

Literature. &c.

THE SPIRIT OF THE MAGAZINES.

A BOOK FOR THE HOME
FIRESIDE.

BY JOHN CRITCHEL PRINE.

When the night cometh round, and our duties
are done,
And a calm stealth over the breast,
When the bread that is needful is honestly
won,
And our worldly thoughts nestle to rest.
How sweet at that hour is the truth-written
page,
With fancy and fiction allied!
The magic of childhood the solace of age,
Is a Book for the Home Fireside.

There, manhood may strengthen a wavering
mind
By the sage's severest of lore;
There woman, with sweetness and pathos
combined,
Make the fountains of feeling run o'er;
There the voices of children may warble, like
birds,
What the poet has uttered with pride,
And the faint and desponding take heart at the
words
Of a Book for the Home Fireside.

Many souls have been trained into goodness and
grace,
And many stern hearts chastened down;
Many men have been nerved to look up with
bright face,
Whatever misfortune might frown;
Many minds have been roused to new life, and
grown great,
Though baffled, obstructed, and tried,
Have been schooled to endure, taught to 'la-
bour and wait,'
By a book for the Home Fireside.

And not with the presence of home is it
gone,
For abroad in the fulness of day,
It's spirit remains with us, cheering us on,
O'er the roughness of life's common way;
And nature looks lovely, but lovelier yet,
Through the glass of reflection descried;
We have read of her wonders—and who would
forget?
In a book for the Home Fireside.

Whate'er be my fortune, in shadow or shine,
Mid comfort, stern labour, or woe,
May I ne'er miss the taste of those waters di-
vine,
From the well-springs of genius that flow;
I should lose a sweet charm, I should lack a
great joy,
And my heart would seem withered and
dried,
Did I want what has been my delight from a
boy,
A Book for the Home Fireside.

Bless the bards and the prosemen, whatever
their clime,
Who bequeath us the wealth of their thought,
Their truth-revelations, their visions sub-
lime,
Their fancies so tenderly wrought.
We were poor, with the riches of kings for
our dower,
Without what their pens have supplied,
And that brain must be barren which owns
not the power,
Of a Book for the Home Fireside.

Dear child! let thy leisure be linked with
the page,
But one nor too light nor austere;
May its precepts improve thee, its spirits en-
gage,
And its sentiments soften and cheer,
May it keep thy affections in freshness and
bloom,
Console thee, and teach thee, and guide,
Be a flower in the sunshine, a star in the
gloom,
A Book for the Home Fireside.

From Chambers's Edinburgh Journal.

UP A COURT.

Two or three years ago, I established my-
self in one of the large manufacturing towns of
Lancashire, with the intention of there com-
mencing my career as an artist. I was young
and little known; and though I had studied
assiduously, and felt very confident in my own
capabilities for the so called higher walks of art,
yet, as the public at that time showed no parti-
cular admiration of my productions, I found it
convenient to abandon for a time my ambitious
dreams, and apply myself to portrait painting.
In order to procure daily bread, I soon obtained
a tolerable amount of miscellaneous patronage,
and the constant succession of sitters of
every grade made my occupation an amusing
one.

I was about to cease from my my labors on
Saturday afternoon, when a low knock at the
door attracted my attention. 'Come in!' I
cried; and the door opening, a man entered,
whose soiled moleskin dress, sprinkled with cot-
ton flakes, bespoke him a factory hand.

'Beg pardon for disturbin' yo', said my visi-
tor; 'but aw cöm to see if yo'd do a bit of a
job for me?'

'What sort of a job?' I inquired.
'Why, it's a little lad o' mine as is ill, an'
we think as we could like to hev his portrait
ta'en wi' them colored chalks, if yo'd be so good
as do it. Yo'd ha' to our house, 'cause he's
bedfast; but we'd be quite willin' to pay sum-
mat moor than th' usual charge for th' extra
trouble as yo'd hev.'

'Oh! I'll do it with pleasure,' said I. 'But
when do you wish me to come?'

'Why, now, if yo' con,' said my new patron,
'for yo' seen we han but one place, an' it's not
allus fit for a gentleman to go into; but of a
Saturday afternoon it's clyeaped up an' quite
tidy; an' Willie'd be finely pleased to sit, if
yo' could coom wi' me now.'

I assented at once, packed up what I requi-
red, and we sallied forth.

'You are employed in a mill, I suppose,' said
I, as we walked on.

