
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
LOS ANGELES

THE

Life and Adventures

OF

PUNCHINELLO.

ADAPTED FROM THE FRENCH OF OCTAVE FEUILLET

AND

Embellished with One Hundred Designs.

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THE LIFE AND ADVENTURES OF PUNCHINELLO.

CHAPTER I.

SHOWS HOW ONE OF THE AUTHOR'S ANCESTORS BECAME ACQUAINTED WITH THE FAMILY OF SIGNOR PUNCHINELLO—MYSTERIOUS BIRTH OF THE HERO—MARVELLOUS EVENTS.

FROM his earliest infancy, my grandfather's great-uncle had shown a strong desire for travelling; but, owing to a variety of causes, which it is scarcely worth while to record, the worthy gentleman reached the age of sixty without having ever pushed his exploring expeditions beyond Greenwich Park. "It is really absurd," he would frequently say to himself, "that the man who of all others wishes most to travel should be the very one that has seen the least of the world. For I cannot flatter myself that seeing the world consists in a ramble from my house in Little Britain down to Blackheath." In the course of time these reflections produced so strong an influence upon my grandfather's great-uncle,

that he could control his feelings no longer: he accordingly started one day post-haste to Southampton, whence he embarked in a vessel bound to Naples.

Now it was my worthy ancestor's intention to proceed from Naples, which my young readers will recollect is the capital of the Two Sicilies, to the Levant, from thence to pass into India, and afterwards to pay the American continent a visit; so that, thus taking all the world in his way, he might eventually regain his snug parlour in Little Britain, having previously enjoyed a little breathing-time at the Cape of Good Hope. But, alas! all these stupendous projects were suddenly cut short; for he had scarcely been in Naples three days when he died of apoplexy, after eating too freely of macaroni.

This incident was doubly provoking; for it put a complete stop to the projected travels of my grandfather's great-uncle, and deprived posterity of that truly wonderful narrative of his adventures which he had intended to write I must observe, that when his carpet-bag was sent back to England, through the courtesy of the Neapolitan authorities, the first page of a contemplated "Diary" was discovered between two shirts: this is so deeply interesting that I cannot help regretting the absence of all that was to have followed.

I place on record this fragment, which remains a monu

ment of my ancestor's splendid talents, and has a direct relation to the subject of the present volume:—

MY GRANDFATHER'S GREAT UNCLE'S TRAVELLING IMPRESSIONS.

The First Day.—Arrived at Naples. Dear me!
The Second Day.—Dear me! dear me!
The Third Day.—Went for a little trip on the waters of the bay. The boatman's name is Punchi. His wife has a strange little monkey, whom all the inhabitants, twenty-five miles round, have been to see.

This "strange little monkey" was our hero himself, who changed the paternal name of *Punchi* into the more pleasant and endearing one of *Punchinello;* which afterwards was altered to the more famous denomination of PUNCH.

The boatman Punchi and his wife dwelt in a little white cottage near the shore, where their skiff was moored. These worthy people had been married for twenty years; and night and day did they deplore their childless condition. This was especially felt by the poor woman, who was compelled to remain alone the greater part of the day, while her husband was employed in fishing, or in rowing people about on the blue waters of the bay. Poor Dame Punchi, in her sorrow, had purchased a little cradle wherein she might rock alike her cares and her hopes, in waiting a change for the better; and sometimes she beguiled her solitude by singing a simple air over the cradle, as if to lull a newly born infant to repose.

One evening, while Dame Punchi was bewailing, as

usual, that heaven had refused to bless her with a family, her husband—who was wearied of his wife's incessant complaining, and who moreover was in liquor on that occasion—rose abruptly from his seat, and, striking his fist upon the table, exclaimed, "Why the dickens do n't you stop your mouth!"

"Holy Virgin, have mercy upon us!" cried poor Dame Punchi.

Scarcely had she uttered these words, when a huge cat, as black as soot, which apparently sprang from beneath the bed, darted between the legs of the boatman, who was tripped up and thrown sprawling on the floor. The cat made its escape by the door, which happened to be ajar. But, at the same moment, a little bird, concealed in the folds of the curtains, flew across the room, and, having gently pecked at the hair of Dame Punchi as it passed, disappeared by the open window.

Before the worthy couple could recover from the fright which these incidents produced, another strange occurrence increased their alarm; for, all of a sudden, there came from the cradle so peculiar a cry, that it seemed as if

the being, from whose mouth it issued, had a hazel-nut stuck in its throat.

"Wife, do see what that is!" said Punchi, trembling from head to foot, and quite sobered by all these wondrous events, although still kept by fear in a sprawling position on the floor.

Thereupon the poor woman approached the cradle in an agitated manner, but she was ready to die with joy when she beheld in it a little human being rolling about and clapping its hands with delight.

"Oh! the dear child!" exclaimed Dame Punchi, taking the diminutive creature in her arms.

A mother's eyes are often blind to the defects of her offspring, and Dame Punchi was not the woman to be disheartened by the appearance of a hump or a bump more or less. Now this lovely child had but two such excrescences —one in front, growing from the chest in the form of a comma (,), and the other on the back, rising up to harmonise with the first, in the shape of a note of interrogation (?). The face was not disagreeable, if we except a nose that resembled the beak of a parrot, and showed a violent inclination to meet a chin curving directly upwards, so that the two features formed a kind of arch over a mouth as large as a door-way.

"The dear child! the little treasure!" repeated the good woman, gently caressing the dwarf-like being.

"Let me have a look at him!" said Father Punchi, who still persisted in retaining his recumbent posture upon the floor, "Do let me have a look at him! But, dear me! how ugly he is! Well, that certainly is a son to be proud of,

with his hump behind and his bump before! And he is not even ashamed of that precious nose of his! Give me the brat, and I'll throw him into the sea!

But, dear young readers, this was easier said than done; for, scarcely had Father Punchi thus expressed his kind intentions, when the little fellow sprang from his mother's arms, and it would have done your hearts good to see how he gambolled about with his funny spindle-legs, making such grimaces all the time that it was enough to kill one with laughing. Then, on a sudden, he threw himself forward, and balancing his little person on the bump before, turned round with the rapidity of a teetotum. When he had done this, he fell at the feet of Father Punchi, and pulled him gently by the beard, making the most curious face in the world at the same instant.

