the sound of my own voice, and had become in every respect a fitting subject for the species of torture which awaited me.

Shaking in every limb, I groped my way back to the wall, resolving there to perish rather than risk the terrors of the wells, of which my imagination now pictured many in various positions about the dungeon. In other conditions of mind, I might have had courage to end my misery at once, by a plunge into one of these abysses; but now I was the veriest of cowards. Neither could I forget what I had read of those pits—that the sudden extinction of life formed no part of their most horrible pain.

Agitation of spirit kept me awake for many long hours; but at length I again slumbered. Upon arousing, I found by my side, as before, a loaf and a pitcher of water. A burning thirst consumed me, and I emptied the vessel at a draught. It must have been drugged; for scarcely had I drunk, before I became irresistibly drowsy. A deep sleep fell upon me—a sleep like that of death. How long it lasted, of course I know not; but when once again I unclosed my eyes, the objects around me were visible. By a wild, sulphurous lustre, the origin of which I could not at first determine, I was enabled to see the extent and aspect of the prison.

In its size I had been greatly mistaken. The whole circuit of its walls did not exceed twenty-five yards. For some minutes this fact occasioned me a world of vain trouble—vain indeed; for what could be of less importance, under the terrible circumstances which environed me, than the mere dimensions of my dungeon? But my soul took a wild interest in trifles, and I busied myself in endeavours to account for the error I had committed in my measurement. The truth at length flashed upon me. In my first attempt at exploration, I had counted fifty-two paces up to the period when I fell; I must then have been within a pace or two of the fragment of serge; in fact, I had nearly performed the circuit of the vault. I then slept; and, upon awaking, I must have returned upon my steps—thus supposing the circuit nearly double what it actually was. My confusion of mind prevented me from observing that I began my tour with the wall to the left, and ended it with the wall to the right.

I had been deceived, too, in respect to the shape of the enclosure. In feeling my way, I had found many angles, and thus deduced an idea of great irregularity; so potent is the effect of total darkness upon one arousing from lethargy or sleep! The angles were simply those of a few slight depressions, or niches, at odd intervals. The general shape of the prison was square. What I had taken for masonry, seemed now to be iron, or some other metal, in huge plates, whose sutures or joints occasioned the depression. The entire surface of this metallic enclosure was rudely daubed in all the hideous and repulsive devices to which the charnel superstition of the monks has given rise. The figure of fiends in aspects of menace, with skeleton forms, and other more really fearful images, overspread and disfigured the walls. I observed that the outlines of these monstrosities were sufficiently distinct, but that the colours seemed faded and blurred, as if from the effect of a damp atmosphere. I now noticed the floor, too, which was of stone. In the centre yawned the circular pit from whose jaws I had escaped; but it was the only one in the dungeon.

All this I saw indistinctly and by much effort; for my personal condition had been greatly

changed during slumber. I now lay upon my back, and at full length, on a species of low framework of wood. To this I was securely bound by a long strap resembling a surcingle. It passed in many convolutions about my limbs and body, leaving at liberty only my head and my left arm to such extent, that I could, by dint of much exertion, supply myself with food from an earthen dish which lay by my side on the floor. I saw to my horror, that the pitcher had been removed. I say, to my horror, for I was consumed with intolerable thirst. This thirst it appeared to be the design of my persecutors to stimulate, for the food in the dish was meat pungently seasoned.

Looking upward, I surveyed the ceiling of my prison. It was some thirty or forty feet overhead, and constructed much as the side walls. In one of its pannels a very singular figure revited my whole attention. It was the painted figure of Time, as he is commonly represented, save that, in lieu of a scythe, he held what, at a casual glance, I supposed to be the pictured image of a huge pendulum, such as we see on antique clocks. There was something, however, in the appearance of this machine which caused me to regard it more attentively. While I gazed directly upwards at it (for its position was immediately over my own), I fancied that I saw it in motion. In an instant afterward the fancy was confirmed. Its sweep was brief, and of course slow. I watched it for some minutes, somewhat in fear, but more in wonder. Wearied at length with observing its dull movement, I turned my eyes upon the other objects in the cell.