'Ay, aw'm a spinner at Wotton's. We stop'n
sooner of a Saturday, an' so aw took th' oppor-
tunity o' coomin'.'

'And your little boy—what is the matter
with him?'

'Why, aw'm fear'd he's in a consumption.
He geet his back hurt when he wur a little un,
an' he's never looked up sin'. Poor thing! he's
worn away till he's nowt but skin an' bone, an'
has a terrible cough, as well'y snakes him to
pieces. But he's allus lively, though he con-
not stir off his little bed; an' he's as merry as a
cricket when he sees me coomin' whoam at neet,
specially if he spies a new book stickin' out o'
my jacket-pocket. He likes readin', an' aw buy
him a book wnen aw've a spare shillin'. But,
here's Grime's Court: we mun turn up here,
if yo' please'n.'

Turning out of the dingy street we had been
traversing, we entered a gloomy little court,
containing much dirt and many children; where
the heat from the closely-packed houses, com-
bining with the natural warmth of the air, pro-
duced an atmosphere like that of a baker's oven.
The contributions of the inhabitants, in the shape
of rotten vegetables, ashes and dirty water, for-
med a confused and odorous heap in the
centre of the court; and, amongst these
ancient relics, a wretched misanthropic looking
hen was digging with the zeal of an antiquary.

'Why is rubbish allowed to lie here?' said I,
'the scent from it must be both offensive and
injurious. Are there no receptacles for these
matters?—no sewers to receive this filthy
water?'

'There's a sewer, but it's choked up; an'
when we teen'n ony watter down, it breyks
through into that cellar at th' corner, an' then
th' 'owd mon as lives in it grumbles, 'cause it
runs in on his shelf, an' mars his bit o' meyt.—
So we're like to teen it down th' middle o'
the court, an' let it go where it will. As for
th' ashes an' 'tatoe pillin's an' sich like, we'n
nowhere else to put 'em, for we cannot burn
'em.'

'Have you no yard behind your house?' I
enquired.

'No; th' cottages as they build'n now are
mostly set back to back, to save room an'
bricks. There's but two places in 'em, one
above an' one below; so we're like to put th'
victuals an' th' coals under th' stairs. It's
terribly thrutchin' wark, they moight think as
poor folk needed no breathin'-room!'

It seemed to have been cleaning day at all
the houses; the floors, visible through the
open doors, were newly washed and sanded;
and the women in clean caps and aprons, with
faces glowing from a recent scrubbing, were
setting the tea-things with a pleasant clatter;
while their husbands, most of them pale faced
operatives, lounged out side enjoying their
Saturday evening's leisure.

A pleasant-looking, neatly-dressed woman
met us at the door of the house before which
my conductor halted, and with a smile and a
courtesy invited me to enter. The room
though small, and crowded with furniture, was
extremely clean, and as neatly arranged as the
heterogeneous nature of its contents would
permit. An old clock, with a dim, absent-
looking face, ticked merrily in one corner, and
on the chest of drawers opposite the door,
where a number of books, a stag's horn, and a
stuffed owl, which squinted with one of his
glass eyes, and stood on his legs with the air of
a bird who was more than half-seas over.

'Is that Mr Worthington, father?' said a
small, weak voice.

'Ay, this is him, Willie,' said my companion,
going towards the window, beside which I now
perceived a small bed, and in it a little deformed
boy. He was propped up with pillows, and
held out his thin hand with a smile as I ap-
proached him. The pale face, over which the
almost transparent skin seemed tightly drawn,
the large, bright, eager eyes, and parched lips
of the little patient, told too plainly the
nature of his disease. His mother was still
busy with his toilet, or, as she phrased it, 'shod-
din' him up a bit'; so, taking a seat beside him,
I arranged my paper and pencils, whilst the
good woman brushed his hair and smoothed the
collar of his night-dress.

'There, aw think he'll do now, John—won't
he?' said she, addressing her husband, who
had watched her operations with great inter-
est.

'Thou's made him look gradely weel,' an-
swered John; 'an' so now, Mr Worthington,

we'll leave Willie an' yo' to keep house,
whilst my wife an' me goes to th' mar-
ket.'

The worthy couple departed; and I commen-
ced my sketch, feeling rather doubtful whether
I could reproduce on paper the little, wan, half-
infantile, half aged face that looked up at me
with a strange, quiet smile.

'Are you not weary sometimes, Willie,
while lying here constantly?' I inquir-
ed.

