

## Literature. &amp;c.

## THE SPIRIT OF THE MAGAZINES.

From Littell's Living Age.

## A WELCOME TO AULD AGE.

BY MISS HAMILTON.

Is that auld age that's tripping at the pin?  
I trow it is, then haste to let him in.  
Ye're kindly welcome, friend! nay, dinna fear  
To show yersel, ye'll cause nae trouble here.  
I ken there are who tremble at your name,  
As gin ye brought wi' ye reproach or shame,  
And who of a thousand lies had wear the sin  
Rather than own ye for their kith or kin.  
But, far frae shrieking ye as a disgrace,  
Thankfu' I am, to have lived to see your face;  
Nor shall I e'er disown ye, nor tak pride  
To think how lang I might your visit bide;  
Doing my best to mak ye weel respectet,  
I'll nae fear for your sake to be neglectet.  
But since ye'er come, and through aw kind o'  
weather

We'er doomed frae this time forth to jog together,  
I'd fain mak compact wi' ye, firm and strang,  
On terms of fair giff gaff to hold out lang.  
Gin ye'll be civil, I shall liberal be;  
Witness, the lang, lang list of what I'll gie.  
First then—I here mak oure for gude and aye  
Aw youthful fancies, whether bright or gay,  
Beauties and graces too, I wad resign them,  
But sair I fear 'twad cost ye fash to find them.  
For 'gainst your Daddy Time they could na  
stand,

Nor bear the grip of his unsonie hand;  
But there's my skin, which ye may farther  
crinkle

And write your name at length on ilka wrinkle,  
On my brown locks give leave to lay your paw  
And bleach them on your fancy white as snaw,  
But look na' Age, sae wistful at my mouth,  
As gin ye lang'd to pu' out ilka tooth.  
Let them, I do beseech, still keep their places,  
Tho' gin ye wish't ye were free to paint their  
faces.

My limbs I yield ye, and if ye sae meet  
To clap you icy shackles on my feet,  
I'll no refuse, but if you drive out gout,  
Will bless ye for't, and offer thanks devout.  
Sae muckle wad I gie wi' free gude will,  
But och! I fear there's mair ye look for still,  
I ken by that fell glower and meaning shrug,  
You'd pit your skinny fingers on each lug,  
And unco fair ye are, I trow, and keen  
To cast your misty powders in my een.  
But O! in mercy spare my two wee twinklers  
And I for aye will wear your crystal blinkers.  
Then bout my lugs I'd fain a bargain mak,  
And gie my hand that I sell na'er draw back,  
Weel then, wad ye consent their use to share,  
'Twad serve us baith and be a bargain rare,  
Thus I wad hae't when babbling fools intrude,  
Gabbling their noisy nonsense long and loud,  
Or when ill nature weel brushed up by wit,  
Wi' saer sarcastic takes its aim to hit,  
Or when detraction, meanest son o' pride,  
Spies out wee faults and seeks great worth to  
hide,

Then make me deaf—as deaf as deaf can be,  
At aw such times, my lugs I lend to thee.  
But when in social hour ye see combined,  
Genius and wisdom, fruits o' heart and mind,  
Good sense, good humour, wit in playfu' mood,  
And candor e'en frae ill extracting good,  
O! then, auld friend, I maun hae back my  
hearing—

To want it then wad be an ill past bearing.  
Better to lonely sit in the doof spence  
Than catch the sough of words witho't the  
sense.

