

1801

Tales of Wonder. Containing The Castle of
Enchantment or The Mysterious Deception. The
Robbers Daughter or The Phantom of the Grotto.
The Magic-Legacy & c.

Unknown

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Recommended Citation

Tales of Wonder. Containing The Castle of Enchantment or The Mysterious Deception. The Robbers Daughter or The Phantom of the Grotto. The Magic-Legacy &c. London: J. Roe, 1801.



*Naomi appearing to Clodio sitting among
the Ruins of the Old Castle.*

Published for J. Roe. April 21. 1801.



TALES OF WONDER

CONTAINING

- The Castle of Enchantment*
- The Mysterious Deception.*
- The Robbers Daughter or*
- The Phantom of the Grotto.*
- The Magic-Legacy &c*



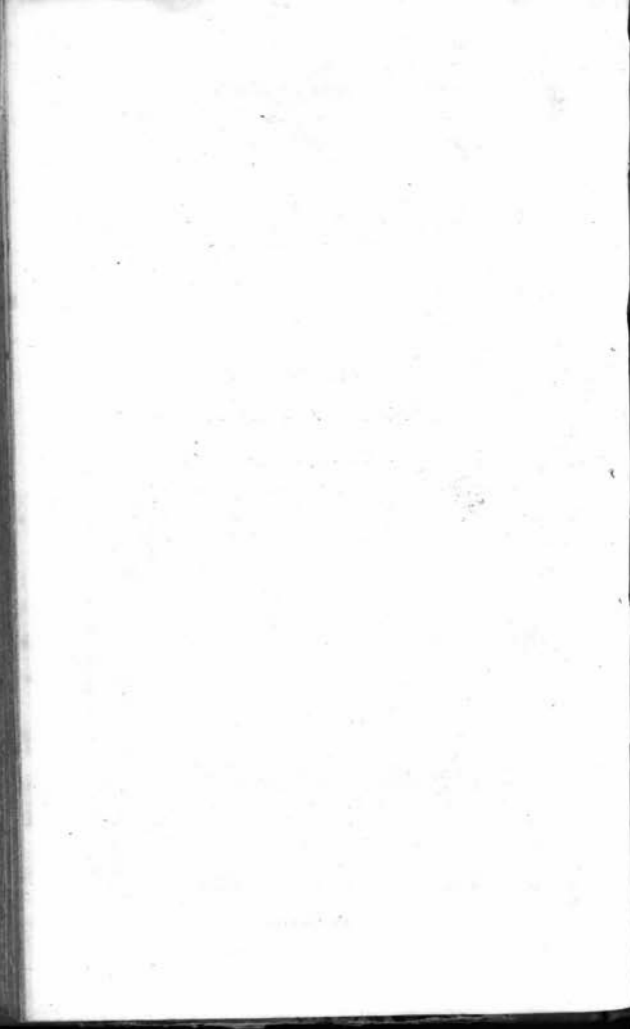
*Black Spirits and White.
Blue Spirits and Grey.*

Printed by J. Hurst

*Printed for Ann Lemoiné, White Rose Co. Coleman St.
and*

Sold by J. Hurst Paternoster Row

Price Six Pence.



THE

CASTLE OF ENCHANTMENT;

OR, THE

MYSTERIOUS DECEPTION.

ON a sultry day, at the beginning of autumn, just as the sun began to decline towards the horizon, a violent tempest surprised a meanly appalled traveller, in a region to which he was an entire stranger, and compelled him to seek shelter from the storm. The natural obscurity of a thick forest of lofty trees, heightened by the heavy clouds, buried all the surrounding objects in so deep a night, that without the frequent flashes of lightning, he would have been unable to see twenty paces before him. Happily, by this dreadful illumination, he discovered an old half-ruined tower, that rose above some thick wood on a small eminence, and offered him a sufficient defence from the violence of the tempest. This sight imparted a ray of joy to him, that was succeeded by rapture, when, by a flash of uncommon splendour, he discovered that, among the ruins of the castle, three turrets still remained uninjured. "At length," cried he, in a voice of transport, "I have found the termination of my troubles, since it is impossible that Lafris would deceive me, and this is certainly the spot he has indicated as the period of my miseries." He perceived a narrow path that led through the thicket to the tower, at which he arrived in a few minutes. These three towers were all that the destructive hand of time had spared of a spacious and magnificent castle, the fragments of which, overgrown with moss and shrubs, lay for a vast extent scattered about.

The heavy rain did not permit him to contemplate these awful ruins, and he hastened to gain the interior of the tower, the entrance of which was open, and he found himself in a large vaulted hall, which, at various apertures, admitted the lightning sufficiently to display a winding ascent, that led to the top of the building. His heart throbb'd, while he groped his way up to the dark ascent, and

winding thrice round the tower, terminated in a small anti-chamber, so feebly illuminated, that he could discern nothing but a bench of stone placed against one of its walls, and the passage to another apartment, from which issued the little light that glimmered in the former room. He looked through the entrance, and the first glance gave such certainty to his expectations, that he drew back, and seated himself on the bench to recover his composure. He observed his dress, and, for the first time, was ashamed of his appearance, which was not calculated to justify his intrusion into an apartment like that before him. Recollecting, that by favour of this appearance he had passed unhurt through various provinces and kingdoms, he resolved to proceed a little longer with it, however ill accordant to the magnificence of the apartment he was about to enter.

He stepped in, and seemed to tread in the chamber of a monarch. The floor was covered with cloth of gold, the walls were hung with green silk tapestry, bordered with festoons of artificial flowers, that rivalled the productions of nature. A bed in the form of a pavillion, with hangings of blue satin, stood on one side the apartment, which received all its light from a lofty arched window of crimson glass, that threw a rich glow over the room, at once solemn and cheerful. However unexpected all these particulars in such a wilderness might be, and in a ruinous castle, he was still more surprised, instead of the object he was in search of, to find a young man reclining on the bed, who raised himself at his approach, and regarded him with a serious but serene look, without the least sign of alarm at the abrupt appearance of a person, whose figure was so little adapted to impress any one in his favour.

The youth was wrapped in a large scarlet mantle; his eyes were sunk in his head, his complexion was pale and sickly, and on his whole person there was an impression of tender sadness. He began an apology for his intrusion, which the youth did not suffer him to finish. "You seem by your appearance," said he, "little favoured of fortune; if you are unhappy, you are my brother, and welcome to me."

"I am a stranger," answered he, "the native of a distant land. A tempest, that surprised me in this forest, drove me for refuge to this tower, which is the same, that for some weeks I have been seeking in this kingdom."

The youth raised his eyes, and observed the stranger with greater attention; and though his appearance was rather hideous than alluring, the sound of his voice was so engaging, as to gain him the heart of the youth, who strove in vain to reconcile so uncouth a figure with an accent that excited in him such pleasing emotions. He bade the old man seat himself on the bed, and he produced some bread and fruits, and a flask of wine. "This liquor," said he, "has remained untouched many days: I cannot expend it better than on thee, who seemest to need somewhat to refresh thee. I have lived for more than a month on bread and water, and shall probably never indulge on better food."

The stranger surveyed his host with a look of pity, and thanking him for his kindness, said, "As a proof of my wish to be grateful, I will shew myself in my own form, in which I may be more serviceable than in my assumed one." With these words he divested himself of his dress, and revealed to the youth a young man of own age, and equal to himself in beauty, though he too seemed to have suffered from inward sorrow, as well as from the toils of his pilgrimage.

The youth of the tower gazed earnestly at his guest; when at length, unable to repress his emotions, he threw his arms about the stranger's neck, pressed him to his bosom, and washed his cheeks with tears.

The stranger, however, affected by this effusion of tenderness, could not but be surprised, and his astonishment was perceived by the youth of the tower. "Thou shalt learn the cause of all these wonders," said the latter; "but first swear never to desert me, but to reside with me here till death shall part us." "I do swear it," answered the stranger, "I vow never to quit thee, by the life of her for whom I breathe, whom I so long have sought in vain, and expected to have found in this tower."

"In this tower," exclaimed the other; "but I think you have already said so. There is something mysterious in thy discourse, in thy features, and in our meeting in this tower. Tell me, I conjure thee, who thou art, and whom thou seekest; I will return thy frankness, and confide to thy bosom a secret, that hitherto has been limited to mire, and on which depends the destiny of my life."

"How can I withhold any thing from thee, when I feel inclined to shed my life to testify my affection for thee. But expect to hear a strange and incredible history."

"It cannot be more marvellous than what I shall relate, when thou hast satisfied my curiosity."

During this discourse a couple of cavaliers, muffled up to the eyes, arrived at the tower, where they sought shelter from the storm. They left their steeds below, and ascended the stairs, but before they reached the anti-chamber, they perceived that others were arrived there before them. They stopped therefore, and seating themselves on the stone bench near the door, wrapped themselves in their mantles, and listened with greedy attention to every word that was uttered.

"The place of my birth," said the stranger, "is in Egypt, where Lasis, my father, is chief minister of the Soudan."

"What do I hear?" interrupted the youth of the tower; "Lasis thy father? and thou his son-Osinandy?"

"How!" cried the other, "and are you then acquainted with us?"

"Forgive me this interruption which shall not be repeated, and proceed with thy relation."

"As you seem not unacquainted with Egypt, it would be superfluous to mention in what manner the sons of our high priests are

educated. Suffice it to say, that when I had attained my seventeenth year, my father sent me, under the care of an aged priest, to complete my education in Greece, that I might be initiated in the Eleusinian and other mysteries. In this tour I employed two years; and learnt all that the several *mysteries* could teach me, and returned with the conviction, that I was equally ignorant of every valuable knowledge as at my departure from Egypt. My father received me with great kindness, and, finding me little elated by my acquisitions, conversed with me very freely on the insignificance of my attainments. 'To what,' said he, 'will all these high secrets avail thee? The true sage is not he who can talk of what few know, and none need or wish to be acquainted with; but he who knows how to render his life most agreeable to himself, and most useful to his fellows, who is versed in the powers of nature, and can operate things by their means, that to the ignorant appear miraculous or magical.' By such discourse as this, Lasis strove to inflame my curiosity, and excite me to diligence, that could alone, as he said, endow me with true knowledge. But fate has cut me off from the inheritance of his wisdom, by subjecting me to a passion, from which all his philosophy did not enable him to release me. This passion (the strangest and most irrational that ever tyrannised over a human breast) mastered me, and destroyed all my former plans of life, frustrated all my efforts to render myself worthy the cares of Lasis, and chained me languishing and inactive to the feet of a statue." "A statue?" exclaimed the youth of the tower, in a tone at once expressive of mirth and amazement:

"Hear me out," said Osmandy: "After my return from Greece, Lasis left his apartment at all times open to me, into which, previous to this, I had never entered but at his summons. Adjoining to this chamber was a cabinet, which no one in the family dared to open, though it was generally unlocked, and without any fastening; every one believing that the door was guarded by a terrific spirit, who would slay any one that presumed to invade this sanctuary. On me, a mere prohibition of my father would have been a greater restraint than the fear of this tremendous spirit. But as he had never imposed any restraint on me on this subject, curiosity impelled me to examine the contents of this mysterious cabinet; and one morning, when I was alone in the apartment, I entered it, when the first thing that caught my eye was a virgin of most divine beauty, who was sitting on a couch and playing with a dove, that seemed to nestle in her bosom. She was dressed in a long robe, which hung from her right shoulder, and was bound beneath her half-revealed bosom with a golden zone. Her arms and shoulders were bare, and the light vestment with which she was clothed, though in the Grecian manner, it afforded a complete covering to her limbs, delicately betrayed the beauty of their form and proportion. I was astonished to find so lovely a person in the cabinet of Lasis, whom his wisdom and his virtue elevated above suspicion; but though I had already seen how close an imitator art is of nature, I was deceived, and did not suspect this beautiful

form of being an image, till her remaining entirely motionless after some time made me suspect it.

"Words cannot express what took place in me at this instant, nor can any one conceive, who has not experienced it. I could not doubt that it was a lifeless image, and yet my heart persisted to think that it lived and breathed, and heard what I addressed to it. This delusion was so strong, that I remained a full half hour on my knee before it, uttering all that the most impassioned love could suggest, without venturing to touch it. Certainly, thought I, she can only be enchanted; she lives, though she does not breathe; she can hear me, though she cannot answer; she will not be ever insensible to the fervent love with which she has inspired me. I will move her by the ardour and constancy of my passion to return it; perhaps it is reserved for me to break the charms that confine her, and to become, by her possession, the happiest of men.

"So entirely, indeed, was I absorbed in this strange fantasy, that I at length seized her unresisting, but, alas! unapproving hand, and with wild, yet timid transport, pressed it with my lips.

"At this moment my father entered, and surprised me on my knees before the lifeless figure, with my face inclined on her hand. I rose at his entrance, expecting a severe reprimand; 'I see that you have become an enthusiast in the arts, Osmandy,' said he, smiling. 'I have never seen any thing in my life so adorable,' replied I, blushing. 'Adorable?' said Lasiris, regarding me with attention. 'So admirable, I would have said,' stammered I.—'That may well be,' returned he; 'tis the work of a master;' and with this he terminated the conversation. However desirous I was of making a thousand enquiries about the statue, I did not presume to put any question to him; for so great was the awe of him in which I had been educated, that I was never wont to seek more of any subject than what he voluntarily communicated.

"I became every hour more confirmed in the opinion, that it was a real virgin under the power of enchantment. This belief fed my passion, and strengthened it to such a degree, that in a few days I was wholly absorbed by the thought of my statue, and was lost to every other idea.

"Meanwhile I conceive, though without discerning any affectation on his part, that my father contrived to leave me no opportunity of entering the cabinet. The consequences of this were so visible, that they could not have escaped his attention. I grew pale and melancholy, lost all appetite, and became quite changed. Lasiris did not appear to notice the alteration; but at length allowed me an opportunity of passing several hours alone in the cabinet.

"The rapture with which I fell at the feet of my entranced virgin, when a second time I approached her; how fondly I embraced her; what I said to her, and how happy I felt myself, he only can conceive who has truly loved."

"This renewal of my pleasure operated so favourably on my health and spirits, that again I appeared another man. Lasiris still took no notice of these revolutions; but for the ten succeeding days.

gave me opportunities to be in the cabinet, where I constantly pass one hour at the foot of my adored image. At some moments my infatuation was so entire, that I fancied she appeared affected with my addresses, and that her lips moved as if she would have said something to me. My persuasion that she was only under the influence of enchantment acquired by this delusion fresh force, and I could not refrain from declaring this belief to my father, as leaving no doubt in me. Lahiris listened patiently to me, and when I had finished, casting on me a severe look, said, 'There is indeed one enchanted, and that one is thyself. It is time, Osmandy, to terminate this ridiculous conduct: what thinkest thou thy love for a statue can avail thee?' The violence of my passion now overcame the restraints which awe of my father had opposed to it; I threw myself at his feet, besought his compassion and aid, and confessed that my love for this statue, however irrational it might be, would decide my life to happiness or misery.