This was irresistible! Father Punchi, who had never laughed so much before in all his life, and who, by the by, had a pain in his side for a week afterwards, was softened in a moment.

"Egad!" cried he to his wife, as he embraced the little being tenderly, so that the good woman was quite overjoyed, "even if he has the hump of a dromedary I shall keep him, for he amuses me exceedingly."

CHAPTER II.

SURPRISING PROGRESS OF YOUNG PUNCHINELLO—HOW HE GOES TO COURT—THE ADVENTURE OF A DONKEY THAT DID NOT DANCE THE TIGHT ROPE—THE MANNER IN WHICH PUNCHINELLO DISMISSES THE NEGRO AMBASSADOR.

FTER six weeks had elapsed, little Punchinello bore the appearance of being at least sixteen years old; so rapid was his growth, and so precocious his intellect. He could speak wisely on a variety of subjects, he reasoned with great clearness on all topics, and he frequently puzzled his parents by the questions he put to them. His father, perceiving the progress that he made, was resolved to bring him up as a street porter; for the dear child, charming as he was, caused some slight difference in the domestic economy of the cottage, and since good luck would have it that he should grow so quickly, it was deemed wise to profit thereby. Accordingly, Father Punchi said to him one morning at breakfast, "Punchinello, my boy, you are now big enough to get your own living, and I should advise you to go down to the quays and look out for work. You will make a good thing of it by carrying travellers' baggage."

"Do n't talk such nonsense," exclaimed Punchinello respectfully, "I have got another project in my head."

"And what may that be?" demanded the father.

"I mean to go to court," was the reply.

"Egad!" cried the boatman, laughing heartily, "to

court, eh? But how will you get there, little monkey? for you must know very well that I have no interest in that quarter."

"I will present myself, without any introduction at all," rejoined Punchinello.

"And why do you wish to go to court?"

"That is easily explained. As I have a hump before and a hump behind, I ought to learn to read and write; and, please God, I may become so learned, that people, when they hear me talk, will forget my deformities. You are too poor to pay for my schooling, and therefore I hope the king will take charge of the expenses of my education. I am almost certain of being able to persuade him to do this for me; but, in order to make sure of success, I must have a donkey."

"A donkey!" cried Father Punchi and Dame Punchi, as it were in the same breath. "Where do you suppose we are to procure a donkey? Perhaps you fancy it is easy to pick one up in the streets?"

"Nonsense, my dear father!" cried Punchinello. "Sell your cottage, and rest assured that before night-fall you shall have one much larger and better furnished. With

the produce of the sale of this hovel, you can buy me a nice little donkey."

"Egad! your son is stark staring mad, wife," cried Father Punchi. "Plague take him, and his donkey!"

"It is you yourself who are a donkey, Master Punchi," exclaimed the good woman: "may not our son understand these things better than you?"

In a word, my dear young friends, after an hour's dispute, Father Punchi was won over by a caper which Punchinello cut at a lucky moment: the house was forthwith disposed of; a donkey was purchased; and the result was anxiously awaited by Punchinello's parents.

The moment the little being was in possession of the much-coveted animal, he leapt upon its back as nimbly as a rider at Astley's. But whither was he going? Straight to the king's palace, followed at a short distance by his father and mother, who, having sold their house, now found themselves abroad in the wide world. The people also gathered near and formed in procession, shouting loudly all the while; for this was no common sight. There was Punchinello, with his two humps, his tight-fitting coat, red

on one side and yellow on the other, his red slippers and his gilt cocked hat, cantering along with a dignified air. When he reached the vicinity of the palace the procession consisted of at least three thousand persons, without reckoning the dogs, the cats, and the butterflies.

The king, hearing the loud shouting of the people, ran to his balcony, and all his court placed themselves at the windows, anxious to learn what object the strange hump-back had in view. Then Punchinello bowed three times to the king and the royal family, and made a sign with his hand that he was about to speak. "Hush! Silence!" cried the multitude.

"Sire," exclaimed Punchinello, in his hoarse tone, "ladies, gentlemen, and good people all, I have the honour to inform you that, with the permission of his majesty, my donkey now present will dance upon the tight-rope. The rope shall be stretched in the air fifty-one feet from the ground, and your humble servant Punchinello will mount the noble animal during this extraordinary exhibition."

"Bravo! bravo!" shouted the people, clapping their hands, joyfully. "Long life to Punchinello! long life to the donkey! long life to the king!"

"But when shall all this be done, my humpbacked friend?" asked the king, after bowing to the multitudes in acknowledgment of their kind wishes; "for I do not hesitate to confess, in the presence of my people, that I am impatient to behold this strange feat."

"Sire," answered Punchinello, "the exhibition shall take place this evening at seven o'clock, if your majesty will have the goodness to order the lord steward of your majesty's household to supply me with all that I shall require, namely, a rope, two poles to fasten it to, and a ladder to ascend by."

"Certainly," said the gracious monarch; "let the lord steward come forward."

You must know, dear readers, that this lord steward, whose name was Bugolino, was an ill-natured nobleman, universally hated throughout the kingdom on account of the evil qualities of his disposition, and the cruelty of his amusements. On one occasion he had ordered Father Punchi to be bastinadoed almost to death, upon the absurd pretext that the poor man had trod on the toe of one of his lordship's horses.

"My Lord Bugolino," said the king, "I desire you to make all the arrangements which this interesting humpback requires. Should your negligence deprive me of this twilight diversion, I will have you hanged within an hour. But if Punchinello shall have promised what he cannot perform, he shall be hanged instead."

"Sire, I agree to those terms," said Punchinello.

"Let food be given both to him and his donkey," exclaimed the king.

Punchinello was accordingly conducted into one of the courts of the palace, and a servant brought him some

choice morsels from the royal table, whereof Father and Dame Punchi had the larger share, as the reader may well

suppose. These poor people, however, were far from being at their ease, for they could not possibly imagine how Punchinello would persuade his donkey to dance on a tight-rope elevated fifty-one feet in the air. They therefore already fancied their dear little humpback hung up hard and fast, for having made a fool of the king.