Ye winna promise! och! ye're unco' dour,  
Sae hard to manage and sae cold and sour,  
Nae matter, hale and sound I'll keep my heart,  
Nor frae a crumb on't sall I ever part.  
It's kindly warm, will na'er be chilled by aw'  
The coldest breath your frozen lips can blaw;  
And tho' ye tak the rest, it shan'na grieve me,  
For aw blith spunk of spirits ye maun leave  
me,

But let me tell ye in yo'r lug, auld Age,  
I'm bound to travel wi' ye but ae stage,  
Be't lang or short ye canna keep me back,  
And when we reach the end on't, ye maun then  
pack,

For there we part forever, late or caire,  
Another guess companion meets me there,  
To whom ye, will ye, nill ye, maun me bring,  
Nor think that I'll be wae or laith to spring  
Frae your poor dozed side, ye carl uncouth,  
To the blest arms of Everlasting youth!  
By him, whate'er ye've rifled stawn or taen,  
Will all be gien wi' interest baek again,  
I rose by aw' gifts and graces, thousands moe  
Than heart can think of, freely he'll bestow;  
Ye need na' wonder, then, nor swell wi' pride  
Because I kindly welcome ye as guide  
To a sae far your better—now aw's told,  
Let us set out upon our journey cold,  
Wi' nae vain boasts, nae vain regrets tormented  
We'll e'en jog on the gait sae quiet and con-  
tented.'

From Chambers's Journal for November.

## THE PHANTOM HORSE.

The story is still current in the neighbour-  
hood of the spot on which the Chateau Beau-  
voisin once stood, though the affair happened  
as long ago as 1786.

The Chateau Beauvoisin was situated about  
a league and a quarter, or nearly four miles,  
from Paris, a little apart from the St. Germain  
high-road. At that time, the house was kept  
in excellent repair, was always used as a resi-

dence all the year round, saving for a month or  
two in the summer and autumn time; and its  
extensive gardens and grounds were laid out  
with unexceptionable taste, and kept in first-  
rate order.

The Marchioness de Beauvoisin, though still  
young, handsome, and rich, had been three  
years a widow, and was much given to roman-  
tic habits—solitary wanderings and musings  
about her estate, long evening vigils at her bou-  
doir-window, and other similar demonstrations.  
As it happened, it was the marchioness herself  
who beheld the apparition in the first in-  
stance.

It was a beautiful evening in that pleasant  
time of the year when spring is fast merging  
into summer; sweet light dews were falling,  
the moon and stars were shining, and the mar-  
chioness was at her window, surveying with pen-  
sive pleasure the long heavy masses of ancient  
foliage that gave beauty and dignity to her  
domain, and now all silvered over and ethereal-  
ized by moonlight and mist. Suddenly she was  
startled by seeing something moving with pro-  
digious velocity up a certain lane which skirted  
one side of the grounds of the chateau, and  
conducted from the Paris highway into the ru-  
ral region. Away, and away, and away—all up  
the lane, she could perceive a large animal  
rushing with fearful speed; and yet, though  
she was certain her eyesight did not deceive  
her, she could not hear the faintest sound. Rai-  
sing her eyeglass, she saw, beyond question,  
that the object of her alarm was a large black  
horse. There was a saddle on its back, but no  
rider!—and though the ground was hard and  
dry, and the night quite still, not the slightest  
sound or echo could she catch of its hoof-  
falls.

The marchioness cried out in terror, and her  
maid, on coming to her side, found her to be in  
a state of violent nervous agitation. The hand-  
some young widow was indeed in an ecstasy of  
wonder and affright. She despatched Antoine,  
the woodman, and the rest of her male servants  
in all directions, to make inquiries as to what  
accident had happened to account for the horse  
being seen running away, saddled and bridled,  
but riderless. The people went forth—north,  
south, east, and west; but without result. No  
one had heard of any accident in any quarter,  
and no one had seen the horse without a rider.  
It was late in the evening, indeed, and the coun-  
try-people were mostly in their houses prepar-  
ing for bed; and as for passing travellers, very  
few travelled the highways at night in those  
times, save in numerous parties. In fine, every  
one believed that the marchioness must have  
fallen asleep at her window, and dreamed all  
this of a horse without a rider. The marchion-  
ess, however, had not been asleep, nor had she  
been dreaming. She crossed herself with a  
pious shrug, and half feared she had beheld the  
Evil One in the form of a black horse.