"Lahiris heard me with patience, without being offended by the warmth and freedom with which I addressed him. He said every thing to me that affection for an only son could inspire, on the subject of so strange a delirium both of the head and heart.

"After this there was an interval of several weeks before we made any reference to this subject.

"Lahiris appeared particularly intent to seize every opportunity of procuring me the sight of the most beautiful virgins. Very opportunely for this purpose occurred the festival of Isis, as on that occasion all the young virgins of the city pass richly adorned in solemn procession before me. I saw some who were accounted of extraordinary beauty, though I did not admire, or even notice them. My father, after the ceremony was finished, asked me, 'whether, among all those lovely virgins, I had beheld the original of my admired statue?' No, answered I, not one who appeared to me worthy to be her slave. 'I am sorry for it,' returned Lahiris, 'since thou hast seen among them her whom I intend for thy consort.' My consort, exclaimed I, confounded at this declaration? 'She is the most amiable of all,' continued he, 'and unless my eyes deceive me the most beautiful; at least, she is far more so than the lady of marble for whom thou hast conceived such a fancy.' That, cried I, is impossible! 'And if it were,' said Lahiris, 'a rational man is not determined in his choice of a companion by beauty; but as thou art not at present capable of a rational choice, I have employed my reason for thee.'

"This discourse overwhelmed me with fear and grief, and I cast myself at his feet. He listened patiently to me, and, seeing my emotions too violent to admit the operations of reason, left me for a while, desiring me to compose myself; that, when he returned, he might be informed of my determination on this subject.

"No sooner had he quitted the cabinet, than I threw myself at the feet of my beloved image, vowed eternal fidelity to it, though the misery of my life, or even a cruel death, should be the consequence. I now embraced her with the most rapturous passion, pres-

sed my heart to her marble bosom, covered her cold cheeks with tears and kisses, and was so little master of myself, as to fancy she acquired warmth and life from my touch.

“When Lafiris returned, he found me still more resolute and inflexible than before. My father, said I, I am convinced that there is something extraordinary in this statue. Either it is a real virgin reduced to this state by magic; or, if it be an inanimate mass, there exists somewhere the original of this beautiful form. In both cases my happiness hangs to this image: it will ever remain the idol of my adoration and love; and it will be impossible to tear my affections from it. Oh my father, let me be indebted to thee for my happiness! I am certain that the mystery of this lovely form is known to thee. I cannot longer sustain this state of suspense and anxiety. Tell me, I conjure thee, what I must do to obtain my beloved, and terminate my life and misery.

“Is this thy last resolve?” said my father.

“My last,” answered I, unshaken.

“Then return to me to-morrow at sun-rise, and hear what I have to say to thee.”

“Ere the day began to dawn, I repaired to the anti-chamber of my father; but I had yet to be tortured with an eternal hour of waiting. I counted a thousand pangs in every moment, while my eyes were fixed immoveably on that point of the heavens where the signal of my happiness was to appear. The sun at length ascended doubly luminous and welcome to me; the door of the apartment opened, and I entered. Lafiris said, in a placid and gracious tone, ‘Since thou wilt have it so, Osmandy, we must part. A love, violent as thine, must be gratified or eradicated, and one or the other will be done by the means I shall suggest to thee. Dress thyself in these garments, and disguise thy face under this mask. They will give thee the appearance of a needy old man, will protect thee from violence, and procure thee pity and aid wherever thou shalt go. Here is a purse, in which thou wilt find as many drachmas as there will be days in thy pilgrimage. Go, my son, and may thy love animate thee to persevere in thy undertaking. Travel to the north-west till you reach Gaul, and seek for an old castle, of which, only three turrets remain undestroyed. There shalt thou find the term of thy wanderings, and the object of thy wishes.’

“Lafiris aided me to dress, and with his own hands bound on the mask, which fitted so closely, that none would have suspected that it was false. ‘I see inquiries floating on thy tongue,’ said Lafiris, ‘but ask me no questions, only trust thyself to thy destiny. Do not desert thyself, and thy Genius will not abandon thee. My heart forebodes thy success. Farewell, Osmandy, we shall again see each other.’

“With these words he embraced me, and recommended to me to begin my journey.

“A year has revolved since I left my home. The difficulties and dangers that I have encountered would have probably subdued my constancy, and induced me to return, had I been in pursuit of

a diadem; but what I sought could not in the estimation of my heart be purchased too highly. I should be rewarded by attaining the original of my charming statue.

This morning I had expended my last draehma, and the tower had yet eluded my search. Unexpectedly I lighted on it during the storm, and in it on a friend, whom I had not hoped for; but, alas! the object of my wishes——”

“Is nearer, perhaps, than thou thinkest,” interrupted the youth. “At least you have reason to hope so, since hitherto every thing has corresponded to the predictions of thy parent. Would to heaven I had no greater cause for despair than you! Thou canst not be more happy in the arms of thy beloved image, than I have been, and might still be, had not my own folly—for why should I accuse destiny?—by depriving me of her, whom alone I love, rendered me the most unhappy of mortals.”

Osmandy was so affected by the grief of his friend, that he forgot his own. He approached him, caught his hand, pressed it with affectionate warmth, and remained sometime silent beside him. The lovely youth did not remain long insensible to the sympathy of his new friend; and he seemed ashamed of his weakness. When Osmandy perceived him more composed, he said, “it is sometimes an alleviation for an oppressed heart to unlace his cares into the bosom of a friend. If thou thinkest thyself able to sustain the pain of recollection, reveal to me the subject of the sorrow that consumes thee.

“Hear my tale,” answered the youth, “and judge if my case be not hopeless.

“Nature has endowed me with a tender and susceptible heart, and an inclination rather to seek my happiness in an ideal world of fancy’s creation, than in the narrow circle of human existence. My education fostered this tendency, I was brought up in solitude, and among other consequences, when I arrived at manhood, I took aversion to the female part of the creation. About this time, among a collection of curious manuscripts made by my father, I found some which treated of the *habitants of the several elements*; a race of beings between men and angels, who, when I became acquainted with them, had quite other charms for me than the residents of this gross, impure earth. When I had learnt the possibility of arriving at the closest intimacy with this sublime order of beings, was any thing more natural than that I should from the resolution (which I did in my sixteenth year) of renouncing all commerce with the daughters of men, and by a consecration of myself, to attain the exalted happiness of being beloved by a Sylphid. My mother, a woman of great beauty and virtue, and my only sister, the exact copy of the former both in mind and person, were alone excepted from my general aversion to the sex. The accounts which I had heard of the depraved manners of the women who resided in the cities around me, nourished my contempt and aversion for the sex, and threw me entirely into the contemplation of the invisible world. My father, when he became acquainted with my capricious dislike of women,

highly disapproved it, and laboured by every means to overcome it. My sister too seized every occasion of laughing at my insensibility; but neither reason nor raillery, effected any change in my sentiments.

“Nine weeks have now past since, in a lonely ramble among these regions, a white dove of uncommon beauty rose from a bush before me. Her flights were so short and low, and she so often suffered me to approach almost within reach of her, that I did not despair of overtaking her. My hopes were continually disappointed and continually renewed, and I followed her till night sheltered her from my views. I found myself in so thick and pathless a wilderness, that, though I was sensible I could not be very distant from my father’s house, yet I could not determine its direction. It soon grew too dark for me to think of returning; left, bewildered as I was, I might probably be much more so, and I apprehended being obliged to pass the night without shelter, when I was led by a sudden light to this tower. I entered; and, by favour of a glimmering lamp, perceived the stair-case: I ascended it, and arrived at this chamber, where I found a young nymph, who lay slumbering on this couch. A loose robe of azure silk covered her from the shoulders to the feet. It was formed in the Grecian fashion, and was bound beneath her bosom, the beauties of which shone through a veil of purple.

“My instant, and only conception was, that I beheld before me one of those divine beings, whose mere idea had for several years turned all earthly charms into deformities in my eyes, and had rendered the most beauteous of their sex odious to me. The emotions that this heavenly spectacle excited in me, confirmed me in my conjecture. I stood silent, motionless, and hardly daring to breathe before her. I know not how long I were in this trance of admiration and delight; for when the divine form vanished, it seemed to me but an instant.”

“Alas, my poor friend!” cried Osmandy, “was it then but a dream?”

“Quite otherwise,” replied the youth, “she waked, raised herself from the couch, observed me with attention, and then making a motion with her hand, which I did not comprehend, suddenly vanished. I stood in an instant surrounded with the most profound darkness, and seemed as if I should have sunk to the ground had I not been supported by invisible hands. For some moments I lost all perception, and when I regained my senses found myself on the couch, which had just before been pressed by the lovely nymph. The morn beamed through the window; I looked round, and recognized the chamber; but of its lovely habitant was there no trace.

“I left the tower, and returned to my father’s mansion. I told how I had been led astray and benighted, and how I had found a ruined tower, where I had sheltered myself. No one knew of such a tower; but all observed an alteration in my appearance, and harassed me with enquiries concerning what I had seen.

“I retired to my room, and passed the day in reflection on my adventure. And at night, instead of seeking my chamber, I hasted to the forest, and endeavoured, as well as the twilight per-

mitted, to pursue the path, by which I had returned from the tower; but the increasing obscurity would have prevented my continuing any constant road, had I not seen a faint light before me, which I resolved to make my guide. It continually fled, as I advanced, and in a short time conducted me within sight of the tower, which the moon, now rising above the trees, pointed out to me when the light was vanished.

“ Think on my extacy, when, at the distance of about forty paces, I saw the form, that had so enchanted me the ensuing evening, seated on the fragment of a broken pillar. Her dress was the same as before; but her veil thrown back presented me a more lovely face than I could have conceived. She sat leaning her cheek on her left arm, and gazed on the moon, as if she beheld in it the image of her beloved. As soon as she perceived me, she covered herself with her veil, and advanced towards me. ‘ Dost thou seek any one, Clodio?’ said she, in a tone that was echoed through my heart. Whom should I seek but thyself, heavenly being? said I. ‘ Is this adulation, or is it the voice of thy heart?’ asked she, smiling graciously. I confess I have long known thee, and my friendship for thee is mature.’ I interrupted her by throwing myself at her feet, and kissing her offered hand with uncontrolled transport. She bade me rise, and, as the night was uncommonly warm and fine, led me into the regions behind the castle, which, among all their variety, simplicity and freedom, displayed too much harmony, correspondence, and choice, to conceal the hand of art.

“ The varied beauties of this enchanted spot, illuminated by the silver rays of the moon; the odorous gale which breathed from every side; and the presence of my adorable nymph, plunged my senses and fancy into a delicious delirium, and I imagined myself transported into fairy land.

“ My unknown fair entertained me, as we wandered through this fascinating spot, with such delightful discourse, as gave me the most exalted opinion of her understanding and fancy, and all with a frankness and confidence as if we were brother and sister. The morn began to enpurple the eastern heaven; she perceived it, and said: we must now separate, but if my society have any charms for thee, thou mayest enjoy it every night, by repairing at the hour of twilight to this tower. She then pointed out to me a path on the other side of the ruins, which in less than an hour conducted me to my residence. After accompanying me some part of the way, she disappeared so suddenly, that I proceeded several steps without missing her. I used the permission which my unknown fair had given me; and fortunately not any of the family seemed to view my conduct with suspicion. I passed some weeks in the regular enjoyment of the most fascinating converse with my unknown fair, and I expressed to her all I felt towards her. She confessed to me in one of these moments of tender effusion, that from her first sight of me she had resolved to bestow on me her heart and person, should she, on examination, find me worthy her choice. She owned too, that my contempt for the earthly fair, and my love for the more

refined beings of the elements, had raised me in her esteem; but she persisted to make her name and nature a secret to me.

“It is now above five weeks since, repairing as usual, full of fervent but respectful love, to our wonted place of meeting, I sought her in vain among the ruins, or walks of the garden; at length I found her on the couch in the chamber, where I had first been blest with her sight. A slight rain which had fallen in the evening induced her to this precaution, as she said, for my health, which might suffer by exposure to the damps of the earth and the night air. I spoke with rapture of the joys of love, and of the blissful hopes she had encouraged me to; and, for the first time ventured to express, the impatient expectations that fired me. She did not resent my boldness, but bade me wait seven days without murmur. Seven days, idol of my heart, cried I, falling at her feet, will be seven ages torture to me. Make my trial cruel as thou wilt, I will endure it without repining; but, oh! do not let it be thus eternal. At length, she was prevailed on to reduce the seven days into three. ‘Employ this time,’ said she, ‘in examining thy heart, and judging if it be capable of so pure and constant an affection as beings of my nature require. I exist only in thee, but in return I demand that thy heart shall be wholly mine. If thou think me worth this sacrifice, and find thyself capable of enduring the test, return hither on the third night from the present, and we will exchange vows of eternal constancy. But now let me quit thee!’ Do not ask it, goddess of my soul, cried I, clasping her with passionate ardour; let me here at thy feet—

“At this instant, the magic-day that filled the chamber, died into the utmost darkness, and my fair unknown melted from my embrace. In vain I felt for her every where in the apartment: she was gone, and I was obliged to console myself with the hope of a recompense for my patience at the expiration of the three days.

“These three days were a chasm in my existence. The wished for evening at length came, and I hastened earlier than usual to the forest; but my senses were confused, and I was unable to discover the path, which the nymph had pointed out, though I sought most solicitously. At length I was bewildered in the forest, and was surprised by darkness before I had discovered any signs of the tower, at which I never had been so impatient to arrive.

“At length I perceived a light, and ran towards it, in the hopes that it would direct me to my wishes. It led me for some time in a kind of labyrinth, and vanished, having conducted me to the door of a palace, from which, issued a servant, richly dressed, asked me if my name were Clodio? I had no sooner answered, than he flew into the palace, with an exclamation of joy. In an instant the portals were thrown open, and six virgins, magnificently attired, preceded by twelve slaves bearing torches, came out, and took me by the hand, to lead me into the palace. I entreated them to excuse my declining their invitation, said, that I had wandered from my path, that I was expected elsewhere, and could not delay my departure an instant. ‘Pardon us, my lord,’ returned one of the

virgins, 'you are arrived where you have been impatiently expected.'—'You mock me,' cried I, angrily, 'I know none in this palace, who could expect me? and am losing here the most precious moments of my existence.' With these words I would have quitted them; but the virgins threw themselves on their knees around me, and said, 'What we solicit from you, generous knight, is what can be effected by you only; it will detain you but a few instants, and it is what no one of your rank and character can refuse to the supplications of the unfortunate. Overcome by their importunities, and seeing no way to disengage myself, I consented to their request, and followed them, though with inward discontent and vexation.

