# Literature, &c.

## THE SPIRIT OF THE MAGAZINES.

### SILENCE.

There is a silence big with woe,
The latest satge of settled grief,
When scalding tears have ceased to flow,
To the sad bleeding heart's relief.
'*Tis passion's slumber*—but so full,
Of hideous dreams, she sleeps in vain,
Her heart is still insatiable,
And unrelaxing is her pain.
While like an asp, the worm of care,
Sucks the rich stream of life away;
Till smiles the demon of despair,
Exulting o'er his prey.

There is a silence big with joy,
The full heart's throbbing eloquence,
When love upraised to ecstacy,
Defies the power of utterance.
'*Tis passion's trance*—the soft eye's ray,
Half shrouded in the lid, reveals
What thrilling rapture bears the sway,
And gently o'er the bosom steals;
And as it meets a glance in turn,
As soft, as sweet, is fondly given,
Such fires of wild delirium burn.
It seems as earth were heaven.

There is a silence of the heart,
Where humble resignation dwells,
Though care thrusts in his poisoned dart,
And like the sea affliction swells.
'*Tis passion's calm*—no rising wind,
Can ruffle, and no storm o'ersway,
The equilibrium of the mind,
Which e'er to heaven's decrees gives way
For power divine enchains self-will;
When he who by his mighty nod,
Stays nature's shocks, exclaims " Be still,
And know that I am God !"

There is a silence of the night,
When nature's murmur sounds no more,
When darkness steals the realms of light,
And spreads his wings the welkin o'er.
'*Tis passion's rest*—o'erweening thought,
Gains some relief; the fevered brain,
The throbbing heart with anguish fraught,
A little respite find from pain.
Hush'd is the city's busy hum;
A silent hour the village knows;
And the wood's choristers are dumb,
Inviting to repose.

But there's a silence deeper still
Than these—the silence of the grave,
When the fond bosom's every thrill
Finds rest beneath oblivion's wave.
'*Tis passion's end*—the mourner's sob,
And languor's sigh are heard no more;
The flutter of delight, the throb
Of love, of hope, and fear, are o'er;
Nor aught that silence e'er shall break,
Till the last trumpet's fearful voice,
The tenants of the earth shall wake,
To tremble or rejoice.

### AN ANECDOTE ABOUT AN OLD HOUSE.

Not many seesons ago I was enjoying the summer-tide in the pleasant county of Kent; and as autumn ripened around me, I almost for got that its maturity would usher in that wintry period which always recalls me to my metropolitan manacles. I do not mean to give the real names of the seaside town in which I had pitched my tent—of the old house near it, of which my anecdote treats—nor of the family to which that house belonged. There are tragedies consummating yearly in pleasant places at this very moment; but it is for the future to exhibit them to the public scrutiny; and there are few actors in such scenes who court the notoriety of a legitimate name. And in truth it was a pleasant place where that old mansion, half castle, half manor-house, had its site. Standing, or rather, when I saw it, falling into gradual decay, amidst rich corn-fields, on a gentle acclivity that looked upon the wide sea, it had subtided into a rambling, ruinous farm-house, with high gables, and a couple of projecting parapets which told their tale of better days in the olden time. But it is not of the olden time our tale tells, or we might have spared ourselves the delicacy of veiling the true name of the place.

It was during one of my first rambles through a part of the country to which I was a stranger, that I was struck by the anomalous appearance of the 'Old House;' but there was no person in sight of whom I could make enquiries regarding it; so I strolled on and on, until at length I reached a bottom or narrow dell, entirely shut in by the small trees and large shrubs which surrounded it, forming a dense thicket. A little space at the very lowest part of this bottom remained clear from the redundant wilderness of sloe-bushes, wild roses, and brambles, that formed a safe shelter for the hedgehogs in which this part of the country abounds. As I reached this clear space I became aware that I was not alone; amongst the long grass in the very middle of the dingle sat a grim-looking old gipsey-woman, busily shelling a quantity of peas—no doubt her personal booty, reft from some neighbouring field.

She no sooner saw me than beginning the usual whine of solicitation, she offered to read my fortune; and willing to have a little chat with her, I crossed her hand with the " sesame silver;' but soon tired of her twaddle, I asked her the name of the old farm-house which I had just passed, and to whom it belonged.