For a day or two, the marchioness's 'dream  
was the joke of the men and maids, both the  
indoor and outdoor menials of her ladyship;  
but very soon her strange narration received  
'confirmation strong.' Antoine, the woodman  
or keeper—Antoine himself, the most hilarious  
of the sceptics, was the next who beheld the  
apparition. Only a few days later, he was  
coming down the avenue or lane towards the cha-  
teau, at a late hour in the evening, when he be-  
held the large black horse approaching him at  
a terrific pace. Its long wild mane was tossing  
and flying in the air, and Antoine fancied its  
eyes shone with a supernatural fire. The bridle  
was over its neck, and the saddle on its back,  
but no rider! And what was more strange,  
more darkly suspicious than all, the horse sped  
along the hard road in a mysteriously silent  
manner; its hoofs, in fact, not making more  
noise than those of a goat. Surely, after all,  
the marchioness had not been dreaming.—  
They who had discredited her had been the  
fools.

The honest woodman was stricken with su-  
perstitious terror at the phenomenon. Though  
almost frightened out of his wits, he still look-  
ed after the flying horse, expecting every mi-  
nute to see the earth open, and the creature  
leap into its stables in Hades amidst fire and  
smoke. But the creature went straight on up  
the avenue, neither turning to the right nor the  
left; neither rising into the air nor descending  
into the bowels of the earth; for Antoine looked  
after, and watched it as long as he could see  
even the waving of its ample tail.

After this, there was nothing talked of at the  
Chateau Beauvoisin but the phantom-horse; and  
while the excitement was still raging in the  
midst of the fair mistress of that household and  
her several retainers, Antoine made a special  
journey of inquiry into the matter, proceeding  
straight up the village at the end of it, and call-  
ing upon all his friends and acquaintances and  
gossips there. But the whole affair was quite  
new to them; they had never seen or heard  
anything about this horse; nor had any one  
heard of an accident taking place, such as  
would account for a horse being seen without  
a rider. As for the said horse running without  
making any noise, all Antoine's friends scratch-  
ed their heads again, and thought that rather  
too good not to be considered as a joke. An-  
toine had many a wrestling argument with them  
on the subject; and as argument is rather dry  
work, many a cup of wine was drunk while the  
subject was being discussed. To the latter cir-

cumstance must be ascribed the fact, that An-  
toine did not set out upon his return until the  
evening was somewhat advanced, notwithstanding  
that his route lay down the haunted ave-  
nue, unless he were disposed to make a circuit  
of several miles. The wine, while it had tempt-  
ed him to prolong his stay, had also imparted  
to him some measure of a hazy, effervescent  
bravery. He broke away from his cronies with  
a laugh and a boast, and to all their taunts and  
jokes about the haunted lane and the phantom  
horse, declared that he should be only too glad  
if he could meet the Evil One himself, for  
then, perhaps, his dark majesty would be kind  
enough to explain to him the mystery of the  
whole affair.

So Antoine set out upon his homeward walk.  
It was growing dark, but the stars were peep-  
ing forth, and it was the time of the new moon  
and promised to be an evening at least light  
enough for one to walk home in comfort. The  
people were all retiring within their houses.  
As he passed along the straggling village  
street, many *jalousies* were closed, and many  
candles lighted. Notwithstanding the wine,  
Antoine soon began to think that it was a drea-  
ry thing to be out late by one's self, and to wish  
that the chateau were not so far away; and as  
exercise and the increasing cold qualified more  
and more the dauntless mood in which he had  
set forth, he began to look forward with con-  
siderable discomfort to that part of his journey  
where he should have to strike into the spot  
he grew more serious, till he might be said to  
be in a state not far from downright trepida-  
tion.

Antoine crossed himself many times that  
night. When one's nerves become excited, it  
is astonishing how much may be found to af-  
fright in the commonest sights and sounds.—  
The swaying of a branch in the wind, the sigh-  
ing and murmuring of the air amidst the leaves,  
gave a new significance in twilight hours, and  
when heard by ears prepared for alarms.