"They led me through a long gallery, splendidly illuminated, and through various apartments, the last of which had no light, but what it received from a dim lamp. At the upper end were folding doors that opened into another room, and beside them stood two giants with enormous clubs to guard the entrance. I stopped and turned to the virgins, who were my guides, and told them that I was unarmed; when at that instant a dragon descended from the ceiling with a flaming sword in his mouth. I seized the weapon, and rushed towards the gigantic forms, who lifted their ponderous clubs; but as I drew near, sunk to the earth. I now passed into a hall lined with black, which, from a cupola that seemed vaulted with fire, received a blue sulphurous light, that rendered the darkness below more horrible. Beneath the dome stood a bier covered with black velvet, that hung to the ground. Six blacks in yellow habits, with black plumes in their turbans, and scimitars drawn in their hands, stood in menacing attitudes round the bier; but as I advanced with the flaming sword to encounter them, they sunk to the ground and disappeared. Two of the virgins who had accompanied me, removed the pall, and beckoned me to her. I did, and beheld, by the dismal light, a young lady of extraordinary beauty lying in a coffin, with an arrow plunged up to the pinion in her left breast. As I shrunk with horror from this piteous sight, the virgin thus addressed me: 'You see before you the unfortunate person, whose deliverance from her present condition is reserved for you. This young princess unhappily inspired a powerful genius with a violent passion for her. As he is not less odious than she is amiable, her aversion was equal to his love. After having persecuted her with his hateful suite, and finding all his offers scorned, he determined on vengeance. He conveyed her by his power to this hall, placed her in the coffin, and plunged the arrow in her breast. For more than a year past he has visited her every morn, and drawn the shaft from her bosom. The wound instantly heals, and he urges her the whole day with his abhorred passion; but as she remains immovable in her aversion, he every evening drives the arrow into her breast, places her in the coffin, and retires. Beside the guard of Moors and giants, whom he set over her, he has affixed a talisman to the palace, which renders it invisible; and, if this proves insufficient, he removes it every day to a different place. Yst all these provisions have not

prevented its being in your power, noble stranger, to terminate the captivity of the princeſs. A viſion informed me, that her deliverance could only be atchieved by a young knight, named Claudio, who, guided by ſuperior powers, ſhould elude and vanquiſh the enchantments of our tyrant. After long expectation, noble knight, you are arrived; and are doubtleſs the ſame whom the viſion announced. Your diſcovery of the palace, the magic ſword, and, above all, your valour and ſucceſs, aſſure us of it, and promiſe a happy concluſion. No power on the earth, but the Genius's and your own, can extract that arrow from the boſom of our unhappy princeſs: if it ſucceed, the power of the tyrant ceales. I approached the fair form, whoſe beauty was ſo dazzling, that I did not obſerve her attentively. With mingled expectation and horror I graſped the dart, and with ſome labour drew it from her breaſt. Immediately the gloomy light was quenched in utter darkneſs: a burſt of thunder ſhook the whole edifice; and, for ſome time, I was wrapped in a thick pitchy cloud. At length it diſſipated, and I found myſelf in a magnificent hall, ſplendidly illuminated, and hung with blue velvet; the bier was replaced by a ſumptuous throne, on which I beheld the fair Diana, in the attitude of one recovered from a long trance. She roſe to retire, and, while leaning on two of her virgins, ſhe ſlowly paſſed me, caſt on me a look of tenderneſs that penetrated into my heart. My eyes involuntarily purſued her till ſhe left the hall.

“ Amazed with the ſucceſſion of ſtrange circumſtances, I was ſome minutes forgetful of the tower, and of my fair unknown: at length I was preparing to depart, when one of the virgins returned, and begged me in the name of her miſtreſs not to leave the palace, till ſhe had expreſſed her ſenſe of the ſervice I had rendered her.

“ Painful as this new delay was to me, it ſeemed impoſſible to avoid it. They ſet before me a collation on a table of ebony ſupported by golden feet. My long wandering in the foreſt, had ſo enfeebled and exhausted me, that ſome minutes reſt and reſreſhment was neceſſary to me. At length I perceived the morn break, and ſaw, with inexpréſſible pain, that the time for meeting my fair unknown was elapſed. The thought of having violated the appointment drove me to madneſs. What muſt ſhe conclude of my love? In this tumult and vexation of ſpirit, the virgin found me, when ſhe returned to conduct me to her miſtreſs. I followed her with a viſible expreſſion of diſcontent and uneaſineſs; but the firſt ray of Diana's eyes, diſſipated every ſhade of ſadneſs and anger that clouded my aſpect, and all was ſerenity and joy. Whatever might be the conſequences of this adventure, I could not but congratulate myſelf on having been, in the hands of a higher power, of ſuch eſſential ſervice to ſo amiable a perſon. My myſterious miſtreſs, thought I, will commend my neglect, when ſhe knows the cauſe of it.

“ I found the lovely Diana ſeated on a ſofa; ſhe invited me to ſit beſide her, and thanked me, for the ſervice I had rendered her. The ſound of her voice ſtrangely affected me: it was not that of my beloved ſylph, but it reſembled it, and this reſemblance ex-

deared her to me. Her glances were arrows of love, that pierced directly to the heart; but their wounds were too pleasant to be avoided or counteracted. Imagine a face embellished with every charm; conceive it the impression of the most insinuating sensibility; fancy a gentle, tender smile, floating on the lips and cheeks, that alternately reigned and yielded to the most interesting languor; and say, if it were possible for mortal to remain unconquered."

It was difficult to withdraw the eyes from so amiable a creature; but I did not spare attempts to tear myself from the enchanting spectacle. Her dress was a delightful union of pomp, elegance, and simplicity. Her ebon hair, adorned with pearls, hung like an unpropped vine in luxuriant clusters on her ivory neck and shoulders, and her bosom was less concealed than is common to the sex, as if to convince her deliverer, that no ruinous trace remained of the accursed dart. Confess, Osmandy, that my constancy was put to a fiery test! I felt my danger; and my agitation betrayed more anxiety than tenderness. She enquired about the subject of my uneasiness, and added with a tender sigh, that she should be inconsolable if my generous efforts in her deliverance had cost me a sacrifice greater than she could replace to me. This address threw me into wild commotion, and I had almost invoked my adored Sylph to sustain my sinking constancy. I renewed in my heart all my vows of fidelity; but every glance at the fair Diana rendered me faithless. I felt that flight alone could save me: and yet was I so infatuated, that I had not the power to fly.

Every moment magnified the danger, and it was by a series of most violent efforts that I was at length able to resolve on departure. I told her, as she was now safe from her prosecutor, I would discharge her of my presence: an affair of the highest value to me, requiring my attendance at a place, where I was expected the preceding evening, when accident led me to the gates of her palace. She said, 'she should for ever accuse herself, if by obliging her I should cost myself the least sacrifice; that what she was already indebted to me, gave her no right to expect new complaisances on my part, and if I would gratify her with my company only for the day (she added with a smile), she would surrender me at eve to those who had a prior right to me.'

In short, I yielded to her intreaties, and, after having suffered her to gain this victory over me, was conducted to a chamber, that I might recreate myself by a few hours repose.

"About noon, I was again invited to the fair Diana, whom I found in a superb saloon that opened to the garden, surrounded by her virgins, and attired in an Oriental dress. I felt all my firmness melt beneath her glance, and could scarcely refrain from throwing myself at her feet. After the repast, which consisted of the richest and rarest fruits, she challenged me to chess; and, if her design were to assail me in a narrow circle with the collected force of all her charms, and thus complete her conquest of my reason, her plan could not have been chosen with more art. You may conceive, how often I was mated, and will judge, that Diana

had little cause to thank her skill in the game for her success; but the more for this her eyes glittered with exultation at the triumph of her seductive arts.

"The approaching evening invited us to enjoy its beauties in the gardens of the palace, which were of vast extent, and embraced whatever nature possesses of the grand, the beautiful, and fantastic. Insensibly we were left by the attendants, who had for some time accompanied us; the soft perfumes of the gardens, the warbling of the birds, who seemed to chant an hymeneal; the love-inspiring whispers of the zephyrs, the sweet confusion of light and shade, which equally conspired to lull us to repose and languour, insensibly I pressed Diana's consenting hand against my throbbing heart; insensibly I imbibed from her love-melting eyes an entire oblivion of the past and future; and ere we knew where we were, we found ourselves in a temple of white marble, that stood inclosed with a grove of myrtles.

"I see thou tremblest for me, Osmandy, and I blush to proceed. The lovely Diana sunk on a sofa, and I fell at her feet, and was devouring her hand with kisses, when suddenly the whole temple appeared in flames, a loud clap of thunder shook the ground, Diana vanished from my arms, and the voice of my unknown fair, in an indignant tone, exclaimed, 'Perfidious youth, thou hast lost me for ever.'

"Spare me the rest of my sad tale, I have not strength to support the renewal of that fatal night; since which I have been the most miserable of men. Alas! but for this, I should have been the most blessed. I am too convinced that it was my adored Sylph, who in the character of Diana, unveiled herself to me, and by all her charms, of which I had beheld in the tower but a few rays, and by every seduction of time, circumstance, and manner, laboured to render me unfaithful to herself. Cruel fair! how could she expose to my heart such a test?

"She will not, she cannot remain implacable," said Osmandy, "That she loves thee is evident, and——"

"Thou dost not know," interrupted the desponding Clodio, "the jealous delicacy of beings of her nature. They are inexorable to the image of infidelity. Alas! forgiveness of my crime is hopeless. Renouncing all hope of happiness, I devoted myself to lamentation and despair, and shut myself in this tower, which I have never since quitted.

One of the masked personages, who, during all this discourse, had remained in the anti-chamber, whispered these words to the other: "it is now time for us to finish our work and retire." On this the other drew a small flask from beneath his mantle, hid to the upper part of the tower, came down immediately, and with the former, stole away as unperceived as they had arrived.

"I cannot think," said Osmandy, "that your mistress can be so obdurate, as not to pardon a crime so deeply lamented. But permit me, since you have reminded me of it, to ask the source of

your acquaintance with Lafiris and Osmandy, have you ever been in Egypt?"

"Before I answer thee," returned the youth, "let me entreat thee to partake with me of what I can set before thee. We both need some refreshment."—With this he opened the secret closet, and drew from it some fruits together with a flask of wine, which he had not before perceived. "My invisible purveyor," said he, "seems to have reckoned on my guest by the unusual abundance of the provisions."

"A sudden thought strikes me," said the youth of the castle; as the gloom of anxiety fled before the cheerfulness of the table: "how say you, if your beloved statue, should be of my acquaintance, and indeed, my nearest relative?—The Egyptian gazed at him with amazement and expectation.—"At least, continued the other, "the idea is plausible, as thou wilt confess, when I relate to thee the origin of my acquaintance with thy family."

"It is now the third year since the death of my excellent mother. My father, though esteemed the wisest of men, found in the whole magazine of his philosophy nothing that consoled him for his loss. He intimated to me and my sister, who was then about fifteen years of age, that we should prepare for a long journey. 'I will voyage to Egypt,' said he, 'and confirm my fortitude in the arms of my friend Lafiris.' I learnt on this occasion, that they had known each other in early youth, and during more than forty years, notwithstanding absence and vast distance, had cultivated the closest friendship. We were received by the venerable Lafiris with every testimony of joy. The two sages found in meeting, after a separation of so many years, a renewal of their youth; and their mutual communications were so reciprocally delightful, that my father was easily persuaded to remain a whole year. Thou wert then traversing Greece; and I, entered into the temple of Isis, to be initiated into your mysteries, where I passed the greater part of the time. Thy sister, at our arrival, was with a relation of her mother's, and I had shut myself up in the temple of Isis before she returned; so that owing to this, and to my aversion to the sex, I have never seen her. But between her and Matilda there grew so warm an affection, that they soon became inseparable, and when a separation began to be spoken of, it was found that either Matilda must remain, or thy sister proceed to my father's castle. Thy father consented to part with his daughter, on condition, that his friend should leave with him the statue of Matilda. My father, among various arts and secrets which he possesses, is skilled in statuary, and has discovered a method of tinging marble with hues, that enable it to emulate life. A Grecian artist, who had accompanied him, prepared the work, which my father perfected; and this must be the form that so attracted thy wonder in the cabinet of Lafiris."

Here the youth of the castle noticed a singular incident, which was no less, than that his young friend had not been kept awake by a tale, so interesting to him. This event appeared unaccountably

to him: but while he was reflecting on it, he himself yielded to the power of sleep, and sunk unconscious on the couch behind him.

Their sleep continued some time, and both waking about the same time, what was their amazement and joy, when Osmandy beheld his beloved statue, and Clodio his adored Sylph. Osmandy beheld his statue on the same couch, with her dove on her bosom, and breathing and looking love, as he had so often seen her in the cabinet of his father. Clodio saw his celestial fair in her azure robe and purple veil, as she was wont to appear to him in the tower. Both feared to trust their eyes and their wishes; yet both rushed to throw themselves in speechless rapture at the feet of their idols, when a concealed door sprang open, and the majestic sages, Lasis and Aranes, entered hand in hand, and by their sudden appearance fixed them in dumb amazement. Aranes seized the hand of the young Egyptian, and, smiling, said to him. "animate her, if thou canst, and be happy!" At the same time Lasis led the youth of the castle to his supposed Sylph, and, drawing aside the veil, said, "let your forgiveness be mutual, your mutual offences will but heighten and confirm your love and felicity."

The moments that ensued were such as spurn description. Osmandy, sinking in the arms of his beloved image, felt with ecstasy her heart, for the first time, beat against his own. Clodio needed all the fire of love, that streamed on him from the eyes of the tender Diana, to feel himself in the embrace of his austere Sylph, without expiring with rapture. Never had love made four mortals so blest: and never had two fathers enjoyed to such a height in the transports of their children, the accomplishment of their favourite project.

The hospitable tower was too confined for so much happiness, and they descended to the garden, which, behind the ruins, fell by a gentle slope into the plain. The lovely Naomi pointed out to him a winding path, leading to the palace of the supposed fairy, which had been concealed from him in his rambles, by a grove of poplars.

After some time they entered the marble temple, and seated themselves on the cushions which were placed around it. Aranes, who read in the eyes of the young men their curiosity to learn what was incomprehensible to them in this blissful adventure, began to gratify it by a full explanation.

"The friendship betwixt myself and Lasis was built on so solid a basis, that never, perhaps, did affection so strong subsist between two men. No sooner did we see ourselves blest each with a son and daughter, than we resolved; if possible, to unite the two families by a double marriage. We did not consult your inclinations; we knew that your happiness would depend on your own hearts. In the late visit which I made to Lasis, the desire of uniting our families was renewed with redoubled warmth. But the son of Lasis was absent, and to Clodio, who from his childhood had nourished such an aversion to the daughters of the earth, it would have been dangerous to shew him the amiable daughter of Lasis, though she might inspire him with an immortal love as one of his fantastic beings. Osmandy

was suffered to continue his travels, and Clodio was left undisturbed in his whimsical phantasy. Naomi had opportunities of seeing my son without being observed by him, and Matilda needed but the assurance that Osmandy resembled his sister, to conceive a sufficient partiality for him. However certain we might esteem ourselves of succeeding in our project, we concerted the double adventure, which has terminated so favorably to our wishes. Osmandy's affections were engaged to his future consort as a statue; and Clodio was enamoured of Naomi as a Sylph. The year which you, my son, employed in your journey, gave me sufficient time for all my preparations. The wildest part of the forest near my mansion, was changed into the dwelling of the supposed fairy, and the pavillion, which after thy return was the usual residence of the two sisters, was so situated among the surrounding gardens, that Naomi could perform her double character without difficulty; and your supposition that a spot like this could not have remained unknown without magic, was confirmed by all the household having the strictest injunctions to profess ignorance, whenever your curiosity impelled you to make any enquiries respecting the wondrous place." "As for the wine that contained a sleeping potion, was conveyed there by me," said Naomi, who had arrived with Matilda at the castle in disguise, just after Osmandy, and heard best part of their discourse.

