

THE
WANDERING YOUNG GENTLEWOMAN,
OR THE
CAT-SKINS' GARLAND;
IN FIVE PARTS.

PART I.—How an Esquire's daughter near London was forced from home by her Father's cruelty, but through her tender Mother, was well educated, and clothed in rich array. When she came to understand she was hated by her Father, she made a robe of Cat-skins, with which she wandered, carrying rich attire and jewels with her.

PART II.—How one night she went to a Knight's house, where she begged for a night's lodging in the stable, which was granted her.

PART III.—A very comical and pleasant circumstance which passed between Cat-skins and the young squire, the Knight's son.

PART IV.—In what manner he came to catch Cat-skins in her rich attire, and how he fell in love with her, and got his parents' consent; he going to himself sick, and made Cat-skins his nurse, with account of their marriage.

PART V.—An account of the death of her Mother and Sister. Her Father dressed like a beggar, went to the gate, where he cried for charity.

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THE CAT'S-SKIN GARLAND.

PART I.

Ye fathers and mothers, and children also,
Come draw near unto me, and soon you shall know
The sense of my ditty, for I dare to say
The like han't been printed this many a day.
The subject which to you I am to relate,
It is of a squire's son of a vast estate,
And the first dear infant his wife to him bare,
It was a young daughter of beauty most rare.
He said to his wife, had this child been a boy,
'Twould have pleased me better, and increased my joy
If the next be of the same sort I declare,
Of what I'm possess'd she shall have no share.
In twelve months thereafter, this woman, we hear,
Had another daughter of beauty most clear;
And when that her husband knew 'twas a female,
Into a strong bitter passion he fell.
Saying, since this is of the same sort as the first,
In my habitation she shall not be nurst,
Pray let it be sent into the country,
For where I am truly, this child shall not be.
With tears his dear wifo to him thus did say,
Husband, be content, I'll send her away,
Then unto the country with speed did it send,
For to be brought up with one who was a friend.
Although that her father hated her so,
Her mother fine learning on her did bestow;
And with a golden locket and robes of the best,
This slighted young damsel was commonly drest.
And when into stature this damsel was grown,
And found by her father she had no love shown,
Sho cried, before I lie under his frown,
I'm fully resolv'd to range the world round.

PART II.

But now good people the cream of the jest,
 In what sort of manner this lady was drest.
 With Cat-kins she made, for a robe I declare,
 The which for a covering she daily did wear.
 Her new rich attire, with jewels beside,
 They up in a bundle by her then were ty'd,
 Now to seek her fortune she wander'd away,
 And when she had travell'd a whole winter day,
 In the evening-tide she came to a town,
 When at a knight's door she sat herself down
 For to rest, she was very tir'd to be sure,
 This noble knight's lady she came to the door.
 And seeing this creature in such sort of dress,
 The lady unto her those words did express ;
 From whence cam'st thou, and what will you have,
 He cry'd, a night's lodgings in your stable I crave.
 The lady said to her, I'll grant thy desire,
 Come into the kitchen, and stand by the fire ;
 When she thank'd the lady, and went in with haste,
 Where she was gaz'd on from biggest to least.
 And being well warmed, her hunger being great,
 They gave her a dish of good meat for to eat ;
 And then to an out-house this creaturo was led,
 Where she with fresh straw then made her a bed.
 And when in the morning the day-light she saw,
 Her rich robes and jewels she hid in the straw ;
 And being very cold, she then did retire,
 To go to the kitchen, and stand by the fire.
 The cook said, my lady hath promis'd that thou
 Shall be as a scullion to wait on me now ;
 What sayest thou, girl? art thou willing to bide?
 With all my heart, truly, to him she reply'd.

To work with her needle she could very well,
 And for raising of paste, few could her excel ;
 She being very handy, the cook's heart did win,
 And then she was call'd by the name of Cat-skin.

PART III.

This lady had a son both comely and tall,
 Who often-times used to be at a ball ;
 A mile out of town in an evening-tide,
 To see the ball acted away he did ride.
 Cat-skins said to his mother, madam, let me
 Go after your son, this fine ball for to see ;
 With that in a passion this lady flew,
 Struck her with a ladle which she broke in two.
 And being thus serv'd, she then went away,
 And with a rich garment herself did array ;
 Then to see this ball with speed did retire,
 Where she danc'd so rarely, all did her admire.
 The sport being done, the young squire did say,
 Young lady, where do you live, tell me, I pray ?
 Her answer was unto him, I will tell,
 At the sign of the broken ladle I dwell.
 She being very nimble, got home first 'tis said,
 And with her cat-skin robe she soon was array'd,
 And into the kitchen again she did go,
 But where she had been, none of them did know.
 Next day, the young squire himself to content,
 To see the ball acted, away then he went ;
 She said, pray, let me go this ball for to see,
 Then struck her with a skimmer, and broke it in three.
 Then out of doors she ran with heaviness,
 And with her rich garments herself then did dress ;
 For to see this ball she ran away with speed,
 And to see her dancing, all wonder'd indeed.

The ball being ended, the young squire then
 said, where do you live? she answer'd again,
 sir, because you ask me, an account I will give,
 at the sign of the broken skimmer I live.

Being dark then, she lost him, and homeward did hie,
 and with her cat-skin robe was drest presently;
 and into the kitchen among them she went,
 at where she had been they were all innocent.