'Rosebourne, my gentleman, has belonged to many,' said she; 'but the old folks are not there. It was a black deed that brought an ill name on the house, and evil things will walk about it as long as one stone stands upon another.'

This reply led to further questioning; and a few additional sixpences elicited the facts I am here to relate.

Almost a hundred years ago the house of Rosebourne was the residence of the Chesterton family, then reduced in numbers and in wealth from what it had been in former times. Gilbert Chesterton, the master of Rosebourne, was a fine, handsome young fellow, whose personal advantages were unfortunately accompanied, as is too frequently the case, by a weak head and a feeble intellect. He was, however, free from vicious propensities; and, luckily, his mother, a lady of great prudence and judgment resided with him, continuing in truth to exercise the judicious control of a parent over a silly child, to his great advantage as well as to the satisfaction of all belonging to them. She was his able and willing counsellor in every emergency; preserving him from the imposition of crafty and mercenary advisers, as well as from the influence of pernicious example, and the evils into which his natural credulity and good nature might have led him. He was her only living child, but the three orphan daughters of a brother of her late husband shared the hospitalities of Rosebourne, and to one of these amiable girls it was her chief desire to unite her son; but, in the affairs of matrimony, there are strange discrepancies—events forestalling all our determinations, and thwarting the most Machiavelian manœuvres. It so happened that when Gilbert had reached his thirtieth year, and just as his mother had counted on the speedy termination of her hopes by a union between the cousins, that, to her horror and affliction, she discovered what, indeed, she had never suspected, an intrigue between her son and her confidential servant. This girl, Hannah Filmer, was of low parentage, but great natural shrewdness and a resolute and ambitious disposition had stood her in the stead of education, so that she was generally looked up to as a person very superior to her class. Artful, time-serving, and, withal, very beautiful, she had long crept not only into all the secrets of her kind mistress, but into the accessible heart of her mistress's son, when, unexpectedly, all was revealed.

Hannah was discharged instantly; but the fierce and almost insane anger of Gilbert on the occasion, so utterly unlike his customary childlike docility, coupled with the shock her feelings had sustained at the discovery of so much perfidy in one in whom she had confided, threw the old lady into a fever from which she never recovered; nor had her corpse lain three months in consecrated dust ere Hannah was reinstalled at Rosebourne as the lawful wedded wife of its proprietor. His orphan cousin, expelled with contumely, removed to a small cottage near—— and it soon became obvious that the new mistress of Rosebourne was averse to all who had been befriended by her predecessor: while before a year had passed, her husband's happiness seemed to have no better source than idleness, wassail, and all that want of self-care which preserves respectability.

The hospitality and charity which used to make the Chesterton family so popular, ceased to be practised; and the most churlish niggardliness and meanness marked the living and conduct of the new mistress, whose low bred and unprincipled kindred were now all in all at Rosebourne. Amongst these was one suspicious character, long looked upon with little less than detestation by all who knew him. Benjamin Bailey, or, as he was called, Black Ben, had by turns been sailor, pirate, smuggler; he was a huge, powerful fellow, swarthy as a mulatto, and was as coarse in manners as in appearance; while, to the disgust of the few respectable people who continued to associate with the Chestertons, he seemed to rule with undisputed authority over all Rosebourne, the domineering lady not even excepted. Ere long, however, reports coupled his name with hers in a manner that subjected both to the contempt and scrutiny of the world. It was bruited about that on one occasion Gilbert himself had discovered an intimacy between the cousins which aroused him from his wonted inertion to one of those violent bursts of fury to which the feeble in intellect are prone. Ben Baily, ferocious as he was, nevertheless was driven with opprobrium from the house; and angry menaces were heard to pass between them. A month, however, had barely passed before a reconcilliation was brought about by Mrs Chesterton: and soon after, at a public dinner at ——, Gilbert was heard to say that he was going in a few days to Calais on business of importance, which might detain him for a week.