"And that there has been no forcery in the proceedings at the enchanted castle," continued she, with a smile, "Clodio will be convinced, when he receives this magic feat, together with the Moors, giants, dragons, and other apparatus, which accompany the heart and hand of Diana herself.

THE
ROBBER'S DAUGHTER;
OR, THE
PHANTOM OF THE GROTTA.

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ABOUT the distance of three miles from the Black Forest, in Germany, was once situated a strong free-booter's hold, which was occupied by a knight named *Wilibald*; he was the flower of free-booters, and the terror of all who ventured along the roads. The moment his sword was girt about his loins, and his spurs tinkled at his heels, his heart was steel'd to bloodshed and to rapine.

He accounted pillage and plunder among the privileges of his order; so he fell upon the defenceless traders and country people without mercy. At the word, "*Wilibald* is at hand," all was seized with consternation and horror; the peasants flocked into the fortified towers, and the watch-guard upon the tower sounded their bugles, to give warning of the danger.

But at home, this dread free-booter was as gentle as a lamb, the best of masters, and the fondest of husbands. His wife was a perfect pattern of virtue and good conduct. She loved her husband, and superintended her household with unremitting diligence. She had brought her husband two daughters, whom she instructed in piety and virtue.

At the foot of the castle was a plentiful spring, within a kind of natural grotto, which concealed itself among the tangled thickets. The fountain-head, according to tradition, was inhabited by a nymph of the family of the *Naiads*. If report spoke true, she had been seen, on the eve of important occurrences, in the castle. Whenever, during her husband's absence, the noble lady wanted to breathe a little fresh air beyond the gloomy walls of the mansion, or stole out to exercise her charity in secret, it was her custom to repair to this fountain.

Once, when *Wilibald* sallied forth with his little troop, to waylay the merchants, he tarried abroad beyond the time he had fixed for his return. His affectionate lady, alarmed at his unprecedented delay, apprehended nothing less than that he had been slain in the rencontre, or at least had fallen in the enemy's hand. Being no longer able to endure her apartment, she threw her cloak over her shoulders, and stole out at the private door towards the grove, that she might pursue her melancholy ideas beside her favourite fountain. Her eyes were dissolved in tears, and her moans, harmonized with the melting murmurs of the rivulet, as it lost itself among the grass.

As she approached the grotto, it seemed as if an airy phantom hovered within the entrance; but she was too deeply absorbed in sorrow to pay attention to the vision; and a transitory idea, that it was some illusion of the moon-light, passed half unperceived across her imagination. But on a nearer approach a figure in white was seen to move, and to beckon her into the grotto. The report concerning the inhabitant of the spring, that was circulated, had not failed to reach her ears, and she now recognized the phantom in white for the nymph of the fountain. She concluded that the apparition denoted some important family event: and her husband being uppermost in her thoughts, she instantly set up a lamentation, "Alas, unhappy day! Ah, *Wilibald*, thou art no more!—Thou hast made me a widow, and thy poor children are become orphans!"

While she lamented in this manner, a gentle voice was heard to proceed from the grotto: "Be not afflicted; I do not come to announce bad tidings: approach without fear; I am only a friend that wishes to talk with thee." As she stepped into the grotto, the inhabitant took her kindly by the hand, kissed her forehead, seated herself close beside her, and spake: "Welcome to my habitation,

beloyed mortal, whose heart is pure as the water of my fountain. As for me, the only favour I can confer upon thee is to disclose the fortunes of thy life. Thy husband is safe: ere the morning cock crows thou shalt fold him in thy arms. Do not be apprehensive of thy husband, for the spring of thy life shall be dried up before his. But thou wilt first bear him a daughter. The balance of her fate is equally poised between happiness and misery."

Matilda was deeply affected, when she heard that her daughter was to become an infant orphan. She was unable to suppress her tears. The Naiad, deeply touched by her sorrow, endeavoured to compose her mind: "Be not afflicted; when thou art no longer able to tend thy infant, I will discharge the mother's office, on condition, that I am chosen one of her god-mothers. Be careful at the same time to bring me back safe, the baptismal gilt which I shall leave with her. This was no offer to be rejected. The Naiad took a smooth pebble out of the rivulet, and gave it to Matilda; charging her, at the proper season, to send one of her damsels to throw it into the fountain-head, as a summons to attend the ceremony. The matron promised that the injunction should be punctually observed, laid all these things up in her heart, and returned to the castle. Her patroness stepped into the water, and vanished.

Before a year had expired, the virtuous lady communicated to her lord a discovery, which raised in his mind the pleasing expectation of the arrival of an heir male, when, in a few weeks she was delivered of a daughter. The father would much rather have taken a boy into his arms; but he nevertheless rode about in high spirits to invite his friends and neighbours to the christening. On the appointed day Matilda called to her one of her trusty maids, and charged her thus: "Take this pebble; go and throw it behind you, without saying a word, into the fountain in the grotto: be careful to do exactly as I have directed you."—The maid punctually obeyed the injunction; and before she returned, an unknown lady stepped into the apartment where the company was assembled. When the child was brought out, and the priest had gone up to the font, the highest place fell to the stranger, every one respectfully making way for her. Her beauty, and the gracefulness of her demeanour, attracted every eye. At sight of the stranger Matilda betrayed some emotion—She probably felt a mixture of pleasure and surprise, at the punctuality shown by the Naiad in the performance of her engagement. The presents now engaged all the mother's attention: a shower of gold was poured upon the nursing from the liberal hands of its god-mothers. Last of all, the unknown lady came forward with her boon. They looked for a present of inestimable value from so splendid a person, especially when they saw her produce, and unfold with great care, a silk case, which, as it turned out, contained nothing but a musk-ball, and that not the precious drug, but an imitation, turned in box-wood—This she laid very careful upon the cradle, gave the mother a kiss upon the forehead, and then quitted the apartment.

So paltry a present occasioned a whisper through the room, and a laugh of scorn succeeded;—for the festivity of a christening has in

all ages been remarkable for its effect in frightening the wit—entertained the guests at the expense of their fair stranger.

Ere the infant had outgrown the leading-strings, the nymph's prophecy respecting her mother was fulfilled: she was taken ill, and died so suddenly, that she had not even time to think of the musk-ball; much less could she dispose of it for the advantage of little Matilda, according to the directions of her patroness. Wilibald was unfortunately absent, he had gone to a tournament, and was on his way homeward as this melancholy event happened, with his heart bounding for joy, on account of a prize he had received from the hands of the Emperor himself. As soon as the dwarf on the watch-tower was aware of his lord's approach, he blew his horn, as usual, to announce his arrival to the people in the castle; but he did not blow a cheerful note, as on former occasions. The draw-bridge fell; he cast an eager look into the court-yard, where he beheld the symbol of a dead body set out before the door; and the window-shutters were closed. At the same instant he heard the lamentation of the household, for they had just placed Matilda's coffin on the bier. At the head sat the two eldest daughters, all covered with crape. They were silently shedding showers of tears over their departed mother. The little darling was seated at the foot; she was as yet incapable of feeling her loss, and so she was employed in stripping, with childish unconcern, the flowers that were strewed over the dead body. This melancholy spectacle was too much for Wilibald's firmness: he fell upon the ice-cold corpse, bedewed the wan cheeks with his tears, pressed with his quivering lips against the pale mouth, and gave himself up without reserve to the bitterness of sorrow.

It has been remarked, that the most violent feelings are the shortest in their duration. Accordingly our widower felt the load of sorrow grow lighter by degrees, and in a short time entertained thoughts of repairing his loss by a second wife. The lot of his choice fell upon a young damsel, the very antitype of the gentle Matilda. The new lady delighted in pomp and parade; her extravagance knew no bounds; she held banquets and carousals without number; her fruitfulness peopled the house with a numerous progeny. The daughters of the first marriage were disregarded, and they very soon were put away out of sight and out of mind. The two elder sisters were placed in a nunnery, and Little Matilda banished to a remote corner of the house, no more to intrude upon her step-mother's notice. As this vain woman was utterly averse to all household affairs, her want of economy rose to such a pitch, that she found herself frequently under the necessity of despoiling the repositories of her predecessor. Happening one day to be in great distress, she rummaged every drawer for valuables; in her search, she stumbled upon a private compartment in an old *escrutoire*, and, to her great joy, among other articles, fell upon Matilda's casket of jewels. Her greedy eye devoured the sparkling diamonds, bracelets, necklaces, lockets, and the whole treasure of trinkets besides. She examined article by article, and calculated in *idea* how much

this glorious windfall would produce. Among other rarities she was aware of the wooden musk-ball; she tried to unscrew it, but it was swelled by the damp. She then poised it on her hand, but finding it as light as a hollow nut, she concluded it was an empty ring case, and tossed it as worthless lumber out at the window.

Little Matilda happened to be playing on the grass-plot immediately below. Seeing a round ball roll along the turf, she grasped with a child's eagerness at the new play-thing. It afforded her amusement for several days; she was so fond of it, that she would not part with it out of her own hands. One sultry summer's noon, nurse carried her charge to the grotto for coolness; where she left her, to pick some berries. The child played with the musk-ball, rolling it before her, and running after it: once she rolled it a little too far, and it tumbled into the waters. Immediately a female, beautiful as an angel, appeared in vi. w. The Nymph accosted her in the most engaging terms: 'Be not afraid, my little dear; here is thy play-thing that fell into the water.' The sight of it enticed the child towards her: the Nymph took her up in her arms, pressed her gently to her bosom, and bedewed her face with tears. 'Poor little orphan, said she, 'I have promised to be a mother to thee. Come often here to see me. Thou wilt always find me in this grotto upon throwing a pebble into the fountain. Keep thy musk-ball with the utmost care: be sure never play with it any more, lest thou lose it; for some time or other, it will fulfill three of thy wishes. When thou art grown a little bigger, I'll tell thee more. She, above all things, enjoined her silence. Soon afterwards the nurse returned, and the Nymph was gone.

All her thoughts were now turned towards the fountain. Whenever the weather permitted, she proposed a walk there: her superintendant could deny nothing, the grotto having always been the favourite retreat of her mother, she gratified her wishes so much the more cheerfully. Matilda always contrived some pretext for sending away nurse; no sooner was her back fairly turned, than she dropped a pebble into the spring, which instantly procured her the company of her godmother. The Naiad was not only her companion and confidante, but likewise her instructor in every female accomplishment; and she was studious to form her exactly after the pattern of her virtuous mother.

One day the Nymph clasped her charming Matilda in her arms, reclined her head upon her shoulder, and displayed so much fondness, that the young lady could not refrain from shedding tears upon her hand, as she pressed it in silence against her lips. 'Alas! my child,' said she, 'thou weepst, and knowest not wherefore; but thy tears are ominous of thy fate. A sad revolution awaits yon fortress. Ere the mower whets his scythe, or the west wind whistles over the stubble of the corn-field, all shall be desolate and forlorn. When the maidens go forth to fetch water from my spring, and return with empty pitchers, then remember that the calamity is at hand. Preserve carefully the musk-ball, which will fulfill three of thy wishes, but do not squander away this privilege heedlessly.

Fare thee well; we meet no more at this spot.' She then instructed her ward in another magic property of her ball, which might be serviceable to her in time of need. One evening, about the season of corn harvest, the maids that went out for water returned pale and affrighted, with their pitchers empty; their teeth chattered, and every limb quivered as if they were shaken by an ague. 'The lady in white,' they reported, 'is sitting beside the well, wringing her hands in great affliction.' Curiosity, carried several out to examine whether the report was true or false. They saw the same apparition; nevertheless they mustered up courage to approach the fountain, but as they came near, the phantom was gone. Many interpretations were attempted, but no one fell upon the true import of the sign: Matilda alone was privy to it; but she held her peace in compliance of the Naiad. She repaired, dejected to her chamber, where she sat, in fearful expectation of the things that were to come to pass.

Wilibald had degenerated by this time into a mere woman's tool; he could never satisfy his wife with enough of robbery and plunder. When there was a want of money or provisions, the broad-wheeled waggons and the rich bales of the Venetians, afforded a never-failing resource. Outraged at these continual depredations, the general congress determined upon Wilibald's destruction, since remonstrances and admonitions were of no avail. Before he would believe they were in earnest, the banners of the congress were displayed before his castle-gate, and nothing was left him but the resolution to sell his life as dear as possible. The guns shattered the bastions: on both sides, the cross-bowmen did their utmost: a shaft, discharged in a luckless moment, pierced Wilibald's vizor, and lodged deep in his brain. Great dismay fell upon his party at the loss of their undaunted leader: and the enemy seized the opportunity for making an assault: they clambered over the walls, carried the gates, and smote every living thing that came in their way with the edge of the sword: they did not spare even the extravagant wife, nor her helpless children. The castle was completely ransacked, then set on fire and levelled with the ground, so that not one stone was left upon another.

During the alarm, Matilda had barricaded her doors in the best manner she was able, and took post at her little window in the roof of the house; and finding that bolts and bars were not likely to afford any security, she put on her yell, and then turned her muck-ball thrice round, and repeated the words the Naiad had taught her.

She now came down stairs, and passed unperceived through the confusion of slaughter. She did not quit her paternal roof without deep sorrow of heart, which was much aggravated by her being at a loss which way to take. She hastened from the scene of carnage and desolation, till her delicate feet refused to serve her any longer. The falling of night, together with extreme weariness, constrained her to take up her lodging at the foot of an oak, in the open fields. She turned aside her head to take a far-well view and to breathe her last blessing on the place where she had passed

the years of her childhood, when, behold, the sky appeared all blood red: from this sign she concluded that the residence of her father had become a prey to the flames; she turned away her face from this horrid spectacle, heartily wishing for the hour when the sparkling stars should grow dim, and the dawn peep from the east. Ere the morning had dawned, she proceeded on her wandering pilgrimage; and arrived betimes at a village, where a compassionate housewife took her in, and recruited her strength with a slice of bread and a bowl of milk. With this woman she bartered her cloaths in exchange for meaner apparel, and then joined a company of carriers. In her forlorn situation, she had no other resource than to seek a place in some family; but, as this was not the season for hiring servants, it was a long time before she could find employment.