When the squire came home and found Cat-skin there
 he was in amaze, and began for to swear,
 for two nights at this ball has been a lady,
 the sweetest of beauties that e'er I did see.

She was the best dancer in all the whole place,
 and very much like our Cat-skins in the face;
 had she not been drest to that comely degree,
 she sworn it had been Cat-skins bodily.

Next day to this ball he did go once more,
 when she ask'd his mother to go as before;
 and having a bason of water in hand,
 he threw it at Cat-skins, as I understand.

Seeing her wet ears, out of doors she did run,
 and dressing herself, when this thing she had done,
 to see this ball acted, she then went her ways,
 to see her fine dancing all gave her the praise.

When having concluded, this young squire he
 said, from whence come you? pray, lady tell me,
 his answer was, sir, you soon shall know the same,
 at the sign of the bason and water I came.

When homeward she hurry'd as fast as might be,
 the young squire he then was resolved to see
 where she belong'd: and following Cat skin,
 in an old house he saw her creep in.

He said, O! brave Cat-skins, I find it is thee
 These three nights together have so charmed me ;
 Thou art the sweetest creature my eyes e'er beheld,
 With joy and contentment my heart it is fill'd.
 Thou art the cook's scullion, but as I have life,
 Grant me but thy love, and I'll make thee my wife ;
 And you shall have maids to be at your call,
 Sir, that cannot be, I've no portion at all.
 Thy beauty is a portion, my joy and my dear,
 I prize it far better than thousands a-year ;
 And to have my friends' consent, I have got a trick,
 I'll go to my bed and feign myself sick.
 There's none shall attend me but thee, I protest,
 So one day or other, when thou art drest
 In thy rich dress, if my parents come nigh,
 I'll tell them 'tis for thee I'm sick and like to die.

PART IV.

Having thus consulted, this couple parted,
 Next day this squire he took to his bed,
 And when his dear parents this thing perceiv'd,
 For fear of his death they were heartily griev'd.
 To tend him they sent for a nurse presently,
 He said, none but Cat-skins my nurse now shall be
 His parents said, no, son ; he said, but she shall,
 Or else I shall have no nurse at all.
 His parents both wondered to hear him say thus,
 That none but Cat-skins must needs be his nurse ;
 So then his dear parents, their son to content,
 Up to the chamber poor Cat-skins they sent.
 Sweet cordials and other rich things were prepar'd
 Which between this couple were equally shar'd.
 And when they were alone in each other's arms,
 Enjoy'd one another in love's pleasant charms.

At length on a time, poor Cat-skins, 'tis said,
 In her rich attire she was array'd ;
 And when that his mother the chamber drew near,
 Then much like a goddess Cat-skins did appear,
 Which caus'd her to startle, and thus for to say,
 What young lady is this, son, tell me, I pray ;
 He said, why, 'tis Cat-skins, for whom sick I lie,
 And without I have her, with speed I shall die.

His mother ran down then to tell the old knight,
 Who ran up to see this amazing great sight ;
 He said, why, 'tis Cat-skins we hold in such scorn,
 I ne'er saw a finer dame since I was born.

The old knight said to her, I pray thee, tell me,
 From whence dost thou come, and of what family ;
 Then who were her parents she gave him to know,
 And what was the cause of her wandering so.

The squire cry'd, if you will save my life,
 Pray, grant this young creature she may be my wife ;
 His father reply'd, thy life for to save,
 If you are agreed, my consent you shall have.

Next day with great triumph and joy, as we hear,
 There was many coaches both from far and near ;
 Then much like a goddess dress'd in rich array,
 Cat-skins to the squire was married that day.

For several days this great wedding did last,
 Where were many a topping and gallant rich guest ;
 And for joy the bells rang over the town,
 And bottles of canary roll'd merrily down.

When Cat-skin was married, her fame for to raise,
 To see her modest carriage all gave her great praise ;
 Thus her charming beauty the squire did win,
 And who lives so great as he and Cat-skin ?

PART V.

Now, in the fifth part I'll endeavour to show
 How things with her parents and sister did go ;
 Her mother and sister of life are bereft,
 And now all alone the old squire is left.

And hearing his daughter was married so brave,
 He said, in my noddle a faucy I have ;
 Dress'd like a poor man, a journey I'll make,
 And see if she on me some pity will take.

Then dress'd like a beggar he went to her gate,
 Where stood his daughter, who appear'd very great ;
 Ho cried, noble lady, a poor man I be,
 And I am now forc'd to crave your charity.

With a blush sho ask'd him from whence he came,
 With that he then told her, and gave her his name ;
 She said, I'm your daughter, that you slighted so,
 Nevertheless to you some kindness I'll show.

Through mercy the Lord hath provided for me,
 Pray, Father then come in, and sit down, said she :
 Then the best provisions the house could afford,
 For to make him welcome were set on the board.
 She said, you are welcome, feed heartily I pray,
 And if you are willing, with me you shall stay
 So long as you live ; then he made this reply,
 I only am come thy love for to try.

Through mercy, my child, I'm rich, and not poor,
 I have gold and silver enough now in store,
 And for the love which at thy hand I have found,
 For a portion I'll give thee ten thousand pound.

So in a few days after, as I understand,
 This man he went home, and sold off all his land ;
 He ten thousand pounds to his daughter did give,
 And then altoëther in love they did live.