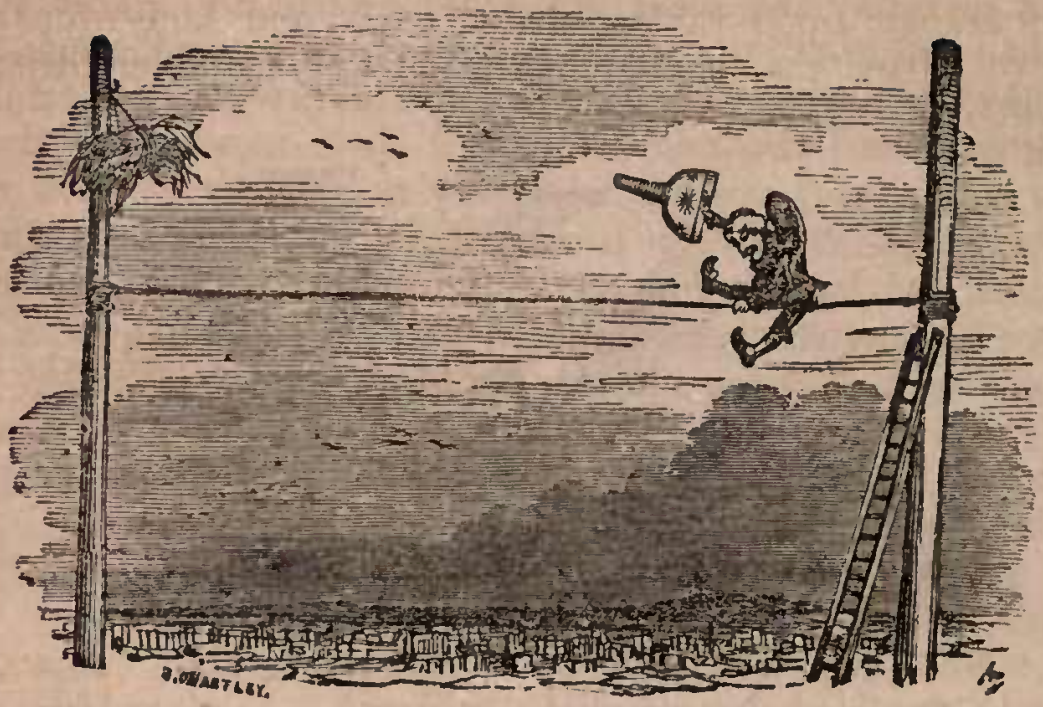
"Shal-la-ballah!" cried Punchinello, "do not alarm yourselves; eat, drink, and be merry, for I will take care what I am about."

The evening soon came. By order of the lord steward, two enormous poles had been raised in the court-yard of the palace; and a strong rope was fastened tightly from one to the other. Three magnificent pavilions, lined with gold brocade, and carpeted with the royal standard, had been also erected with marvellous promptitude. The members of the court took their places on the benches prepared for them, and the king was seated upon his throne in the central pavilion. The multitude filled a vast space. There were the worthy citizens crowded pell-

mell together, upon tables, chairs, carts, and house-tops; many of them, too, supporting their wives and children upon their backs.

Suddenly a shout burst from the crowd, "Here he comes! here he comes!" And, sure enough, Punchinello appeared, mounted upon his donkey, which trotted briskly forward, while he himself bowed right and left to the company. My Lord Bugolino, who remained in the court-yard in order to see that nothing was wanting to render the arrangements complete, held the stirrup while Punchinello dismounted; a ladder stood against one of the poles to which the cord was fastened: Punchinello ascended with the activity of a monkey, and was at the top in no time. Then he waved his hat gracefully to the multitude below; and the people cried, "Bravo! bravo! Look! the donkey is going to dance now! and yet it is a strange idea! Will he dance with his four legs? and must he have a pole to balance himself?" And all this time Lord Bugolino held the donkey by the bridle at the foot of the ladder.

"Now, Punchinello, my good friend," exclaimed the king, growing impatient, "you have bowed and scraped quite enough. Begin the exhibition; I am dying with curiosity."



"Sire," replied Punchinello, from the eminence on which he was perched, "I am ready."

After waiting a few moments, and perceiving that Punchinello did not move an inch, the king exclaimed angrily, "Well, humpback, what are you stopping for? do you want any thing?"

"Saving your presence, sire," was the humble reply, "I want the donkey."

"What! you want the donkey?" ejaculated the monarch, growing more and more passionate. "Are you endeavouring to make a fool of me? Did you not promise that the donkey should dance the tight-rope?"

"And I can safely repeat that promise, sire," rejoined Punchinello; "all I require is, that the donkey may be brought up to me; for if I know how to make the animal dance the tight-rope to perfection, I am completely ignorant of the way to induce him to walk up a ladder. I only undertook the dancing part, sire; the rest is the business of your lord steward. He agreed that all necessary arrangements should be complete; and, shal-la-ballah!

it is precisely the most important one of the whole that he has omitted!"

At these words all the members of the court burst out laughing, and the people clapped their hands; for there was not a soul present who was not delighted with the embarrassment of my Lord Bugolino. Even the king himself sat laughing upon his throne until the tears ran down his august cheeks, and he was compelled to wipe his eyes several times ere he could utter a word.

"My Lord Bugolino, do you hear?" at length exclaimed his majesty; "hasten to fulfil the very proper demand which Punchinello makes upon you."

"But, sire,"—said Lord Bugolino, ready to burst with rage.

"No answer, my lord," interrupted the monarch; "make the donkey ascend the ladder."

Lord Bugolino accordingly dragged the animal to the

foot of the ladder, and tried to persuade the poor beast to mount; but the donkey naturally remained as obstinate as ever.

"Gee up, gee up!" cried Lord Bugolino.

"Hee haw, hee haw!" answered the donkey, braying

with all his might, which created much laughter amongst the assembled crowd.

"Wretched animal!" ejaculated the lord steward; "*will* you mount the ladder? Gee up!"

"Hee haw, hee haw!" repeated the animal, setting its fore feet firmly, and then drawing its body back so that its haunches almost touched the ground.