Not many days thereafter, a gentleman who called at Rosebourne was informed that Mr Chesterton had crossed the Channel, but was expected daily. Weeks, however, passed, unmarked by his return, and at length his wife instituted inquiries, as she declared she had not heard from him since his departure. She felt, or feigned, the most acute anxiety. Bailey was despatched to Dover, and thence passed over to Calais, returning from both places without having found any traces of the missing squire. At last, when more than a month had elapsed, the family lawyers called a meeting: search was made for a will, and one was discovered of so recent a date as a week before his disappearance. All was left to his wife; not even his nearest connexions or most faithful servants were remembered. Time passed; Gilbert was firmly believed to have perished in France, or to have been accidentally drowned on his passage to it. And in those days such things might have happened more easily than now; the spirit of investigation was not so busy—it lay dormant beneath the wings of slumbering justice. At length, when all but the members of his own family seemed to have forgotten him, Gilbert Chesterton's widow grew in opulence and increased in unpopularity, no one appearing to benefit by her accumulating wealth but her kinsman, Ben Bailey, who led a life of reckless dissipation, until, in a midnight fray at ——, he caused the instant death of a comrade by a sudden blow, but had the good luck to escape to the French coast, nor was he again heard of for many years.

At length, when age had bent the form, blighted the beauty, and blanched the black locks, of the lady of Rosebourne, it was reported to her that a travelling tinker craved audience of her. Her refusal to see him was answered by a request that she would look at a ring which he sent her. Mrs Chesterton evinced considerable agitation at the sight of it, and the stranger was summoned. He was a stout old man, his face seamed with scars, his hair grizzled, and with a fierce red eye, which had no companion. After a long visit, he left the presence of the lady, who issued orders for the immediate instalment of the stranger in a snug little cabin upon her property, recently become vacant by the death of a tenant. And here, under the name of Beale, he continued to ply the trade of a tinker.

Years passed, during which strange stories went about of the singular influence of Tinker Beal over the mistress of Rosebourne, until one night, stumbling over a chalk-pit he had the misfortune to break his leg, and when discovered in the morning by a chance passenger, he was raging under fever.

At the same time, on the same night, another death-bed scene was not far distant. In an oak-panelled chamber at Rosebourn, on a stately bed lies the mistress of the house in the last struggle. Though upwards of seventy, her eyes are still keen and hawk-like; and as they wander, or rather *rush*, restlessly, over the group of mercenaries who attended her, a something witch-like and unholy seems to fill her whole being. Her favourite kinsfolk are present, but to their earnest questions as to what her last desires are, she replies not, save by brief denials of the proffered aid of priest or physician. Their still more earnest appeals to her benevolence,—their solicitations that she should reveal the secret deposits of her hoarded wealth, are all in vain. No reply, save a muttered word that sounded more like an imprecation than a prayer, was vouchsafed them. The night was stormy, and the cold intense; a wood fire blazed merrily on the hearth, while death was busy in the chamber where the impatient and worthless relatives of the dying woman would fain have wrested from her the secrets that might enrich them.

'Look, how she keeps gazing at the panel to the right!' whispered one of the women.

'It is quite awful!' said another. 'Did not Gilbert's picture use to hang there?'

'What is that you say of Gilbert?' cried the dying woman, in a hollow tone. 'Who dares say that he is here? The dead do not walk!—'tis a lie! What for do ye whisper! Water? water?—I am choking!'

They wetted her lips, and were again about to seat themselves, when, crackling on the hearth, a huge fagot burst with a loud report, one of the cinders starting from the fire and striking against the very panel of which they had been a minute before talking. The women, startled at first, arose to remove the still burning cinder.

'No, no!—dare not to touch it!' screamed the expiring woman. 'Not there—not there! Touch not that, or curses—curses——'

And sitting up in the bed, her arm extended at full length, her long, skeleton finger pointing to the panel, her eyes glaring wildly, the mistress of Rosebourne stiffened into a clayey corpse. When the horrified attendants drew near the couch, they found her stone-dead in that strange unnatural position.

After they had stretched her down, and in vain tried to close the ghastly eyes, their first thoughts were of themselves.

'Depend upon it,' said one, 'her money lies hid behind that panel, or why forbid us to touch it?'

'It was the spark from the fagot,' said another.

'Not a bit; it must have been the panel.—Let us break it open before anybody is aware she is dead!'