Count Conrad, a knight of the order of knights templars, had a palace in the city, where Matilda had taken her residence. During his absence Mrs. Gertrude, the housekeeper, bore sovereign sway in the mansion. She raised such an alarm wheresoever she moved, that the maids dreaded the rattling of her keys as much as children do hobgoblins. Saucepans and heads suffered alike for her ill-humours; when no projectiles were within reach, she would wield her bunch of keys in her brawny arm, and beat the sides and shoulders of her subalterns black and blue. One day she had administered her office of correction so rigorously, that all the household decamped with one consent; it was at this juncture that the gentle Matilda approached to offer her services. But she had taken care to conceal her elegant shape, by fastening a large lump on her left shoulder, as if she had been crooked; her beautiful auburn hair was covered with a large coarse cap; and she had anointed her face and hands, in imitation of the gypsies, with juice of walnut husks. Mother Gertrude, who on hearing the bell ring, poked her head out of the window, was no sooner aware of the singular figure at the door, than she exclaimed, "Who art thou? Whence dost thou come? And what canst thou do?" The suppositious gypsey answered: "I am an orphan, Matilda by name; I am a stout girl; can spin, card, and knit; I can stew, bake, and brew; am honest, and here to serve you." The housekeeper, softened by all these important qualifications, opened her door to the nut-brown virgin, and gave her a shilling in earnest, as kitchen-maid. The new hieling plied her business so diligently, that Mrs. Gertrude, for want of practice, lost her dexterity at hurling saucepans at a mark. She still, however, retained her morose and querulous humour; and was sure to find fault with every thing.

About the falling of the first snow, our housekeeper had the whole mansion put in readiness for the reception of her lord, who soon afterwards made his appearance, followed by a train of servants, a troop of horses, and a loud cry of hounds. The arrival of the Templar raised little curiosity in Matilda; her work in the kitchen had grown so upon her hands, that she had not a moment to gape after him. One morning, as she was drawing water at the well, he accidentally passed by her, and his appearance kindled sensations in her bosom, to which it had hitherto been a stranger. She beheld a

young man, whose beauty exceeded the fairest of her dreams. The sparkling of his eye, the good humour that lightened up his features, his flowing hair, half concealed by the plumes that overshadowed his soldier's hat, his firm step, and the grace of his whole demeanour, acted so powerfully on her heart, that the blood moved with increased velocity along her veins. She now, for the first time, felt the degraded station to which an untoward fate had reduced her, and this sentiment was an heavier load than the large pitcher. The handsome knight hovered before her imagination day and night: she was continually longing to see him; and whenever she heard him cross the court-yard, she was sure to discover a want of water in the kitchen, and ran with the pitcher in her hand to the well; though the cavalier never once bestowed a glance upon her.

Conrad seemed to exist merely for the purpose of pleasure. He attended every banquet and rejoicing in the city; but Miss Matilda had no share in the festivity: she sate all day in the smoky kitchen, and wept till her pining eyes became sore, constantly bewailing the caprice of fortune, which heaps a profusion of the joys of life over her favourites, while from others she greedily snatches every instant of cheerfulness. Her heart was heavy she knew not why; for she had no suspicion that love had taken up his abode there.

The enamoured Matilda formed project after project, till at last she fell upon a scheme to realise the fondest of her dreams. She had still her godmother the Naiad's musk-ball safe: she had never felt any desire to open it, and make an essay of its power to gratify her wishes. She now resolved to try the experiment. The citizens had, about this time, prepared a sumptuous banquet, in compliment to the Emperor, on the birth of his son. The rejoicings were to continue three days. Each day there was a tournament, and a rich prize for the victor: each evening the most beautiful damsels danced with the knights till break of day. Count Conrad did not fail to attend these festivities.

Matilda had come to the resolution of fallying forth in quest of adventures, on this occasion. After she had arranged the kitchen, and every thing was quiet in the house, she retired to her bed-chamber, and, washing away the tawny varnish, called the lilies and roses of her complexion into new bloom. She then took the musk-ball in her hand, and wished for a new gown, as rich and elegant as fancy could form, with all its appurtenances. On screwing off the top a piece of silk issued out, expanding itself, and rustling all the while. On examination it proved a full dress, fitted up with every little article: the gown fitted as exactly as if it had been cast on her body. Her vanity was fully gratified, as she took a survey of her dress, and she was perfectly content with herself. Accordingly she did not defer a moment longer the execution of her stratagem. She thrice whirled round the magic ball, saying, "Each eye be drowned in sleep." Instantly a deep slumber fell upon the whole household, not excepting the vigilant housekeeper. Matilda glided in a moment out of the house, passed unseen along the streets,

and stepped into the ball-room with the air of one of the Graces; and the charming new figure raised great admiration among the company. Among the noble knights, who crowded to take a peep of the unknown damsel, the Count was far from hindmost. He was nothing less than a woman-hater; and, though an exact connoisseur in the sex, he thought he had never beheld a sweeter person. He approached, and engaged her to dance. She modestly presented her hand, and danced with enchanting elegance. Her nimble feet scarce touched the floor, and the ease and gracefulness of her movements set every eye in rapture. Count Conrad paid his heart for his partner. He no more quitted the fair dancer. He said as many fine things, and pushed his suit with as much zeal and earnestness as the most enamoured of our heroes of romance. Matilda was as little mistress of her own heart: she conquered, and was vanquished in her turn. Her first essay in love was crowned with success equal to her fondest wishes. It was not in her power to keep the sympathy of her feelings concealed beneath the cloak of female reserve. The enraptured Count soon perceived that he was no hopeless lover; his chief anxiety arose from his entire ignorance of his charming partner; and how to prosecute his suit, unless he could discover where she lived. But on this subject all enquiries were in vain: she eluded every question, and after all his efforts he could only obtain a promise that she would make her appearance at the next night's ball. He thought to outwit her, in case she should forfeit her word, by posting all his servants on the look-out to dog her home.

The dawn had already peeped, before she could find an opportunity of slipping away from the knight, and quitting the room. But no sooner had she passed the door, than she turned her musk-ball thrice round, and repeated her spell: by these means she got to her chamber, in spite of the Baron's night-birds, who did not catch a glimpse of her, though they were hovering in every street. No sooner had she shut the door behind her, than she locked up the silken apparel safe in her box, put on her cook's dress, and resumed her ordinary occupations.

Never had any day appeared so tedious to the knight, as that which succeeded the ball. Every hour seemed a week: his heart was in perpetual agitation between longing impatience and apprehension, lest the inscrutable beauty should fail in her engagement. At the approach of evening he equipped himself for the ball, with greater magnificence than the preceding day. He was the first at the rendezvous of pleasure, where, having stationed himself so as to command the entrance, he scrutinized every one who came in with the keenness of an eagle, expecting, with all the eagerness of impatience, the arrival of his dulcinea. The evening star was already advanced high above the horizon, before the young lady could find time to retire to her chamber, and consider what she should do, whether she should extort a second wish from her musk-ball, or reserve it for some more important occurrence of life. The faithful counsellor, Reason, advised the latter; but love enjoined the former with such impetuosity, that dame Reason was quite silenced. Matilda wished for a

dress of rose-coloured satin, so sumptuously bedecked with jewels that a princess need not be ashamed to wear it. The complaisant, musk-ball exerted its powers: the apparel exceeded the lady's expectation: she performed, in high spirits, the rites of the toilette, and, by the help of the talisman, arrived at the spot where she was so ardently expected, without having been beheld by mortal eye. She appeared far more charming than before. The Count's heart bounded for joy at the first glimpse of her person. A power, as irresistible as the central attraction of the globe, hurried him towards her through the vortex of dancers; and as he had now almost given up all hopes of seeing her again, he was unable to stammer out the effusions of his gladness. In order to gain time to recover himself, and to hide his confusion, he led her out to dance, when every couple immediately made way for the charming pair.

At the conclusion of the dance, Count Conrad conducted his weary partner into the contiguous apartment, under the pretext of offering her some refreshment. Here, in the tone of a well-bred courtier, he said a thousand flattering things, as he had done the day before; but the cold language of politeness insensibly kindled into the language of the heart, and at last terminated in a declaration of love. "Consider well what you propose," replied Matilda, "lest repentance overtake you. Those who marry in haste, have commonly leisure to repent. I am an entire stranger: you know nothing of my rank or station; whether I am your equal in birth and dignity, or whether a borrowed lustre dazzles your eyes. It is unbecoming a man of your rank to promise any thing lightly: but a nobleman's engagements should be held inviolable." Here Count Conrad seized her hand, pressed it to his heart, and in the warmth of his affection, exclaimed, "Yes, I pledge my knightly honour, and engage my soul's salvation to boot, were you the meanest man's daughter, and but a pure and undefiled virgin, I will receive you for my wedded wife." On this he pulled a diamond ring from his finger, and gave it her as the pledge of his truth; and took in return the first kiss from her chaste untasted lips, and thus proceeded: "That you may entertain no suspicion of my purpose, I invite you three days hence to my house, where I will appoint my friends, knights, and nobles, to be witnesses of our union." Matilda resisted this proposal with all her might: she was not satisfied at the galloping rate at which the knight's love proceeded; and she was determined to prove the constancy of his affection. He did not cease to press her to consent, but she said neither No nor Yes. The company did not break up before the dawn of day. Matilda vanished; and the knight, who had not enjoyed one wink of sleep, summoned the vigilant house-keeper betimes and gave her orders to prepare a sumptuous feast on the day appointed.

Matilda had so many fowls to pluck, draw, and skewer, that she was obliged to give up her night's rest: yet she did not grudge her labour, well knowing that the banquet was all upon her account. The hour approached; the cheerful host flew to receive every guest

as he arrived, and every time the knocker sounded, he imagined the beautiful stranger was at the door. Though the guests were assembled, the fester lingered long before he served up the dishes. Conrad still waited for the charming bride; but at last, when she did not appear, he was reluctantly obliged to give the signal for dinner. When the guests were seated, there appeared one cover too much; but no one could guess who it was that had dishonoured the knight's invitation. The founder of the feast lost his cheerfulness by perceptible gradations, and in spite of all his exertions it was not in his power to enliven his guests with the spirit of mirth. The musicians, who had been summoned for the evening ball, were discharged; and for this time the banquet ended without one tuneful sound, in the house that had always before been the mansion of joy.

The disconcerted guests stole away at an unusually early hour: the knight longed for the solitude of his bed-chamber; he was impatient for an opportunity to ruminate at liberty on the fickleness of love. While his reflections were engaged by this melancholy subject, he tossed and tumbled to and fro on his bed, with the most intense exertion of thought, he could not determine what conclusion to draw from the absence of his mistress. The blood boiled in his veins; and ere he had closed an eye, the sun peeped in through his curtains. The servants found their master in a violent paroxysm of fever, wrestling with wild fancies. This discovery threw the whole family into the most violent consternation.

For seven long days did secret chagrin gnaw Count Conrad's heart: the roses of his cheeks were all withered, and the fire of his eyes was extinguished. Matilda had perfect intelligence of every thing that was going forward within doors; and it cost her a hard conflict between head and heart, reason and inclination, before she could firmly resolve not to hearken to the call of her beloved. But on the one hand she was desirous to prove the constancy of her suitor, and she hesitated on the other to extort its last wish from the musk-ball: for she considered that a new dress was necessary to the bride; and her godmother had charged her not to lavish away her wishes thoughtlessly. Nevertheless, she felt very heavy at heart, retired to a corner, and wept bitterly. The Count's illness, of which she easily divined the secret cause, gave her still greater concern; and when she heard of his extreme danger she was utterly inconsolable.

The seventh day, according to the prognostication of the physicians, was to determine for life or death. In the morning Matilda waited, as usual, upon the housekeeper, to receive her instructions respecting the bill of fare. But Mrs. Gertrude was in too deep tribulation to be capable of arranging the simplest matter, much less could she regulate the important affair of dinner. Big tears rolled down her leathern cheeks: "Ah! Matilda," she sobbed, "we shall all be forced to budge: our good master will not live out the day." These were sorry tidings; the young lady was ready to sink for sorrow; she soon, however, recovered her spirits, and said, "Do not despair of our lord's life, he will not die, but recover: this night I have dreamed a good dream." "Let me hear thy dream, that I may

interpret it," said she. "I thought," replied Matilda, "that I was at home with my mother: the good woman took me aside, and taught me how to prepare a broth from nine sorts of herbs, which cures all sickness if you do but take three table-spoonfuls. Prepare this broth for thy master, and he will not die, but get better from the hour he shall eat of it." "Thy dream," she said, "is too extraordinary to have come by chance. Go this instant, and make ready thy broth, and I will try if I cannot prevail on our lord to taste of it." Matilda prepared an excellent restorative soup, with all sorts of garden herbs and costly spices, and when she had dished it, she dropped the diamond ring, given her by the knight as a pledge of constancy, into the basin, and then bade the servant carry it up.

The patient so much dreaded the housekeeper's boisterous eloquence, that he constrained himself to swallow a couple of spoonfuls. In stirring his mess to the bottom he felt a hard body, which could have no business there. He fished it out with the spoon, and beheld, to his astonishment, his own diamond ring. His eye immediately beamed life and youthful fire, to the great satisfaction of Mother Gertrude, and the servants in waiting, he emptied the whole basin, with visible signs of a good appetite. They all ascribed this happy change to the soup, for the knight had taken care to keep his ring concealed from the by-standers. He now turned to Mrs. Gertrude, and enquired, "Who prepared this good soup for me, that restores my strength, and calls me back to life?" "Do not give yourself any concern, good sir knight, about the person who prepared the soup: God be praised that it has had the good effect for which we all of us prayed!" This evasion was not likely to satisfy the Count, he gravely insisted on an answer to his question, when the housekeeper gave him this information: "There is a young gypsy, a servant, in the kitchen, she understands the virtue of every herb and plant, it was she who prepared the soup that has done you so much good." "Bring her to me this moment," resumed the knight, "that I may thank and recompense her for the life she has saved." "Pardon me, I beseech you, sir," returned Gertrude, "but the very sight of her would make you ill again. She is as ugly to look upon as a toad; she has a great hunch upon her back, her cloaths are all black and greasy, her hands and face are bedaubed with soot and ashes." "Do as I order you," concluded the Count, "and let me hear no longer demurs." Mrs. Gertrude obeyed in silence; she summoned Matilda quickly from the kitchen, and ushered her into the sick chamber. The knight gave orders that every one should retire, and shut the door close. He then addressed the gypsy, "You must acknowledge freely, my girl, how you came by the ring I found in the basin in which my breakfast was served up." "Noble knight," replied the damsel, "I received the ring out of your own hands; you presented it to me the second evening we danced together at the public rejoicings, it was when you vowed eternal love and constancy to me.—Look now, and say whether my figure or station deserves that on my account you should sink into an early grave. In con-

passion for the condition to which you were reduced, I could no longer suffer you to remain in such a mistake." Count Conrad's weak stomach was not prepared for so strong an antidote to love; he surveyed her in astonishment, and paused. He naturally conceived a suspicion, that his amour had been betrayed, and his friends were practising a pious fraud to extricate him. Still, however, the genuine ring was proof positive that the beautiful stranger was some way or other concerned in the plot. He therefore determined to cross-examine and convict her out of her own mouth: "If you are indeed," said he, "the lovely maiden to whom I devoted my heart, be assured that I am ready to fulfil my engagement; but take care how you attempt to impose upon me. Reassume but the form under which you appeared at the ball-room, and the words which I uttered when I delivered this ring to you shall be sacred and inviolable. But if you cannot perform these requisitions, I shall cause you to be corrected for a vile impostor, unless you satisfy me how you gained possession of this ring."—"Alas!" said Matilda, sighing, "if it be only the glare of beauty that has dazzled your eyes, woe be to me when time or chance shall rob me of these transient charms; when age shall have spoiled this slender shape, and bowed me down to the ground; when the roses and lilies shall fade, and this sleek skin become shrivelled! When the borrowed form under which I now appear, shall, as some time it will, belong to me, what will become of your vows and promises?" Sir Conrad was staggered at this speech, which seemed much too considerate for a kitchen wench. "Know," he replied, "that beauty captivates the heart of man, but virtue alone can retain in the soft bondage of love." "Be it so," returned the damsel; "I go to fulfil your requisitions: the decision of my fate shall be left to your own heart."