"Vile beast!" cried the lord steward, surveying the donkey with desperate vexation; then, going behind the animal, he endeavoured to push it forward with all his strength, until he became quite purple in the face, and seemed ready to burst.

"Hee haw, hee haw!" brayed the obstinate beast.

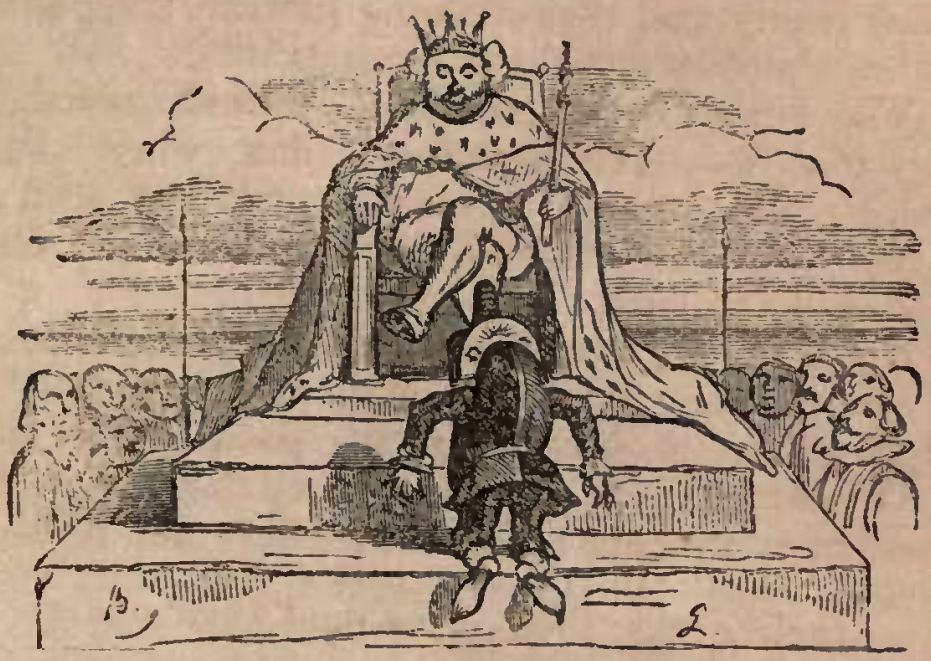
"There, then; take this—and this—and this," roared Lord Bugolino, striking desperate hard blows upon the animal's hind quarters. But this time the donkey had got the best of it in spite of the thrashing; for he suddenly

kicked out his hind legs, and laid my Lord Bugolino, high steward of the royal household, sprawling upon the ground.

"Bravo! bravo!" shouted the populace, unable to restrain their joy.

Quickly as thought, Punchinello descended from his perch, and raised my Lord Bugolino, who was not seriously hurt, although he pretended to be so in order to have an excuse for hurrying away to the most retired part of the

palace. Punchinello made only one bound to reach the royal pavilion, where, prostrating himself before the king, he implored pardon, with so comical an expression of penitence, that the king, who was that day in a merciful humour, replied, "Well then, little joker, I will forgive



you; but it is only on condition that you will exercise your extraordinary powers of invention, so as to release me from the terrible dilemma I am placed in with respect to the marriage of my daughter."

It is here necessary to acquaint our readers with the precise nature of the dilemma in which so mighty a king found himself involved, and the particulars of which were well known to all Naples. A few years previously, the monarch, being threatened with invasion by a Turkish fleet, had demanded succour, in the shape of men and money, of the King of the Negroes. The King of the Negroes had responded favourably to this solicitation, upon condition that he should receive in exchange the hand of the Princess of Naples, who was considered a perfect miracle of beauty, as soon as she reached a marriageable age. The King of Naples, urged by the pressing nature of his position, had been compelled to accept this

condition; and the Turks were eventually cut to pieces by the combined forces of the two sovereigns. Since that period the princess had grown up; and, on the very day when Punchinello appeared at the court of Naples, the ambassador of the King of the Negroes had arrived with great pomp in the city, attended by a train of five hundred black gentlemen, clad in tigers' skins, and wearing gold rings on their necks, their arms, and their ancles. Now this ambassador came with the simple and sole object of claiming the unhappy princess in the name of the king, his master. So ill-assorted a marriage was contemplated by all Naples with sorrow and indignation; for, in proportion as the princess was favoured with both mental and personal beauties, so was the King of the Negroes marked by all kinds of deformity.

Accordingly a murmur of approbation rose amongst the crowd, when Punchinello thus answered his majesty:—"Sire.

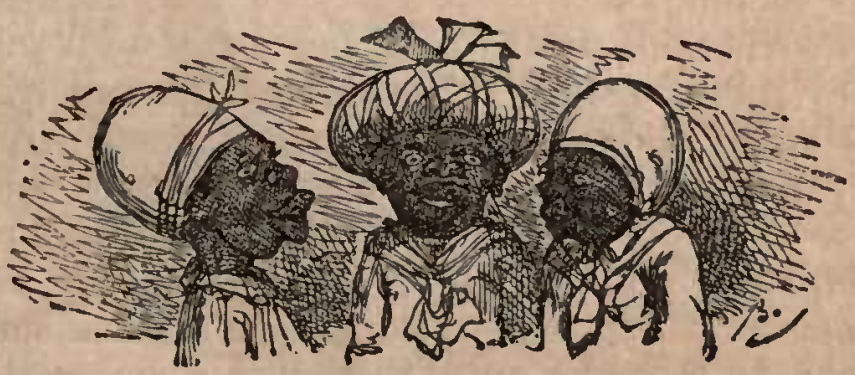
it would be downright cruelty to send the princess, who is a perfect star of beauty, amongst the lions, tigers, and negroes."

"That is also my idea, good humpback," said the king; while the princess turned aside to wipe away the tears which dimmed her beauteous eyes. "But what can I do, for I have pledged my word? In plain Italian, my honour is compromised."

"What!" ejaculated Punchinello, "does the treaty merely record the obligations which bind your majesty? Has the King of the Negroes no condition to fulfil on his side?"