'Sometimes,' he answered, 'but not often;
there's always somethin' to look at, you see;
either th' children outside, or th' old hen, or
th' donkey man as sells blackin'. Once,' con-
tinued Willie, growing confidential, 'there was
a real Punch an' Judy came into the court, an'
th' man as was with it saw me through the win-
dow, an' asked mother if I was bedridden; an'
when she told him I was, he brought Punch an'
Judy close to th' window, an' let me watch 'em
ever such a while; an' he said he'd come again
sometime.'

'Have you some plants there, Willie?' said
I, pointing to two black jugs, filled with soil,
in which some small brown stumps were vi-
sible.

'Yes; they're rose trees as mother set for
me. She says they're dead; but there may be
a little bit of 'em alive somewhere, an' so I wa-
ter 'em every day still. An' see, father's made
me a garden in th' window here,' added he
proudly exhibiting a large plate, covered with
a piece of wet flannel, on which mustard-seed
had been strewn. The seed, sprouting forth
vigorously, had covered the surface of the
plate with bright-green vegetation. 'Isn't it
nice?' said he, looking up with sparkling eyes.
'Sometimes I put my eyes close to it, an' look
through between the stalks, an' then I can al-
most fancy it's a great forest, an' every little
stalk a big tree, an' me ramblin' about among
'em like Robinson Crusoe.'

'Have you read Robinson Crusoe, Willie?'
I asked.

'Yes, many a time,' he answered, 'Look,
I've these books too; and he drew a couple of
volumes from beneath the pillow. *Bruce's Trav-
els and Types*. And father's promised me
a new book when he gets his wages rais-
ed.'

He had talked too eagerly, and was stopped
by a dreadful fit of coughing, which left him
panting and exhausted. He lay quiet, and
listened delightedly, whilst I described to him
what I had witnessed in the course of my own
limited rambles: yet showing, by his minute
questions, that eager and painful longing for a
sight of the open country which the sick so of-
ten display. When, finally, I promised to bring
him some flowers at my next visit, his joy knew
no bounds.

We had become fast friends by the time the
father and mother returned; and great was
their delight when I exhibited my sketch, al-
ready more than half finished, and in which I
had succeeded beyond my expectations. The
child's artless talk, and the simple kindness
of the parents, interested and pleased me, and
I continued to work zealously at the portrait
till the twilight, which fell in Grime's Court
two hours earlier than anywhere else, com-
pelled me to cease. Promising to return on the
following Saturday to complete the work, I
departed, after receiving a kiss from Willie, who
held me by the collar, whilst he enjoined me to
be punctual, and to mind and bring the flow-
ers.

Saturday afternoon arrived in due course,
and having furnished myself with a bouquet as
large as a besom, I betook myself early to
Grime's Court. Willie was watching for me at
the window, and clasped his hands for joy at
sight of my floral prize. Whilst I resumed
my task, he busied himself in examining, arrang-
ing, and rearranging his treasure, discovering
new beauties every moment, and peeping into
the flower-cups as if they were little fairy pal-
aces, filled with untold wonders, as they doubt-
less were to him. The portrait was just finish-
ed when John came home, and he and his wife
vied with each other in expressing admiration of
my performance.

'Aw'm sure yo're nother paid nor haulf-paid
wi' what yo' charge'n,' said he, as he placed the
payment in my hand; 'but aw'll try to come
out o' yer debt sometime if aw live.'

'An' many thanks to yo', sir,' said the mo-
ther, 'for th' pleasure as yo'n gin to th' child.
There's nothin' pleases him so much as flowers,
an' he so seldom gets any.'

'Willie's full o' presents to-day,' said John:
'see thee, lad! and he drew forth a new
book, and placed it in the child's outstretched
hands.

'Look, look, Mr Worthington!' cried Wil-
lie, his little face flushed with excitement and
pleasure: 'a Journey round the World, and
full of pictures—only look!'

'Ay! aw thought that would would please
thee,' said his gratified father. 'Now you can
ramble round th' world bout stirring off thy
bead. But stop a bit, Mr Worthington,' he
added, as I was preparing to depart, 'aw've
sommat to fetch down stairs before yo' go'd:
sit yo' down a minute; and John vanished up
the stairs whence he speedily returned with a
small parcel in hand. Unfolding a paper, he
displayed a long, narrow box, formed out of a
piece of curiously marked wood. On the lid

an owl's head, evidently copied from the
squinting individual on the drawers, was carved
with considerable skill.

'Is that your work, John?' exclaimed I, in
some surprise.