The Count fluctuated between hope and the dread of a new deception, called the housekeeper, and gave her strict orders, "Attend this girl to her chamber, and wait at the door while she puts on her clean cloaths.—Be sure you do not stir till she comes out." Mother Gertrude took her prisoner under charge, without being able to guess the intention of her lord's injunctions. Matilda asked for a bit of soap and an handful of bran, took up a wash-hand basin, entered her attic, and shut the door, while the new appointed duenna watched on the outside with all the punctuality that had been recommended to her. The Count, big with expectation, quitted his bed, put on his most elegant suit, and betook himself to his drawing-room, there to abide the final issue of his love adventure. At length the folding doors flew open of a sudden, and Matilda, arrayed like a bride, and beautiful as a goddess, stepped into the drawing-room. Conrad exclaimed, in the transport of a lover intoxicated with joy. "Goddess or mortal! whichever you may be, behold me prostrate at your feet, ready to renew the vows I have already made, and to confirm them by the most solemn oaths, provided you do not disdain to receive this hand and heart." The lady raised the suppliant knight: "Gently, sir knight, I pray, do not be too rash with your vows; you behold me here in my real shape, but in all other respects I am

an utter stranger to you. You have still the ring on your finger." Conrad instantly drew it off, and it sparkled on his partner's hand, and she resigned herself to the knight. "Henceforward," said she, "you are the beloved of my heart. I have no longer any secret for you. I am the daughter of Wilibald, that stout and dauntless knight, whose misfortunes, doubtless, are well known to you. I escaped with difficulty from the downfall of my father's house; and under your roof, though in mean estate, have I found safety and protection." She proceeded to relate the whole of her story, without even suppressing the mystery of the musk-ball. Conrad, utterly forgetting that he had just been sick to death, invited for the following day, all the guests who had been driven away by his dejection, before whom he solemnly espoused his bride. The knight now relinquished the order, and celebrated his nuptials with great magnificence.

The new married couple spent their time in mutual happiness and innocent enjoyments. Count Conrad's mother was still living. She passed her widowhood in retirement, at the family seat. Her dutiful daughter-in-law had for some time longed, out of pure filial affection, to beg her blessing, and thank her for the noble son whom she had borne. But the Count always found some pretext for declining the visit: he now proposed, instead, a summer excursion to an estate that had lately fallen to him, and bordered upon the grounds belonging to Wilibald's demolished fortress. Matilda consented with great eagerness. She rejoiced at the idea of revisiting the spot where she had spent her early youth. She explored the ruins of her father's residence; dropped a piteous tear over the ashes of her parents; walked to the Naiad's fountain, and hoped her presence would induce the nymph to manifest herself. Many a pebble dropped into the spring-head, without the desired effect. Even the musk-ball floated on the surface like an empty bubble, and Matilda herself was fain to be at the trouble of fishing it out again. No fairy rose to view, although another christening was at hand; for the lady was on the point of bestowing on her Count one of the blessings of wedlock. She brought forth a boy beautiful as Cupid; and the joy of the parents was so extravagant, that the mother would never part with him out of her arms. She herself watched every breath of the little innocent, although the Count had hired a discreet nurse to attend the infant. But the third night, while all within the castle was buried in profound sleep, after a day of rejoicing, and a light slumber had fallen upon the watchful mother, on awaking she found the child vanished out of her arms. She called out in a voice of surprise and terror, "Nurse! where have you laid my babe?" "Noble lady," replied nurse, "the dear infant lies in your arms." The bed and bed-chamber were strictly searched, but nothing could be found, except a few spots of blood upon the floor. The nurse, on perceiving this, uttered a loud scream, "God, and all his holy saints, have mercy upon us!—the Griffin has been here, and carried off the child." The lady pined for the loss of her child till she became pale and emaciated, and the father was inconsolable. Though

the belief in the Griffin did not weigh a single grain of mustard in his mind; yet, as he could not explain the accident in any plausible manner, he allowed the nurse's prattle free range, and applied himself to comfort his afflicted wife; and she, out of deference to him, who hated all sadness, forced a cheerful countenance.

Time, the assuager of grief, closed by degrees the wound of the mother's heart, and love made up her loss by a second son. The anxious mother would not part with the boy; and she resisted the influence of sleep as long as ever her strength would permit. When at last she was no longer able to refuse the call of nature, she took the golden chain from her neck, slung it round the infant's body, and fastened the other end on her own arm; she then crossed herself and the child, that the Griffin might have no power to hurt it, and soon after was overtaken by an irresistible slumber. She awoke at the first ray of morning, but—horrible to tell! the sweet babe had vanished out of her arms. Matilda examined the golden chain that was wrapped round her arm; she found that one of the links had been cut through by a pair of sharp scissors, and swooned away at the discovery. The noise raised an alarm in the house, and Conrad, upon hearing what had befallen his lady, drew his sword in a transport of rage and indignation, firmly resolved to inflict condign punishment on the nurse.

"Wretched woman?" he exclaimed, "did I not give thee strict charge to watch all night, and never once to turn aside thine eye from the infant, that when the monster came to rob the sleeping mother, thou mightest raise the house by thy outcries, and scare the Griffin away? But thou shalt now sleep an everlasting sleep." The woman fell down on her knees before him: "Yes, my noble lord, I entreat you, as you hope for mercy hereafter, to slay me this instant, that I may carry to the grave the horrid deed mine eyes have seen this night.

"What deed," he asked, have thine eyes beheld this night, too horrid for thy tongue to tell? Better confess, as becomes a faithful servant, than have thy secret extorted by the rack." "Alas!" replied the woman, "better the fatal secret were buried with me in the cold ground." The Count, whose curiosity was only raised the more by suspense, took the woman into a private apartment, and by threats and promises forced from her a discovery, which he would fain have been saved the pain of making. "Your lady, since I must needs disclose it, is a vile sorceress. At the dead of night, when every thing was hushed in repose, she feigned herself asleep, and I, without well knowing why, did the same. Not long afterwards she called me by my name, but I took no notice, and set to breathe hard and snore. Supposing me to be fast asleep, she took the infant, and pressing it to her bosom, kissed it fondly, and lisped these words, which I distinctly overheard, 'Child of bone, be transformed into a charm to secure me thy father's love. Now, thou little innocent, go to thy brother, and then I will prepare, from nine sorts of herbs, and thy bones, a potent draught, which will perpetuate my beauty and thy father's fondness.'—Having said this, she drew a dia-

mond needle out of her hair, forced it through the infant's heart, held the poor innocent out to bleed, and when it had ceased struggling laid it upon the bed before her, took out a musk-ball, and muttered a few words to herself. As she unscrewed the cover, a magic flame blazed forth, as if from a tun of pitch, and consumed the body in a few moments. She carefully gathered the ashes and bones into a box, which she pushed under the bed. She then, as if suddenly awaking, cried out in an anxious voice, 'Nurse! what have you done with my babe?' and I replied, shuddering for fear of her sorcery, 'Noble lady, the infant lies in your arms.' Thereupon she began to shew signs of bitter sorrow, and I ran out of the room, under pretence of calling assistance. These are the particulars of the shocking deed, which you have forced me to disclose."

Count Conrad stood as still as though he had been petrified; and it was a long time before he could utter a word. When he had a little collected himself, he said, "What occasion is there for the fiery trial? the stamp of truth is impressed on your words: I feel and fully believe that all is as you say. Keep the horrid secret close pent up in your heart. Intrust it to no mortal, not even to the priest when you confess. I will go in to the hyæna with a feigned countenance; and while I embrace her, and speak comfort to her, be sure to draw the box with the dead bones, and deliver it secretly to me."

He stepped into his wife's chamber with the air of a man firm though deeply touched. His lady received him with the eye where no guilt was depicted, though her soul was wounded to death. She did not speak, but her countenance resembled an angel's countenance. Compassion softened the spirit of vengeance: he clasped the unhappy mother to his bosom, and she moistened his garment with the tears of her affliction. Meantime the nurse had taken care punctually to perform what she was ordered respecting the delivery of the horrid reservoir of bones. It cost his heart a hard struggle, before he could determine the fate of the supposed sorceress. He at length resolved to get rid of her privately, and without drawing the notice of mankind towards his domestic grievances. He mounted his steed, and rode away, after he had given these orders: "When the Countess leaves her chamber at the expiration of nine days, for the purpose of bathing, bolt the door on the outside, and let the fires be raised as high as possible, that she may sink under the vehemence of the heat, and come no more out alive." The servant, who, in common with the whole household, adored his kind and tender lady, heard these orders with the utmost sorrow and concern. But, nevertheless, he was afraid to open his lips in opposition to the knight, on account of the positive manner in which he spake. On the ninth day Matilda gave orders for heating the bath. Her husband, she thought, would not abide long, and she wished, before his return, to eradicate every vestige of her late misfortunes. On entering the bathing-room she observed the air to quiver for mere heat, and she made an effort to retreat, but a vigorous arm forced her irresistibly forwards, and she instantly heard some without bolt and bar the door—She cried out

for help in vain—nobody heard: the fuel was now piled up high, and the fire raised till the furnace glowed like an iron furnace.

The Countess resigned herself to her fate; only the odious suspicion, which she apprehended had fallen upon her, afflicted her soul much more than her disgraceful death. She then threw herself down upon a couch to begin her last agonies. Nature, however, on the approach of the evil hour, will make an involuntary struggle against her dissolution. In the anguish occasioned by the suffocating heat, as the unhappy sufferer toiled and tumbled on the couch, the musk-ball, which she had constantly carried about her, fell upon the ground. She snatched it eagerly up, and cried aloud, "O Naiad, if it be in thy power, deliver me from a dishonourable death, and vindicate my innocence!" She screwed off the top, and the same instant a thick mist arose out of the musk-ball, and diffusing itself through the whole apartment, refreshed the Countess, so that she no longer felt any oppression. The cloud collected itself into a visible form; and Matilda, whose apprehensions for her life had now vanished, beheld, to her unspeakable joy, the Nymph of the Fountain clasping the new-born infant to her bosom, and holding the elder boy with her right hand.

"Hail, my beloved Matilda!" exclaimed the Naiad: happy was it for thee that thou didst not so heedlessly lavish the third wish of thy musk-ball as the two former. Behold here the two living witnesses of thy innocence: they will enable thee to triumph over the black calumny under which thou hast nearly sunk. Henceforward the musk-ball will fulfil no more of thy wishes; but nothing further remains for thee to desire; I will unfold the riddle of thy fate.—Know, that the mother of thy husband is the author of all thy calamity. The marriage of her son proved a dagger to the heart of that proud woman, who imagined he had stained the honour of his house by taking a kitchen-wench to his bed. She breathed nothing but curses and execrations against him, and would no longer acknowledge him for the offspring of her womb. All her thoughts were bent on contrivances and plots to destroy thee, although the vigilance of thy husband had hitherto frustrated her malicious designs. She, however, at last succeeded to elude his vigilance by means of a fawning hypocritical nurse. She induced this woman, by the most liberal promises, to take thy first-born child out of thy arms, while asleep, and cast it, like a whelp, into the water. Fortunately she chose my spring-head for her wicked purpose; and I received the boy in my arms, and have ever since nursed him as his mother. In the same manner did she undesigningly commit to my charge the second son of my dear Matilda. It was this vile deceitful nurse who became thy accuser. She persuaded the Count that thou art a sorceress. She delivered into his hands a box full of the bones of doves and fowls, which he took for the remains of his children, and in consequence of this mistake gave orders to stifle thee in the bath. Spurred on by penitence, and an eager desire to countermand this cruel sentence, though he still holds thee guilty, he is now on his return, and in one short hour thou wilt recline, with thy honour vio-

icated, on his bosom." The Nymph, having uttered these words, stooped to kiss the Countess's forehead. She then, without waiting for any reply, involved herself in her veil of mist, and was no more seen.

Meanwhile the servants were exerting their utmost efforts to revive the extinguished fire. They thought they could hear the sound of human voices within, whence they concluded that the Countess was still alive. But all their stirring and blowing was ineffectual. The wood would no more take fire than if they had put on a charge of snow-balls. Not long afterwards Conrad rode up full speed, and eagerly enquired how it fared with his lady. The servants informed him, that they had heated the room right hot, but that the fire went suddenly out, and they supposed the Countess was yet alive. This intelligence rejoiced his heart. He dismounted, knocked at the door, and called out through the key-hole, "Art thou alive, Matilda?" The Countess replied, "Yes, my dear lord, I am alive, and my children are also alive." Overjoyed at this answer, the impatient Count bade his servants break open the door; he rushed into the bathing-room, fell down at the feet of his injured lady, bedewed her hands with tears of repentance, led her, and the charming pledge of her innocence and love, out of the dreary place of execution to her own apartment, and heard from her own mouth the true account of these transactions. Enraged at the foul calumny, and shameful sacrifice of his infants, he issued orders to apprehend and shut up the treacherous nurse in the bath. The fire now burned kindly, the flames played aloft in the air, and soon reduced the diabolical woman to ashes.

THE MAGIC LEGACY.

A CERTAIN king had one son, named Alindor, whom he had made an accomplished prince. A few minutes before his death, which took place after a long illness, he addressed him in the following words:—

"Son, the spirits of my ancestors beckon me to them; I am aged, and it is time I should make room for thee. The crown, which I bequeath, has been a burden to my head. Thou, my son, wilt wear it with joy and honour. Know, that I have long possessed a treasure which enchantment has prevented me from enjoying; but

nothing restricts thee from the use of it. Take this key, and open a chest that thou wilt find buried beneath the fountain before the eastern front of thy palace. Possess thyself, as soon as I am in the land of spirits, of this inestimable prize; and let justice and generosity guide thee in the application of it. Once more embrace me, and receive the last breath of thy expiring father in a prayer for thy prosperity."

With these words the old king breathed his last. Alindor, sunk in deep grief, hung long sorrowing over the lifeless corps. His grief was genuine, and flowed from the sensibility of a tender and grateful heart.

He caused his father to be interred with pomp suited to his worth, and fulfilled every duty to his remains. He then set fifty labourers to dig under the fountain, which was constructed of enormous masses of marble, that rendered the work slow of execution. At length, after some weeks labour, a vault was discovered many feet under the earth.