"Alas!" answered the sovereign, "in the dilemma in which the approach of the Turks involved me, I promised all that was asked of me; and I am, moreover, bound to give my daughter a dowry into the bargain. As for my intended son-in-law, he was no doubt determined to make merry at my cost; and he accordingly added an ironical clause to the treaty, whereby he binds himself to give the princess nothing save a pair of slippers to be made of the most rare material which I can devise, so long as it really exists on the face of the earth."

"Shal-la-ballah!" shouted Punchinello. "Dry your tears, beautiful princess! the King of the Negroes shall not even touch you with the tip of his little finger. Sire, allow me to speak to this ambassador. It will not be long ere I send his black excellency away with all his sable body-guard."



The king, with a slight shake of the head, which implied a doubt as to the result, sent to desire the presence of the negro ambassador, who, together with all his suite, occupied the pavilion on the left hand. The moment his black excellency and Punchinello were face to face—and a very strange pair of faces it was too—the latter spoke

in the following manner:—"Illustrious envoy, you are no doubt a man of great intellect; I therefore feel convinced that it is not your wish to carry off that beautiful princess against her inclination?"

"My instructions are to take her away with me, and I shall obey them," returned the ambassador rudely.

"Very well," continued Punchinello; "and yet it will be an easy matter for your excellency to restore happiness to the hearts of the king, the queen, and the princess, without offending your master. Your excellency may tell his sable majesty, for instance, that the princess has suddenly become so ugly that she quite disgusted you; or that she

has gone mad; or has taken to drinking; or has married some one else; or even that she has got a couple of humps, like me; or any thing else you choose."

"A thousand thunders!" cried the ambassador; "why do you bother me with your humps?"

"Shal-la-ballah!" ejaculated Punchinello; "is this the pig that we have got by the ears? Well, be it so. Now, most noble ambassador, are you not bound by treaty to present the princess a pair of slippers made of any material she may choose?"

"Precisely so," answered the ambassador; "that is, upon condition the materials chosen be in existence on the earth!"

"Better and better!" exclaimed Punchinello; "and if you refuse a pair of slippers made of the material so specified, there is to be no marriage?"

"You have spoken correctly," returned the envoy, laughing with an insolent air of defiance.

"Now then, most conscientious ambassador," cried Punchinello, "the princess has so good a taste that she fancies nothing upon earth to be equal in beauty to your skin, both on account of its jet black hue, and its glossy brilliancy. Will your excellency, therefore, order a pair of slippers, double-soled, to be immediately made of that rare and costly material? Should you, however, prefer keeping your skin for your own personal use, make to your master what excuse you choose provided he leaves us quiet in future. That is all I have to say: so good night—go and be skinned elsewhere if you will."

The ambassador, who, no doubt, had strong reasons for not being skinned alive, decamped

as fast as his legs would carry him, and embarked on board the ship that brought him, followed by all his negro gentlemen. Indeed, such was his haste to depart,

that he forgot to pay his debts. The King of Naples, however, was so rejoiced at this happy event, that he announced his intention of paying them from his own private purse, so that no one might be injured by the hurried flight of the ambassador.

Meantime Punchinello was the object of a thousand congratulations and tokens of friendship on the part of the courtiers; for they naturally supposed that he would immediately rise high in the royal favour. And, sure enough, the king desired him on the spot to specify the nature of the recompense which he desired in return for the important service rendered to the royal family.

"Sire," said Punchinello, "I require four things of your majesty. The first is, that you will receive me amongst your pages, and give me masters to instruct me in all the services"

"Granted," exclaimed the king.

"The second is, that my donkey, to whom I owe so much, may not in future be compelled to turn the mill, but that he be permitted to graze in your royal meadows."

"He shall eat of his fill of my pastures," said the king.

"The third," continued Punchinello, "is, that your

majesty will enable my father and mother to live in comfort for the rest of their days."

"Granted most willingly," said the king. "What is your fourth request?"

"The fourth is, that your majesty will permit me to kiss the hand of the princess."

And every one was delighted with the prudence and wit of Punchinello.

The king was graciously pleased to allow him to kiss the fair hand of his daughter; and the princess, smiling with all her heart, held out her hand to the happy little humpback, who gently touched the four fingers with his lips; but, on reaching the thumb, he threw aside all ceremony, and smacked it right cordially.

CHAPTER III.

PUNCHINELLO BECOMES THE KING'S PAGE — THE THREE LAUGHABLE ADVENTURES OF MY LORD BUGOLINO—FIRST LAUGHABLE ADVENTURE —PUNCHINELLO'S SECRET.

THAT very same evening Punchinello took up his abode in the king's palace, and became a royal page. His father and mother were not neglected; for the king gave them a pretty little cottage which stood in the royal gardens, and was shaded by orange-trees. Dame Punchi had nothing to do but spin golden and silken thread for the princess, who often called, during her morning walks in the garden, to chat with the good old couple.

The young pages, who were Punchinello's companions, were at first inclined to joke with him on account of his humps and ugly face; but, in a short time, they all became his friends; for some were afraid of his wit, and the rest loved him because he was very good-natured. When a person is both clever and good, he is sure to be liked by every one; and no one thinks of looking whether such a person be handsome or ugly.

Punchinello, according to his request, was provided with masters to teach him all things useful: he knew very well that natural talents are of little value unless assisted by learning; and he made up his mind to gain so much

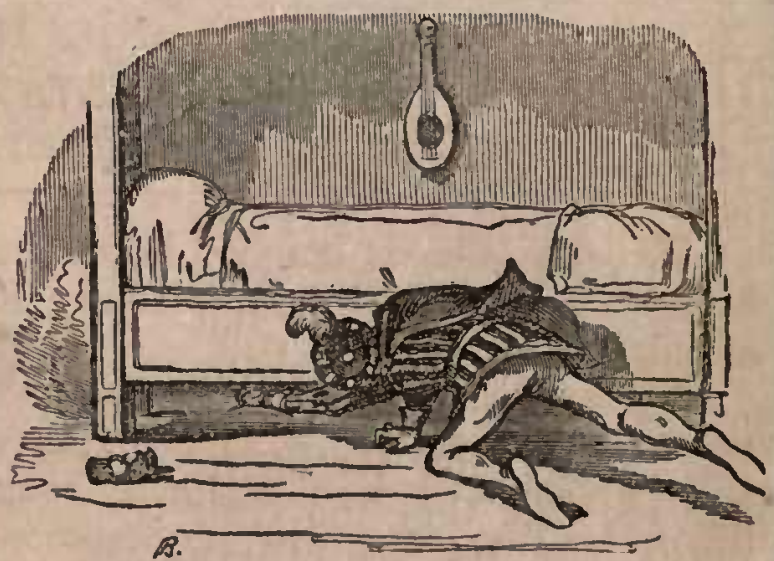
knowledge, that persons would never think of looking at his humps and ugly face when he was talking to them. Already his powers of invention had made the king very fond of him, and the princess very friendly with him. Indeed, the princess, ever since that evening when he did her so great a service, by sending off the negro ambassador, always gave him something or other very nice when she met him, and, most frequently, oranges, of which Punchinello was very fond.