Thus honest Antoine was in such a state by  
the time he found himself as the top of the  
dreaded avenue that he walked on muttering  
his prayers aloud and shutting his eyes every  
instant, for fear that the next step might reveal  
something horrible straight before him. A dark  
dismal-looking house, surrounded on three sides  
by ancient sobre trees—one of the country-  
seats of the Du Foinvert family but very  
little used as a residence for many years  
past—stood by the side of the road, a little  
way down. Antoine passed the gloomy man-  
sion in particular dread, and was just beginning  
to breathe a little more freely as he cleared the  
deep shades of its surrounding trees, when sud-  
denly he saw before him something advancing  
up the avenue with a wild swinging action,  
which he but too well remembered. It was the  
phantom horse! Antoine rushed aside, and  
stood quaking beneath the trees. The crea-  
ture came on, bounding, tearing, tossing; eyes  
shining, mane and tail flying, bridle and stirrups  
swinging; no rider on its back, no noise from  
its hoofs. It was gone, past and away, in an  
instant. Sick with terror, Antoine looked after  
it, expecting every moment to behold some  
terrific *denouement*; but what was his aston-  
ishment when he saw it stop right in front of  
the old house of the Count du Foinvert, and  
paw at the great wooden gate of the *porte  
cochere*, uttering at the same time a short im-  
patient neigh! And what when, almost immedi-  
ately, he beheld one leaf of the gate opened from  
within, as if in obedience to the summons of  
the diabolical horse, which thereupon tossed its  
head and walked in, as proud and confident as a  
lord entering his own castle! 'The devil has  
taken apartments in the Chateau Foinvert!'—  
exclaimed Antoine. 'No wonder the family  
have not been able to live there years past;  
this accounts for it. This is the secret of the  
unlucky old horse!'

When Antoine reached home that night, he  
was in such a state as to awaken the sympathy  
of his feilow domestics, from the coachman to  
the scullion; and when, after the administration  
of the various stimulants, he related what he  
had seen, the whole household became sudden-  
ly oppressed with the sense of the surrounding  
mystery, and believed unhesitatingly that the  
world was full of ghosts, spirits, enchanters,  
and emissaries of the Evil One.

In the morning, the marchioness heard the  
story from the lips of her own waiting-maid,  
and was immediately seized with an intense cu-  
riosity to know who lived in the Chateau Foin-  
vert, and what was the meaning of it all; and,  
moreover, the marchioness, like a resolute  
young widow, fully believed that nothing in the  
world could prevent her getting at the bottom  
of it.

Almost immediately after breakfast she or-  
dered her carriage, and taking with her the  
coachman, a footman, and Antoine, was driven  
to the Chateau Foinvert.

The gates were opened by a groom, who, in  
answer to an inquiry as to who was living in the  
house at present, answered: 'No one; but  
Monsieur the Count stops at the place occasi-  
onally, and, as it happens, is here now.'

'Oh!' exclaimed the marchioness, 'I was  
not aware Monsieur the Count did our neigh-  
bourhood so much honour. Tell your master

I beg to speak with him a moment on a sub-  
ject which has given me much anxiety.' The  
words were hardly uttered, when a very ele-  
gantly dressed gentleman was observed merg-  
ing from one of the shaded walks beneath the  
ancient trees that surrounded the chateau. He  
was a personage of a distinguished and elegant  
presence, and apparently about twenty-nine or  
thirty years of age. His face was handsome;  
but in its already sunken cheeks and peculiar  
pallor, exhibited the ravages of a life of dissipa-  
tion. Seeing a carriage with attendants, and a  
very charming lady in it at his *porte cochere*,  
he hastened forward.

'There is Monsieur le Comte,' said the  
groom; and turning to his master, he exclam-  
ed—the name having been communicated to  
him by the footman—'Madame la Marquise  
de Beauvoisin desires to speak with mon-  
sieur.'