A slight noise attracted my notice, and, looking to the floor, I saw several enormous rats traversing it. They had issued from the well, which lay just within view to my right. Even then, while I gazed, they came up in troops, hurriedly, with ravenous eyes, allured by the scent of the meat. From this it required much effort and attention to scare them away.

(To be Continued.)

From the London Working Man's Friend.

THE FOUR GREAT MEN OF THE  
LAST GENERATION.

(From a Lecture by Dr. Croly.)

In the interpositions of Providence, the fewness, yet the grandeur, of the instruments, is a distinguishing feature.

If this high evidence were given to a nation, it was to England, in the French war of 1793. To meet the four distinct aspects of the national peril, four individuals were successively brought forward; each possessing peculiar faculties; each applying those faculties to a peculiar crisis; each performing a service which would confessedly have been performed by no other of his contemporaries; each forming a class by himself; and each achieving a fame which neither time nor rivalry can either diminish in the memory of England.

WILLIAM PITT.

In the commencement of this greatest of European conflicts a mighty mind stood at the head of the English affairs—William Pitt!—a man fitted, beyond all his predecessors, for his time; possessed all the qualities essential to the first rank in the conduct of an empire—an eloquence singularly various, vivid, and noble—a fortitude of soul that nothing could shake or surprise—a vigour and copiousness of resource inexhaustible. Yet he had a still higher ground if influence with the nation in his unsullied honour and visible superiority to all the selfish objects of public life—in the utter stainlessness of his heart and habits, and in the unquestioned purity of that zeal which burned in his bosom as on an altar, for the glory of England. The integrity of Pitt gave him a mastery over the national feelings which could not have been won by the most brilliant faculties alone. In the strong financial measures, made necessary by the new pressure of the times, and to which all the sensitiveness of a commercial people was awake, the nation would have trusted no other leader. But they followed the great minister with the most profound reliance. They honoured his matchless understanding, but they honoured still more the lofty principle and pure love of country, which they felt to be incapable of deception.

The British minister formed a class by himself. He was the leader not only of English council, but of European. He stood on an elevation to which no man before him had ascended; he fought the battle of the world, until the moment when the struggle was to be changed into victory. If he died in the night of Europe it was when the night was on the verge of dawn. If it could ever be said of a public man that he concentrated in himself the genius and the heart of an empire, and was at once the spirit and the arm of a mighty people, Pitt was that man.

EDMUND BURKE.

Another extraordinary intellect was next summoned, for a separate purpose, scarcely less essential. The revolutionary influence had spread itself extensively through the country. A crowd of malignant writers, from whose pens every drop that fell was the venom of atheism and anarchy, were hourly labouring to prevent casual discontent into general rebellion. Success had made them insolent; and the country was rapidly filled with almost open revolt. Their connection with France was palpable—every roar of the tempest in that troubled sky found a corresponding echo in our own; we had fetes, the societies; and almost the frenzy of France; every burst of strange fire from the wild and bloody rites which republicanism had begun to celebrate flashed over our horizon; every pageant of its fantastic and merciless revelties found imitators ready to rival it on our shores.

Burke arose; his whole life had been an unconscious preparation for the moment. His early political connections had taught him of what matter democracy was made. He had seen it, like Milton's Sin—

—Woman to the waist and fair,  
But ending foul in many a scaly fold.

His parliamentary life had deeply acquainted him with the hollowness and grimace, the selfish disinterestedness, and the profligate purity of faction; and, thus armed in panoply, he took the field.

He moved among the whole multitude of quarrelous and malignant authorship a giant among pigmies—he smote their Dagon in its own temple—he left them without a proselyte or a name. His eloquence, the finest and most singular com-