In spite of this kindness, Punchinello did not escape some little annoyances; for he had a dreadful enemy in the person of my Lord Ernest Bugolino, who never forgave him for having made his lordship the laughing-stock of the court. Now this bad man Bugolino, by virtue of his office of lord steward, had to look after the pages, and see that they did their duty; and he was always thinking how he could set the king against our poor little friend with the two humps. When any trick was played in the palace,—if, for instance, some lord put his hand into his pocket, and found a mouse nibbling at a

nut; or if an ambassador walked gravely into the king's presence, dragging a little cart made of card-board, and fastened to the train of his robe—whenever such things as these happened, then Lord Bugolino always said, "Ah! any one can see that Master Punchinello has had a hand in this." But as the king seldom took any notice of what the lord steward said about Punchinello, this wicked nobleman made up his mind to ruin the poor little humpback by means of some vile trick or another.

He knew that the king was very fond of a little bird, the colour of fire, which the Sultan of Bengal had sent him; now this little bird was silent all day, but when evening came and the dew began to fall, it would warble the most beautiful airs, which delighted every one who heard them.

Lord Bugolino, like all stupid and wicked people, hated music; so one day he twisted the neck of the little warbler of Bengal, and went and hid it under Punchinello's bed. The next morning, as every one in the palace was wondering what could have become of the poor little bird, Lord Bugolino sent a servant to search the rooms where the pages slept, and, of course, the dead body of the bird was found under Punchinello's bed, because his lordship had put it there. You may guess how angry the king was when he heard this, and he ordered Lord Bugolino to have Punchinello well flogged with fifty lashes on the part where such punishments are generally inflicted.



Punchinello was greatly vexed at the affront thus put

upon him, and he made up his mind to revenge himself in some way or another upon Lord Bugolino. He noticed this nobleman was a great dandy in his dress, and thought himself very handsome; now this was a weak point which the humpback resolved to attack.

The very next morning the walls of the palace, inside and out, were found covered with a vast number of placards containing these words:—

IN A FEW DAYS WILL BE PUBLISHED,

THE SEVENTY-THREE-AND-A-HALF WAYS OF TYING A CRAVAT.

BY LORD BUGOLINO.

The whole court laughed heartily at the expense of his lordship, who had no great difficulty in guessing the author of this squib.

On another occasion, when the king gave a grand ball, this wicked nobleman, who was very vain of the lightness with which he danced, suddenly found himself unable to lift up his feet just at the very moment when he wanted to perform a favourite polka step, for the soles of his shoes had been secretly covered with a kind of wax, which stuck fast to the floor when it became heated. It required four strong men-servants to move the nobleman from the spot; and when he went to wipe the perspiration from his face, for he was very warm through rage and shame, he rubbed his cheeks with a handkerchief that had been strewed with soot. Presently he looked at himself in the glass, and, as

you may suppose, he was the only one in the room who did not laugh at his face which was as black as a sweep's.

Some time after this provoking adventure, the conversation in the king's apartment turned upon the rich dress and fine appearance of Lord Bugolino.

"Yes, he does wear very nice clothes," said Punchinello, "and he may be very handsome: though no one, seeing him dressed, would fancy that there was any thing the matter with him."

"What is the matter with him?" asked the king.

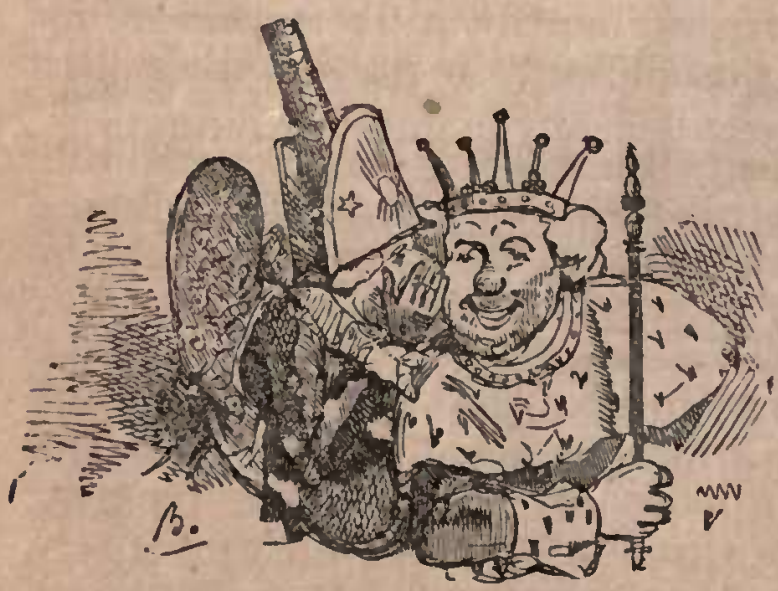
"Your majesty cannot be ignorant of *that*, surely?" said the cunning little humpback.

"What do you mean?"

"Sire, any one of your majesty's courtiers will explain it."

The king then questioned his courtiers, but one and all declared that they did not know what Punchinello meant. His majesty was dying with curiosity, so he pressed the page to speak out.

"Sire," said Punchinello, "I thought that this matter was well known, but as I alone appear to know any thing about it, it is better for me to keep the secret."