'Ay,' said John, with a grin. 'Aw seed as
yo' carried yer pencils an' 'tother things lapped
up in a piece o' paper, an' aw thought a box
would be a deal handier; so aw've made this at
neets, when aw'd done my work, an' aw's feel
very proud if yo'll accept o' it.'

'That I will,' said I; 'and thank you heart-
ily. But how is this, John?—why, you are
quite an artist! Where did you learn to carve
so well?'

'Aw took it up o' mysel' when aw wur a lad,
an' aw carve bits o' things now and then for th'
neighbor's childer; but yo' see aw cannot
make th' pattern for 'em, so aw geet the de-
signer at our mill to draw me this owl's yead
fro' this on th' drawers, an' then aw cut it out.
Willie can draw a bit; aw'll warrant he'll copy
most o' them flowers as yo'n brought him, afore
they wither'n: will 'ou not, Willie?'

The boy lay still, with his face turned
towards the window, and did not an-
swer.

'Willie! Willie!—why, surely he hasn't
fall'n asleep already,' said his mother, approach-
ing the bed. He had—into the long deep
sleep, from which there is no earthly awaking.
With the book clasped to his breast, the droop-
ing flowers from his hands, the child had died,
without a sigh or a struggle.

I stood long beside the bed, listening silently
to the mother's wail and the father's smothered
sobs, feeling it vain and useless to offer words
of comfort till their wild grief had spent
itself.

'Hush, Martha, woman! said John at last,
laying his hand on his wife's shoulder, and try-
ing to command his shaking voice; 'hush! I
dunnot tak' on so. It's a comfort, after a', to
see him die wi' smiles on his face, than if he'd
gone i' pain. He went when we wur at th'
happiest, an' we'll hope he's happier still
now.'

'John,' said the mother, looking up, 'let's
not stir th' book an' th' flowers; it would be a
sin to tak' 'em fro' him; let 'em be buried
wi' him.'

Two days later, I helped to carry little Wil-
lie to a quiet church-yard, some distance from
the town, where we laid him in a sunny corner,
with the book and the withered flowers upon
his breast.

NEW WORKS.

From the Crimean Expedition. By Baron de
Bazancourt.

BATTLE OF THE ALMA.

Placed upon a hill the marshal sees the whole
of the movements of his army; he follows with
his eyes his valiant troops, dispersed upon dif-
ferent points, and climbing under a murderous
fire, the activities of the Alma. Oh! my
brave soldiers! cried he often. Worthy sons of
Austerlitz and Friedland! He wishes to be
everywhere at once; for danger is everywhere.
He is no longer the sick man exhausted by
suffering. The noise of battle has revived his
strength; his look flies with his thought. He
hears Bosquet's cannon; he sees the 3rd Division
climbing the last acclivities; he sees the
battalions of the 1st crowning the heights, and
marching through a torrent of grape; but he
also sees, advancing against them, formidable
masses; and all around him, bullets bound and
shells burst. He foresees, he divines, that it is
upon this point, attacked simultaneously by
those two Divisions, that the heat of the battle
must now be concentrated; that it is there
that the Russians will fight with desperation.
He sends orders to General Forey (who placed
at first on the left of Prince Napoleon's Divi-
sion, to connect it with the right of the Eng-
lish, had proceeded under fresh orders, with
his division of reserve, towards General Bos-
quet), to despatch one of his brigades to Ge-
neral Canrobert, and to proceed himself, with
the other, to the extreme right. The general
rapidly traversed, with General de Lornet's
brigade, the village of Almatamak, and crossed
the river; whilst d'Aurelle's brigade puts it-
self in motion, to rejoin the first Division.—
This latter brigade passes before the little
mamelon upon which the commander-in-chief
is placed, surrounded by all his staff. Directly
the marshal perceives General d'Aurelle, he
cries aloud: General, go and place yourself
without loss of an instant, at the disposition of
Canrobert, who has much to do up there! I
count upon you d'Aurelle! The latter, for
answer, waves his kepi in the air, shouts Vive
l'Empereur! and dashes forward in the direc-
tion which is indicated to him.

CAPTURE OF MENCHIKOFF'S CAR-
RIAGE.

No one could describe the irresistible dash
of the troops, during this memorable day, or
that warlike ardour which boiled in the veins of
the soldiers and officers. What heroic traits,
what sublime deaths, have remained obscure
and unrecorded! During the battle, when the
marshal galloped from one point to another,
the wounded, as he passed, half rising and
seeking to draw themselves towards him,—
while waving in the air their mutilated arms.