The prince, whom curiosity often led to inspect the industry of his workmen, was present when it was broken. All that it was found to contain was a chest of ebony, which Alindor, to his amazement, found so light, that he could raise it in his arms and carry it without difficulty.

But what a new shock to the expectations of the prince, when opening the chest, he found nothing but an empty leather purse, a horn of metal, and a girdle of coarse hair. His sudden disappointment was so great, that he stood for some time motionless, meditating in silent agony on the insulting mockery of his father.

Alindor examined the chest with more attention, and in one corner discovered a roll of parchment, on which he read these words:—

"When thou hast need of gold, open the purse and thou wilt find whatever thou hast occasion for.

"If soldiers be necessary to thee, blow the horn three times, and an army will stand at thy command, whom thou mayst dismiss with a word.

"Wouldst thou be transported from one place to another, gird thyself with the belt, and it will convey thee instantly to the place where thou wishest.

"These wisely employed may make thee the most powerful of monarchs; but be careful to preserve them, for they will possess the same virtues in the hands of another: and what may conduce to thy prosperity may also be employed for thy destruction."

The son of a poor king, debarred from the magnificence of his rank, will ever desire gold: and gold was accordingly the first wish of Alindor. The purse was required to do its office, and scarcely had the young king opened it with the wish, than it swelled in his hands to such a bulk and weight, that he was constrained to let it fall to the floor, which was covered with gold of every species.

The prince then blowing the enchanted horn inconsiderately, he found himself surrounded with soldiers, who disappeared at his

order. These proofs satisfied him that his girdle would not fail when brought to trial, and he soon found occasion to employ it. He had long languished with a secret passion for Zenomia, the daughter of a califf. Zenomia was selfish, vain, haughty, and ambitious, but at the same time, an admirable creature; since in beauty and accomplishments she was unrivalled among her sex.

Zenomias beauty, which was the more seductive as she knew how to vary it with every form of sentiment, held a croud of young princes in her chains. Alindor sighed in solitude for her, while his richer rivals, by magnificent offerings, openly contended for her favour. That he had never declared his love proceeded from his inability to support an expence equal to his rivals, and he felt that in courage, address, and personal accomplishments he was inferior to none. This made him confide on his power to attract the attention of Zenomia, if he were enabled to present himself with suitable splendour.

The treasure which he possessed in the magic purse, now furnished him with means of surpassing every competitor in expence. As soon as he entered the realms of the califf, he spared no cost to extend the fame of his wealth and liberality. His entrance into the capital excited the amazement of the people, and his appearance at court awakened the jealousy of all the rival princes, who dreaded in him a formidable antagonist.

The califf and his consort encouraged the addresses of so rich a monarch to their daughter, and Zenomia gradually displayed a marked preference for him over his rivals. Alindor was benivolent, sincere, and consequently, unsuspecting and credulous; he thought himself master of the princess's heart, when, in fact, he had but excited her avarice and vanity.

The violence of his passion at length drew from him a formal declaration, when his efforts to please her had seemed to render her peculiarly favourable to him.

"How canst thou expect acceptance of thy love?" said the princess, "when it is too plain thou hast reposed no confidence in me. The title thou hast assumed is an imposition; since the petty kingdom, of which thou callest thyself the ruler, could never suffice to thy profusion. In short, prince, there is somewhat mysterious in your appearance, which must be explained before I can make any answer to your offers."

Alindor protested, that his name and title were what he professed them, and as Zenomia was still incredulous, and persisted to maintain the contrary, to remove from himself the unjust suspicion, the too ingenuous prince revealed to his beloved fair the secret source of his riches.

Zenomias was not content with his assurance; she would see the purse, and make experiment of its virtues.

Alindor long refused to part, for a moment, with so inestimable a treasure, the care of which had been so solemnly enjoined on him by his father; but Zenomias reproaches and insinuating intreaties, at

length triumphed over his constancy, and he gave the purse reluctantly into her hands.

No sooner was it in her power, than she flew out of the apartment, and shut the door on the prince, who, considering her only in a jest, expected her return with impatience, but without uneasiness.

After some time, a slave came in the name of the princess, to thank him for his present, and announce to him, that Zenomia, in company of the califf, and her mother, was about to set off for one of their country palaces.

The plot now stood revealed to the prince, and he saw, that the father, mother and daughter, had been engaged in a conspiracy to plunder him. He had no resource, but to return to his kingdom for the most potent of his father's gifts, to revenge the injury, and to obtain restitution of what had been so treacherously won from him. In two months he appeared before the capital of the califf, provided with his horn and girdle. No sooner had he given three blasts, than an army of fifty thousand men stood at each of the four gates of the city, while a large body of horsemen scoured the country. Amazement and fear seized the inhabitants; none thought of attack, or were prepared for resistance; they threw themselves at the mercy of the victor, and the califf sought to save himself and his family by flight.

The fugitives were intercepted by the prince's cavalry, and brought captives into the tent of Alindor.

Zenomias wiped away the tears that dimmed her eyes, and recognized Alindor, whom his helmet and arms had at first concealed from the knowledge of the califf and herself.

"Scarcely can I trust my eyes," said she, "when I behold in thee, prince, the disturber of our peace, and the ravager of our city and empire. Alas! I see, that thy vows of love and esteem were words devoid of sentiment! Shame," proceeded she, scornfully, "who, to avenge a woman's frolic, wastes kingdoms, and, sword in hand, assails his mistress! Blush, prince, this conduct disgraces you."

Zenomias concluded her address with a voice of such tenderness, that Alindor, wholly subdued, cast himself at her feet, and swore with the most solemn imprecations to disband his troops, and think no more of vengeance, as soon as his purse was restored to him.

"Here is the unhappy cause of all this mischief," said she, throwing a leathern purse to him; "receive the fatal treasure, of the possession of which thou art so jealous. Take it, and know that I feel no more pain in parting with it, than I do in flying a lover whose humours are so impetuous and fatal!"

Alindor lost all government of himself: he mistook the reproaches of Zenomia for offended love, and fancying he had really possessed the princess's heart, the fear of having lost her esteem drove him almost to desperation. He would willingly, to excuse himself rather by actions than words, have made a voluntary offering of the purse to

Zenomía, had she deigned to wait his answer; but with the last words she had retired hastily from his presence.

Alindor now turned to the califf, and conjured him to reconcile him with the princess. He dismissed his army, which, during this time, had collected about his tent, and which he annihilated by a word. The califf thanked the prince for his generosity, and besought him to accompany him to the city, where a banquet should solemnize the peace, and consign all enmity to oblivion.

He now renewed with more fervour his vows of love, and his wish to possess the heart of his princess.

"Willingly," said she, "would I obey a voice that speaks too eloquently for thee in my heart, were not thy power too tremendous. I shudder at the thought of belonging to a man, who stands in such close relation to supernatural beings. Disclose to me the means by which thou hast brought so innumerable a host before our gates ere we knew of thy arrival. Explain to me the possibility of such a surprise, which is not less miraculous than the sudden disappearance of so many, whom I myself saw vanish into air in an instant. Speak, prove thyself of a mortal nature like myself, that I may not be weighed down with thy superiority, and from that moment I will chase awe and terror from my soul, and all within me shall be Love's and Alindor's."

Zenomía uttered these words with so true a tone of affection and tenderness, that the prince consented to gratify her curiosity. He produced his magic horn, and informed Zenomía of the manner and effect of its operation. The artful beauty soon found means to gain this precious instrument; and as soon as it was in her hands, she gave three blasts, and in an instant an army, that filled the palace, attended her orders. Alindor's confidence in his beloved was so entire, and his shame of his former distrust was so great, that he had not the least suspicion of any insidious design, and he only regretted the alarm and confusion which her inconsiderate experiment might cause in the city. He requested her to dismiss the magic host into air, when, to his amazement and horror, the princess, instead of listening to his words, turned to the nearest soldiers, and bade them seize the prince, and convey him to her father.

Fortunately Alindor had girded himself beneath his robe with the magic belt; and this with his fist with transported him instantaneously to his own kingdom. His indignation were so incensed at this second deceit of his perfidious mistress, that he vowed eternal hatred, and menaced the most severe vengeance on her head. But what words can speak his phrenzy, when recurring to his purse to replenish his exhausted coffers, he found it remain empty. When, on close inspection, he found it totally different from his own, and he perceived the black fraud and perfidy of Zenomía.

Stung by repentment, he was not long inventing the plan of his revenge, and the means of executing it were found in the magic girdle, the sole remaining and apparently most worthless legacy of his father. On this he reposed all his hopes of restitution and vengeance; and

waiting only for midnight, he bound the girdle about his waist, and wished himself in the princess's apartment.

The belt fulfilled its office in an instant, and placed him beside the couch of his false mistress, who, sunk in sound sleep, apprehended nothing from her enraged lover.

Alindor's design had been to surprise Zenomia during her sleep, to extort from her, by menaces of instant death, his magic purse and horn, and by means of the latter to collect a numerous army, and carry away the califf, with his perfidious family, captives. But the poor prince soon felt that the execution of this splendid scheme was impossible, and he renounced a triumph for which his too weak and susceptible heart incapacitated him. The charms of his false, but fair, Zenomia, whom he saw by the light of a lamp reclined before him, more encharming and irresistible than ever, and whom he contemplated too long to remain constant to his design, raised his passion in full force, made him forget his wrongs, and left him no care but to excuse his temerity. A deep sigh, which stole from his lips, disturbed her, she leaped terrified from the sofa, and cried aloud for help. Alindor embraced her, and besought her to be tranquil.

"Who art thou, rash man?" exclaimed Zenomia, struggling to extricate herself, "what means thy insolence? unhand me!"

"Forgive my temerity, Zenomia," said the prince, "as I forgive thee greater offences. I conjure thee to banish every fear, and give me a patient audience."

Zenomina now recollected the voice and features of her injured lover, foreboded his design, and prevented his declarations by thus addressing him. "I am culpable, prince, I own. I urged too far the proud design of robbing you of every thing, that from my hand you might receive all. You have mistaken my sentiments, and must have argued meanly of me. I will not inquire by what new charm you have penetrated through the numerous guards of my palace: I revere the mysterious powers that obey you, and search not into their ways. Yet you need not their assistance to recover your treasures, ere morning they shall be restored. But, prince," continued she, with a tone of insinuating tenderness, "there is a reparation owing me, which, if thou hast ever loved me, thou wilt not scruple to acquit thyself of. Thou hast endangered my honour, and exposed my name to calumny, by this intrusion into my apartment: from this hour thou art my husband, and to-morrow must solemnize our nuptials."

"Is it possible," cried Alindor, "that thou canst return my rashness with such generosity? Yes, beloved Zenomia, I am thine, and nothing henceforth shall disturb our harmony."

Zenomina, meanwhile observed his girdle, whose shaggy texture rendered it sufficiently perceptible on the silken robe which the prince wore beneath, and her penetration suggested to her that some new magic was concerned with this uncouth ornament. Hoping to win the secret from her lover, she loosed the belt gradually from his waist; and when she had so far effected her purpose, that another touch would detach it, she drew back, in the midst of a tender address of

the prince, pretending to have been hurt by some part of his apparel. She now feigned to perceive the magic girdle, and ridiculing it for its ungraceful appearance, begged him to divest himself of so odious an ornament.

“Do not despise this belt,” replied Alindor, “of all the wonders I possess it is the most precious. To this girdle I owe all the happiness of my future life.”

To support his words, Alindor related how he had made a journey of many weeks, by means of this girdle, in an instant, and, unsuspectingly informed her, it had the virtue of transporting him whithersoever he would.

No sooner was the artful Zenomia acquainted with the precious secret, than she approached the amorous prince, threw him off his guard by her caresses, and loosed from his body the girdle, which now scarcely hung to his side. Instantly binding it round her waist, she wished herself conveyed to the califf's apartment, and vanished in the moment from the arms of her deluded lover.

Alindor's astonishment at this treachery was so great, that he lost all consciousness, and was near falling into the hands of the guards, whom she had dispatched to seize him. Fortunately the rattle of the gates awaked him from the stupefaction in which the base perfidy of the princess had left him, and he had time to save himself by a staircase that led into the gardens.

Death was his sole wish: and to rid himself of life, which had become insupportable to him, he sought the haunts of lions and tygers, to find in their fangs refuge from the thoughts of a mistress more inhuman than all the savages of the wild.

For two days he wandered about the rough cliffs of a horrid wilderness, to meet that death which he could never find. Fatigued beyond sufferance, and tormented by the most raging thirst and hunger, he resolved to terminate all his miseries, and accordingly, mounting to the summit of the steepest precipice, he threw himself headlong down. The fall must have proved immediate death to him, had not his robe caught in the projecting branch of a fig tree. This broke the force of his fall, and let him down gently on a bed of thick moss, that preserved him free from any fracture; but he had lost his breath and sense during the fall, and he lay some time motionless on the ground.

When his reason returned, he found himself tormented by such a burning thirst, that he cursed the destiny which had protracted his anguish by preserving his existence, and seeing no way to escape from the place into which he had thrown himself, he had the prospect of dying in the most deplorable and lingering manner.

Urged by his scorching thirst, he strove to raise himself from the earth, that he might search for some spring water; but all his struggles were ineffectual, and he seemed held to the ground by some vast weight. Looking for the impediment that restrained him, he perceived that a vast branch, which he had by the violence of his fall detached from the tree, lay under him, and was entangled with his

garment. With joy he saw the branch covered with ripe figs of extraordinary size and beauty. He gathered some, and devoured them with avidity.

Scarcely had the prince appeased his thirst with the delicious fruit, than he was disturbed in his enjoyment by a frightful prodigy.

With every fig he had eaten, his nose extended itself the length of a thumb; but occupied with the cravings of hunger and thirst, he did not remark the deformity, till the disproportion of feature was become monstrous. He observed it with amazement, but without terror, and almost with indifference. "Perhaps," said he, "it is a brand of ignominy for my folly and credulity, in losing the precious donations of my father."

During these reflections, the prince wandered about the valley, into which he had precipitated himself, in search of an outlet. Noontide advanced, the sun shot more burning rays, and Alindor's thirst returned on him with new fury. Happily he heard the gushing of water, and perceiving a spring, he reclined beside it, to drink with more facility the clear liquid. He swallowed the cool water out of his palms for want of a better cup, and observed, that with every draught the monstrous exuberance of his nose diminished. He profited by the discovery, and continued his draughts till his deformed feature had recovered its natural dimensions.

This unexpected good fortune inspired him with a transient joy; which nothing can extinguish in the human breast, was again resumed in him. Meditating on the possibility of regaining all his treasures, the ludicrous accident that had befallen his countenance, suggested to him a stratagem which promised to restore his losses, and revenge him on his false mistress.

Alindor delayed not an instant the execution of his plan. He broke off a branch of the finest figs, and returning to the spring with an earthen vessel which he procured from a forester, he filled it with the miraculous water. Exchanging his rich vestments for a dress of inferior stuff, he entered the city in the disguise of a peasant, bearing his figs neatly disposed in a basket, and proceeded with them to the palace of the califf.