"I promise not to betray it, if you will tell me," cried the king. "Indeed, as your sovereign, I command you."

Punchinello then put his lips to the king's ears, and said in a whisper, "Sire, the Lord Ernest Bugolino is covered with small feathers."

"What!" exclaimed the king, "covered with feathers! Is it possible?"

"Very possible, sire. He is completely covered like a bird, every where, save on his head, neck, and hands."

"Well! now I am no longer astonished that he should dance with so much *lightness!*" said the king; "but, feathers, indeed! It is really wonderful!"

"Sire, his lordship is covered; and when he sits down, your majesty may suppose that he does not find himself very much at his ease." The king burst out into a loud laugh, rubbing his hands merrily together. The lords and ladies of the court who were present saw the king laugh; and, of course, supposing that Punchinello's secret must be something very good, they, one after the other, took him aside, and begged him to admit them to his confidence.

"I will tell you the secret with pleasure," said Punchinello, giving the same answer to each; "but only on condition that you will not reveal it again."

Then he related the same story he had told the king; and, thanks to this method of confiding his secret, under the pledge of silence, to every one, there was not a soul in the palace, down to the scullions, who had not speedily learnt that Lord Earnest Bugolino was covered with feathers beneath his garments. It is from this circumstance, that all secrets, which are not faithfully kept, have ever since been called, "*Punchinello's secrets.*"

In due course Lord Bugolino entered the royal apartment to play cards with the king. His presence was the signal for stifled laughter, cunning glances, and roguish

smiles, the real cause of all which his lordship was very far from suspecting. Some persons present even went so far as to stand upon tiptoe and look down his back, beneath his lace collar, in order to see where the feathers began. The worst of all this, in respect to Lord Bugolino, was, that, having lost several games, he observed, "Your majesty, I have just been *well plucked.*"

At these words every one present burst into a fit of laughter; and the king could not help saying, "Well, my dear Ernest, you have done quite right."

Lord Bugolino, who could not make out what they all meant with their laughter and their strange observations, retired to his own apartments to reflect on these mortifying events.

Punchinello did not, however, think his chastisement repaid by the tricks he had already played on Lord Bugolino. He had noticed that every evening, at the same hour, this nobleman went in secret to a beautiful arbour, in one corner of the royal gardens, and dug up the earth in a certain spot. Punchinello, who was curious to learn the meaning of this, turned up the earth in the same place, and discovered a bag of gold. Lord Ernest was a miser; and, fearful of being robbed (for wicked people are always suspicious), he had buried his money. Punchinello was much too honest to think for a single moment of taking what did not belong to him: he accordingly covered up the treasure as he had found it, and then hastened, leaping and skipping joyfully along, to the king, who was at

supper in his great marble hall. "What is there new?" demanded the sovereign, when he saw Punchinello.

"Sire," answered the humpback, in a low voice, "your lord steward must belong to some family of birds. He is not only covered with feathers; but—he goes farther still—he lays eggs!"

"What!" cried his majesty; "do you mean to tell me that Lord Bugolino lays eggs?"

"Sire," said Punchinello, "it is very certain that he does really lay eggs."

"Nonsense!" exclaimed the king, greatly surprised.

"Sire," added the mischievous little page, "if your majesty will come with me to-morrow evening, all doubts on this point shall be cleared up."

On the following evening, the king and Punchinello passed through the gardens together, his majesty feeling very curious to see his lord steward lay eggs. When they reached the arbour, they concealed themselves amongst the trees, and soon saw Lord Ernest drawing near. He entered the arbour very cautiously, looking about him on all sides; then, with his back turned towards the place where the king and Punchinello were concealed, he stooped down to bury some more money.

"Upon my honour," whispered the king to Punchinello, "I do really believe that you are quite right. This is the funniest thing I ever knew! A man must have very little to do when he amuses himself by laying eggs. But why the dickens does he dig up the ground?"

"He is burying the eggs," replied Punchinello.

"Ah! I see," said the king, twiddling his forefingers in a very serious manner. "There can be no doubt of it; my lord steward lays eggs."

At this moment the nobleman rose, and retired slowly, thinking of his hidden treasure. The king lost no time in entering the arbour, while Punchinello lighted a lantern.

"Here is the place," said the king.

"Very well," returned Punchinello; and, with his knife, he began to dig up the earth, but not in the precise spot where he knew the gold to be buried.

"Goodness gracious!" cried the king, all on a sudden, as he watched the proceeding with the most lively interest; "here is one egg! here is another! here is a third! here is a fourth!" —and, thus counting them one after another, he found as many as twelve. "By my royal crown," continued his majesty, turning them over with the tips of his fingers, "one might almost think they were turkeys' eggs."

This great sovereign was not very far wrong; for Punchinello had taken them in the morning from the royal turkeys' nests.

"Well, I shall take them away," exclaimed the king; "and I know very well what I shall do with them."

He accordingly held up his purple robe like an apron, so as to carry the eggs in safety; and in this way he returned to the palace, attended by Punchinello, who held the lantern.

Now there was at Naples, my dear young readers, a college of twelve learned men, whose business it was to look into every thing wonderful or strange that might occur. The king sent that very same evening to order the twelve learned men to come to the palace without delay; and, on their arrival, he explained to them the singular event he had witnessed by means of Punchinello. He also placed the eggs before them. A small stove was brought in; one of the eggs was plain boiled; the rest were made into an omelette; and three of the most learned of the wise men were formed into a committee of taste. From the report of these sages, the president of the college gave the following opinion to the king: —

"Although the eggs of the Lord Ernest Bugolino have the shape of turkeys' eggs, they differ completely in their taste. Their flavour is that of pine-apples; and as so wonderful a thing ought to be fully explained, his lordship is prayed, in the name of the king, and for the advancement of science, to appear before a special committee, which, being divided into several sections, may visit foreign colleges, and thus obtain a complete explanation of the subject."

In spite of the lateness of the hour, some of the learned

men went straight to acquaint Lord Bugolino with the president's opinion. The nobleman was in bed; but the moment the message was delivered to him he jumped up, and began skipping about like a madman, so that the wise men began to suspect that Punchinello had deceived them all; for they now saw very clearly that Lord Bugolino had not a single feather upon his body, and it was but fair to suppose that the story of the eggs was untrue also. We cannot say who looked the more foolish,—Lord Bugolino, or the learned men; it is, however, certain that they one and all made up their minds to punish Master Punchinello for the absurd trick which he had played them.