A carving knife was in the room, and with that and the poker the covetous gold-seekers soon forced the panel out; nor were their hopes of discovering something defeated. But it was not money they found; *it was the mouldering bones of a human corpse!*

The tinker lay in the agonies of death next morning, when the medical man who had attended him entered the cabin.

A gipsy woman, who had served as nurse to the sick man, and who, indeed was the chance passenger who found him after his fall, sat near the pallet, and heard the doctor ask him how he felt.

'Is Hannah Filmer—is Mrs Chesterton still alive?' was the reply.

The medical man related her death, and the strange discovery of the body behind the panel.

'It is the body of Gilbert—of her husband!' said the tinker. 'We murdered him, and hid him there!'

And so it was.

For many years after that fearful act, the room had been shut up, the lady declaring she could not sleep in the apartment where her dear husband had slept so long beside her; but a few weeks before she was seized with her last illness, she insisted on its being prepared for her. As for her paramour, kinsman, and confederate, Benjamin Bailey, otherwise Black Ben the tinker, he expired in a few moments after the dreadful confession had passed his lips.

### A PRECIOUS KING.

George IV never had any private friends; he selected his confidants from his minions.—Macmahon was an Irishman of low birth and obsequious manners; he was a little man, his face red, covered with pimples, always dressed in the blue and buff uniform, with his hat on one side, copying the air of his master, to whom he was a prodigious foil, and ready to execute any commissions, which in those days were somewhat complicated. Bloomfield was a handsome man, and owed his introduction at court to his musical talents; he was a lieutenant in the Artillery, and by chance quartered with his regiment at Brighton. The Prince, who was always fond of music, then gave frequent concerts at the Pavilion; some one happened to mention a young officer of Artillery who was a proficient on the violoncello; an invitation was sent, the royal ameteur was pleased, the visits became more frequent, a predilection ensued, and the fortune of the lieutenant was assured. In the latter days of his reign, and before his health had rendered it necessary, he very seldom went out, even in his favourite low phaeton and ponies at Windsor; his more genial habit was to remain in his robe de chambre all the morning, and never dress till the hour of dinner. In this dishabille he received his ministers, inspected the arrangement of all the curiosities which now adorn the gallery in the castle, and are standing monuments of his good taste; amused himself with mimicking Jack Radford, the stud groom, who came to receive orders; or lectured Davison, the tailor, on the cut of the last new coat. His dress was an object of the greatest attention to the last; and, incredible as it may appear, I have been told by those about him, and by Bachelor, who, on the death of the Duke of York, entered his service as valet de chambre, that a plain coat, from its repeated alterations, would often cost £300 before it met his approbation. This, of course, included the several journeys of the master and his men backwards and forwards to Windsor, as they almost lived on the road. Mrs Fitzherbert was married privately to George the fourth, and though bearing always the most unsullied reputation, her life during his reign was one continued scene of trial and disappointment. During the commencement of her union, and while the attachment of that fickle Prince still existed, few were the happy hours that she could number even at that period. He was young, impetuous, and boisterous in his character, and very much addicted to the pleasures of the table. It was the fashion in those days to drink very hard, and Mrs Fitzherbert never retired to rest till her royal spouse came home. But I have often heard the late Duke of York say, that often when she heard the Prince and his drunken companions on the staircase, she would seek a refuge from their presence even under the sofa, when the Prince, finding the drawing-room deserted, would draw his sword in joke, and, searching about the room, would at last draw forth the trembling victim from her place of concealment.—*Raike's Journal.*

### THE FRENCHMAN AND THE ENGLISHMAN.

A Frenchman seems gratified at an opportunity of being polite. An Englishman grows tired after the third bow, and looks vexed, sullen, or impatient; the Frenchman's desire to please seems strengthened by habit. His back is india-rubber, his hams caoutchouc, his hat-brim is metallic, and looks never shabbier for repeated handling. His courtesy, at the first meeting does not imply eternal friendship, yet is as sincere as the cold, cautious bend of the Englishman. John Bull, if he can, considers it a clear gain to slip round the corner and escape shaking hands; Monsieur waits ten minutes at the cafe door in hope of meeting a friend.

Sign of the Times.—A gentleman of highly respectable exterior in a first class railway carriage, the train having arrived at the terminus, and the guard demanding the passengers tickets, by a slight mistake, arising from inadvertence, produces his ticket of leave.