As the fruit was of uncommon beauty, they were immediately purchased for the table of the sultans and her daughter.

Alindor retired hastily from the palace, when the bargain was concluded, and disguising himself anew in a long beard and a black mantle, he hired a house in one of the suburbs, and assumed the character of an Egyptian physician. The mother and daughter, allured by the delicious flavour of the fruit, devoured it with an eagerness that did not suffer them to perceive its consequences, till the noses of both had enlarged to an enormous bulk of deformity. Each perceived the alteration in herself and the other at the same moment, and both burst into exclamations of surprise and horror.

Mother and daughter ran affrighted to a mirror, and, seeing their faces thus hideously disfigured, brought all their attendants about them with their lamentations. The rumour of this miraculous event spread through the whole palace, and the califf came to satisfy himself of this extraordinary incident.

The califf summoned all the most celebrated physicians of his capital, and promised a kingly recompence to him, who should relieve his wife and daughter from their odious incumbances. After long consultations, it was unanimously agreed, that the misfortune was not to be removed by medicine, and that, as its cause was not in natural circumstances, neither was its remedy in nature.

Neither would submit implicitly to this judgment, and they flattered their hopes by a thousand experiments, which had no other effect, than to fill their minds with expectations that were constantly disappointed.

Alindor now thought it time to hasten the progress of his stratagem. He accordingly announced himself as a sage experienced in all the mysteries of medicine, and he boasted of possessing a magical secret, of infallible efficacy, to restore the princesses to their pristine beauty.

He was received with every mark of respect, and an apartment was assigned him in the palace, that he might be nearer his patients.

The water from the fount, of which he had made in his own case the successful experiment, effected on the sultana's like the coalil wish. Her nose was reduced with every draught, and it depended on the prince alone to have at once freed her from the loathsome incumbance; but he purposely delayed the accomplishments of her cure, to give it greater value from its apparent difficulty.

When the cure was perfected, and he had no longer an excuse for deferring to devote his labour to the princess, Alindor one morning was introduced to her apartment, and addressed her in these words:—

“Your aspect, princess, moves me at once to mirth and compassion. Should you ever appear with this frightful proboscis in the world, will it not be thought you are descended from an elephant? Of what use are your graces, now that this monstrous redundancy counteracts the lustre of your complexion and the splendour of your eyes? The wretches whom you once subjected to your caprice, by the magic of your beauties, now triumph in their turn, and deride your deformity. But compose your anguish; your mother ceases to be an object of horror, and perhaps by the success of my efforts you may soon be so no longer.”

Then after pronouncing many strange words, and using various gestures, he administered to her a cup of common water, which was without any consequence, but to irritate the hopes of the princess. Feigning surprise and disappointment at the failure of his pretended medicine, he prepared another cup of the same potent remedy, into which, to render it still more infallible, he pressed the juice of some flowers and herbs, amidst a multitude of magical ceremonies, and this the princess was directed to drink with her face turned towards the East.

The nose of the princess was not lessened a hair's breadth by this tantalizing process.

Zenobia was in the utmost despair, and the pretended sage confessed himself embarrassed at the failure of his remedies. He received with the assurance, that he would renew his endeavours the ensuing morn-

Alindor repeated three days successively this pantomime, till the anguish and fears of the princess had become almost insupportable. He then appointed the hour of midnight for a grand and final attempt.

Zenomia waited the instant of his arrival with the most agonizing palpitations. It was now to be decided, whether she should remain a monster, or should be again the most beautiful of creatures. Her whole soul hung to the event; she received the astrologer with tears in her eyes, and conjured him to exhaust all his skill to free her from so hateful a deformity.

"If the magnificent rewards promised by my father be insufficient to excite your diligence and ardour, know," said she, "that I possess treasures of inestimable value, with which, on the instant you effect my cure, I will demonstrate to you my gratitude.

"I am familiar with the promises of the sick," said the false physician with indifference and coldness, "and know how little sure they are of performance."

Zenomia, without answering, slipped into her chamber, and returned to the sage with her magic purse, together with the horn and girdle, that she might excite his avarice and establish his confidence.

"These three insignificant utensils," said she, "possess such miraculous virtues, that it depends only on my use of them to become the richest and most powerful of all mortals. From this instant they are your own, and I will instruct you to employ them, when you have restored me to my proportion of feature."

"I need not thy directions," interrupted Alindor, throwing away his disguise, and seizing the precious prize. "I resume what thou hast robbed me of, and leave thee thy false heart, and thy monstrous nose."

While he spoke these words, he girded himself in his magic belt, and wishing himself in his own kingdom, left the false fair one to deplore the loss of her ill gotten gains and her beauty.

THE ENCHANTED KNIGHT;

OR,

PHEBE.

THERE was a man who was left a widower with one child, a sweet girl, whose name was Phebe. After he had lived two or three years single, he determined to marry again; and he was the more easily induced so to do, because he had met with a woman about his own age, and very much of his own disposition, to whom he had made himself agreeable. This woman was a widow, and, like him, had a daughter called Martha, who was two years older than Phebe; they mutually promised to be exceedingly good and tender to each other's offspring; and at first they kept their promises tolerably well.

It happened that the father died, when Phebe was about twelve years old; and as she had been well instructed by her father's care, who loved her dearly, she was, on account of the readiness of her wit, more accomplished and advanced in knowledge than many of twice her age, and much more so than her sister Martha, though there had been equal care taken of them both. The death of her father was a great misfortune to Phebe; she soon began to find an alteration in the behaviour of her mother and sister. The latter, having now no restraint upon her, (for her mother had always been far too indulgent) took every opportunity of thwarting Phebe, of whom she became exceedingly jealous, owing to the preference Phebe always obtained in society.

It may easily be imagined that poor Phebe soon became deprived of all the little pleasures in which she used to share: instead of mixing with the visitors, and going abroad with her sister, as formerly, she was confined to her needle, and ordered to assist the servant at the lowest drudgery.

The praises that Phebe had obtained, and the admiration with which every body was struck who happened to get a sight of her, served only farther to inflame the enmity of those to whom alone she could look for protection; insomuch, that she at last was not only the drudge of the family, but was stinted in her very food, obliged to eat the offals, and beat upon the most frivolous pretences, till she was sometimes hardly able to move.

One day, when the mother and favourite daughter were gone out, and had, as usual, locked up every thing from her, leaving her but a scanty pittance, scarce half enough to satisfy nature, a poor old woman, tottering under age, came to the door, begging she would give her a morsel to keep her from starving. Phebe, though very hungry herself, had too good a heart to see such an old creature ready to sink with age and hunger, and not give her every assistance in her power. She immediately went to the door, gave the poor woman her hand, desired her to come in and rest herself, and set about warming what little morsel she had, (which she herself was going to have eat cold) to make it as comfortable as she could. She then laid a clean napkin and plate, and waited upon and cherished her as though she had been her own mother. "The God of Heaven blest thee!" said the old woman, as Phebe stood ministering by her side; "thou art a merciful and a gracious angel, and shalt lose nothing by thy charity. Thou hast given me food, wilt thou give me a kiss?" Phebe would always rather hurt her own feelings than the feelings of another; and though the old woman was very disagreeable with rags and age, she instantly kissed her with the best grace imaginable, lest she should give her pain, or lest she should be thought to despise age and poverty. The old woman fixed her eyes steadfastly upon her—"Sweet and heavenly creature," said she, "have I at last found such a one! Yes; if thy courage equals thy other virtues, thou art the treasure I so long and ineffectually have sought."—Phebe wondered to hear a miserable old woman speak in this manner, and in such language too. "Thou art very young; art thou of a timid disposition?"—"No, indeed," said Phebe, "I never injure

any creature that has life or sensibility. I would do good to every body if I had the power, and I hope I commit no wickedness, then wherefore should I be afraid?"

Phebe turned her eyes towards her guest, and instead of a poor, decrepid, and beggarly old woman, she beheld a beautiful Being in robes of white and scarlet, and wings more variously spotted than the shining plumage of the Chinese pheasant!

"Purest and best of earthly virgins," said the bright vision, "be not alarmed."—"No," replied Phebe, "I am only surprised. If you are a heavenly being, you will not injure me; if a wicked one, you cannot, till I, by guilt, shall give you power over me."—"Listen to me," said the spirit: "Long have I been seeking to

deliver Oron, the knight of a neighbouring castle, from the authority of the demons; but in vain; they have seduced and enchanted him, and he is held a willing slave to five of the most powerful that the dark entrails of the sulphurous regions can emit. He hath suffered them to light up the Dead Hand within his walls, which hath stupified and lulled to sleep the guardian spirits fate had appointed to protect him from their machinations; and till that is extinguished, never shall he be freed from their wicked dominion. The sylphs and other ætherial essences have in vain made war upon these demons and their adherents; a young virgin alone can vanquish them, and extinguish the enchanted flame of the Dead or Glorious Hand; for a good and beautiful virgin is of more power than a host of spirits. I and my companions have long mourned over the misfortunes of Oron; for till these infernal and malicious fiends had fascinated him, the earth had few young men so promising. To thee, then, fair and excellent creature, is this charitable and noble task assigned."

"I hope I have the will, if I have the ability, to do good," replied Phebe; "nor am I afraid of encountering such danger, as a weak creature, like me, may support; but I am dependent on the will of another. I must not leave my mother's house without her knowledge; for that would be wickedness, and not virtue."

Phebe had scarcely pronounced the last word, when she heard her mother and sister at the door; and, instead of a sylph, saw the same old woman again at her side whom her charity had so lately relieved. She knew not what to think; she was ready to imagine she had been in a dream: she ran, however, to open the door for her mother.—"Hey-day! indeed! said the sister, "what old beldam have you got here to keep you company? I suppose you have been having your fortune told, but I am afraid it is not very good."—"Better than thine will ever be, Calot," answered the old woman, and glided out of the house. There needed not half this to set them upon the patient suffering Phebe: they both fell upon her, and, as they thought, beat her most unmercifully; but, to the astonishment of Phebe, their blows gave her no pain. They were not satisfied with this: her sister insisted upon it that she should be instantly turned out of doors, and the foolish and cruel mother put her wicked wishes in execution.

Phebe could not forbear weeping, at finding herself, thus friend-

less and unknown, driven from her mother's house; she was even exceedingly affected with the thought of parting from persons who had treated her so basely. She comforted herself, however, as well as she could. "I am very able and willing to work," thought she, "and surely some charitable good person will give me a little food for my labour."

She wandered along the path she first took, without knowing whither it led, till evening began to come on, and she was faint with hunger, when, being come to an eminence, she sat herself down, and turned round to take a last look at the inhospitable, yet respected mansion, from which she was expelled. As she looked down the lawn, she saw, with surprise, her favourite cat, to which she had always been very kind, coming trotting after her, and looking up, as if in pity for her fate. The cat seemed to be guided by a superior instinct: there were three paths led from where her mistress sat, and she took one of them, and looked back as if inviting Phebe to follow; which action she repeated several times, Phebe, to whom no path had a peculiar preference, inclined to that from the action of the animal. The cat had not gone far, before she turned a little from the way to a bush, and stopped, then went back to meet her mistress, and returned to the same spot: this incited Phebe's curiosity, and she followed to the bush. Here she found a clean white napkin, and in it a part of a very fine capon, with some good wheaten bread. Phebe's feelings may easily be imagined; she sat herself upon the bank, and divided her treasure with her friend.

She presently rose from her repast, and her cat still ran before, as if to conduct her. They came presently to a place where the stile had been hedged up, to prevent passengers from coming any more that road; the cat turned down the side of the hedge, and found a clear gap.—Darkness now grew on apace, and there was neither town, hamlet, nor house, in view; yet poor Phebe kept implicitly following her wary guide. On each hand were deep pits, bogs, and precipices, into which the smallest deviation would for ever plunge her; but her faithful cat kept just before; and every moment kept turning its luminous eyes, as if to light and guide its mistress, suddenly tumbled down a precipice, and, by its cries, gave Phebe, whose feet were upon the very brink, warning of her danger, and its own apparent destruction.

While she stood thus motionless, and looking down the abyss into which her guide had fallen, she beheld an apparition rise slowly from the bottom, holding a lighted torch in its right hand, for it had but one. Its visage was of a death-like pale and piteous; it held up the remains of its left arm, as if to implore redress, and brandishing its torch to make it shed a brighter light, it glided by, and stood at some little distance. Phebe beheld the spectre with terror, yet with that resolution which virtue alone can give.

Her dreadful guide conducted her safely over the moor, till they came to a gothic castle, surrounded by a moat. The draw-bridge was up, and the spectre made a sudden stop, as a signal for Phebe to proceed no farther yet; it then skimmed across the canal, and

strait the massy hinges began to creak, and the bridge descended with a weighty and loud crash that echoed through the stillness of the night, and made the old vaulted castle reverbrate horror.

Phebe was now in total darkness, and courage and virtue began to fludder at the remembrance of her situation. However, she summoned up her strength, and with heroic fortitude ascended a narrow stair-case. She went up so many steps, and kept so continually winding, that at last, with giddiness and want of breath, she was obliged to rest. She had scarcely stopped a moment, before she heard the clinking of chains, and the footsteps of one descending, who sent forth at intervals, the most painful and dismal groans. Her hair now stood an end, her blood ran cold, and her heart sunk within her: it was impossible for any one to pass, and the least opposing body would precipitate her to the bottom. The groans and the clanking increased; they seemed not three steps distant, and her faculties were frozen with horror, when the place was instantaneously illumined, and she beheld the beauteous Sylph sustaining a dreadful combat with a monstrous dæmon, by which it seemed to be almost overpowered. A voice at the same time cried aloud—'Go forward! You only are in danger when you do not proceed. Phebe again called up her resolution, began to ascend, and again was left in silence and total darkness.

She came at length to a little door, which opened with a gentle push: through this she went, and found herself upon the great stair-case, opposite to a suit of magnificent apartments, illuminated with large wax tapers; these she boldly entered, passed through several, and found each succeeding one superior to the last, till she arrived in the grand saloon. Here, in the centre, she beheld, upon a superb couch, Oron, the enchanted knight, lying entangled: over him hung suspended in the air the Glorious Hand; that is to say, a dead man's hand prepared by Necromancy, dipt in magical oil, and each finger lighted up.

The Glorious Hand burnt dim as she drew near; the colour revived in the cheeks of Oron, her virgin breath purified the air. The Hand gradually descended; it's faint light burnt blue, and scarce cast a gleam; and, when opposite to her coral lips, Phebe breathed upon it, the flame became totally extinct, and the knight rose from his enchanted couch.

Phebe's virtues now met a full reward, if any earthly blessing could be a reward for such patience, meekness, and magnanimity. She became the lady of the castle, the adored wife of Oron, the wonder of the country, and the ornament and pride of her sex. Her mother and sister would have humbled themselves at her feet; but she taught them to be virtuous, and took them to her bosom: and thus she convinced the world, that a perseverance in goodness must at last conduct to happiness.

F I N I S,

London: Printed by J. Bonsor, Salisbury Square.