'Yes, monsieur,' said the lively marchioness,  
inclining her head as the count bowed low be-  
fore her. 'I have come expressly to ask some  
important questions.'

'I shall be only too happy to answer any  
questions madame may do me the honour to  
ask,' said the count, politely opening the door  
of the carriage, and handing the marchioness  
out. 'Pray, step into my poor house. It is  
not well appointed, for we seldom come here  
now-a-days; but, at any rate, we may find a  
chair for you to sit upon.'

They passed into the house, and entering  
one of the rooms opening from the entrance-  
hall, the count placed a chair by the window for  
the marchioness, and drawing another for him-  
self exactly opposite, sat down and prepared  
himself to hear what she had to say, with a  
gravity which in a slight measure discompos-  
ed the marchioness, who all the time was fully  
conscious that her visit was solely prompted by  
curiosity, and indeed was rather fearful that  
some of the questions she intended to ask might  
be of a somewhat hazardous sort.

'I am exceedingly anxious to know, mon-  
sieur,' she commenced, 'who it was that was  
thrown from his horse last night.'

'Thrown from his horse, madame! How—  
when—where?' asked the count in sur-  
prise.

'Well! that is what I am come to learn,'  
said the marchioness. 'It was a large black  
horse the gentleman had been riding, and the  
accident happened somewhere in this immediate  
neighbourhood.'

'It is the first I have heard of it,' said the  
count, looking at his fair visitor with a peculiar  
smile, which might have expressed a grave sur-  
prise, and perhaps some other feeling. 'I am  
extremely sorry that it is not in my power to  
afford any information on the subject; but you  
will forgive the shortcoming when I assure you  
that I know nothing about it myself.'

'Possibly,' said the marchioness, 'your groom  
may know something about it.'

'My groom has not been away from the  
house these two days, madame, and is not like-  
ly to know anything of what happened out of  
doors last night.'

'And your other domestics?'

'Are all in Paris.'

'What! only one groom?'

'Only one groom, madame—as I am here to-  
day and gone to-morrow.'

'Very well, monsieur. Excuse my ques-  
tions. I warned you they would be impertinent.  
The fact is my servant saw a horse  
bridled and saddled running up the avenue  
last night, as if he had thrown some one and  
run away; and the affair has made me so un-  
easy that I have not been able to think of any-  
thing else ever since.'

'That anxiety does great honour to your  
kind heart, dear madame,' said the count. 'I  
can assure you I regret very sincerely that I  
have not been thrown off my horse myself—so  
that I might be able to answer your inquiries,  
and have the honour and pleasure of your com-  
passion.'

This was spoken with great gallantry, and  
the marchioness could not forbear a little blush;  
but she moved restlessly in her chair, as if an-  
noyed at the thought of being balked in the  
elucidation of a romantic mystery.

'Excuse me, monsieur, for my persistence,'  
she went on; 'but, as I am informed, this horse  
saddled and bridled, but without a rider, stop-  
ped its headlong course at your gate, of all  
places in the world—and that the gate was  
opened as he was let in. It was the fact of  
the creature running hither, indeed that made  
me fear some one belonging to the house had  
met with the accident.'

'It must be all a mistake, madame,' said the  
count, smiling again. 'Your servants' eyesight  
must have deceived him in the gloom of the  
evening. And—a black horse too—did you not  
say a black horse?'

'Yes monsieur—perfectly black.'

'I have not such an animal. I have only one  
horse here, in fact, at present, and he is more  
white than black.'

The marchioness blushed: it seemed as if she  
were doomed to be baffled.

'Well!' said she, rising from her chair, there  
is certainly something mysterious about this af-  
fair—exceedingly mysterious; for on one occa-  
sion I saw this horse running up the avenue  
myself; and my servant has seen it twice. Is  
it not very remarkable monsieur?'