CHAPTER IV.

SECOND LAUGHABLE ADVENTURE OF LORD BUGOLINO—WHAT HAPPENED TO THE WIGS OF THIS NOBLEMAN AND THE TWELVE LEARNED MEN.

NEXT morning Lord Bugolino, followed by the twelve learned men, presented himself to the king, who, in spite of his dignity, could not help laughing in his sleeve when he saw them all come in. The lord steward, speaking in the name of the whole body, assured his majesty that "the state would be shortly ruined, if the impudence of Master Punchinello were not put an end to, for nothing was sacred in the eyes of the humpback. He has already found means to turn the respectable body of wise men, and even myself (the lord steward), into ridicule before the court and city. In a short time, if he be not punished, we shall see him make a laughing-stock even of your majesty; and we therefore pray your majesty to chastise this great offender, so as to save the country and the throne from ruin."

The king, upon hearing this discourse, wore a serious aspect, and ordered Punchinello to be brought before him.

"Master page," said the king, "I must frankly admit that your last joke gave me much amusement; I even laughed with the queen, as we talked about it, during a great part of the night. It is not the less certain, however, that you made fools of us all—of me as well as of those learned gentlemen. This is very wrong, and is

likely to set a bad example. I cannot, therefore, help ordering you, my poor little humpback, to receive five hundred blows of a stick upon the soles of your feet."

"Sire," exclaimed Punchinello, "may I be at least permitted to choose the kind of stick with which I am to be chastised?"

"You may," answered the king.

"Then, sire, I beg that it may be a sugar-stick," said Punchinello.

"No, no," cried the king, severely; "we are not joking at present. I am, moreover, in no humour for mirth; because the princess, my daughter, has been for some days plunged into a profound melancholy, of which the physicians declare she must shortly die, if we do not find means to make her laugh. And this is impossible! The poor creature is as gloomy as death. Nothing calls a smile to her lips."

"I will make her laugh!" ejaculated Punchinello.

"You! can you make my daughter laugh?"

"This very day, sire."

"Well and good," said the king. "At that rate I will forgive you the five hundred slaps with the stick; but if you do not succeed you shall receive a thousand. "Gentlemen," added the king, turning towards Lord Bugolino and the twelve wise men, "ye shall be the umpires."

"I hope that they will," said Punchinello to himself.

When the monarch asked the humpback if he required

any thing to assist him in doing what he had proposed, Punchinello said, that all he wanted was about fifteen pigeons from the royal dove-cotes. The king gave him leave to take them; and all the court went immediately into the gardens. The princess placed herself at a window, in obedience to a positive order which the king gave her; for she had no heart for any amusement; and it was quite wretched to see how pale and thin she had grown, while her eyes were always filled with tears, caused by her melancholy state of mind.

"It is very clear," said the people on all sides, "that the fear of the five hundred slaps has turned poor Punchinello's head; for he never can make our sweet princess laugh."

But it was chiefly from Lord Bugolino and the twelve learned men that Punchinello received the most cutting taunts, and the most cruel jokes, for having undertaken so hopeless a task.

Punchinello shortly made his appearance, bearing on his back a large cage in which there were fifteen of the royal pigeons.

"What is he going to do?" said the king. "Alas! my daughter does not laugh; and really I, myself, can see nothing to laugh at."

"In the meantime Punchinello placed his cage at the feet of Lord Bugolino and the twelve wise men, saying, in a polite manner, "My lord and gentlemen, I trust you will be able to judge better than any one else the value of my joke."

He then took from the cage one of the pigeons, which he fondled for a short time, in the midst of general attention; but the princess still went on weeping sadly! All on a sudden Punchinello let the pigeon go, and it immediately flew upwards. No one had observed that there was a piece of fine silk fastened to the bird's leg, the other end of which remained in Punchinello's hand. While Lord Bugolino was following the pigeon with his eyes, like every one present, the mischievous page adroitly fixed to the nobleman's wig a fishing-hook, which he had fastened to the silk; and now, behold! the wig suddenly flies up into the air!

At this droll event, and at the sight of my Lord Bugolino, who leapt up as high as he could to try and catch his wig, shouts of laughter broke forth so loud, that some folks who make great things of trifles said, they were heard nearly eight miles off at sea! Still the merriment thus occasioned knew no bounds, when Punchinello, who had seized the first moment of surprise to fasten, with great skill and speed, the twelve other hooks to the wigs of the learned men, suddenly let the pigeons escape, and the twelve wigs flew up into the air after that of the lord steward. Then was it that the princess, who had not

smiled until now, followed the example of all the rest, and began to laugh so heartily that she was forced to hold her sides, for she could not stop herself. As for the king, he was so rejoiced at this event that he knew not what he did; and he actually hugged a greasy kitchen-boy who happened to be passing at the time. In a word, his courtiers were obliged to carry him away to the palace. The pigeons and the wigs were soon out of sight in the clouds; while the lord steward and the twelve learned men, with their bare heads, took to their heels as hard as they could, pursued by the shouts and laughter of all the good folks in the beautiful city of Naples.

CHAPTER V.

THIRD AND LAST LAUGHABLE ADVENTURE OF LORD BUGOLINO—HIS COLD IN THE HEAD, AND WHAT IT LED TO.

THE great lords of the kingdom, and the learned men of the country, all thought themselves affronted by the joke of the wigs. They therefore went, half-a-dozen at a time, to the palace, with very long faces, and for the purpose of praying the king to have Punchinello put to death. Having heard all that they had to say, the king declared that "it was very kind of them to wish for the death of a person who had just saved the life of the princess, his daughter; that Lord Bugolino and the learned gentlemen of the college might think themselves lucky in having helped to effect that cure; and that any one who was not satisfied had only to say so in order to be dismissed from office without delay."

The lords and learned men made great haste to depart; for they were mightily alarmed at this assurance on the part of the king; and if their faces were long before, they were now quite hideous, so crest-fallen had they become.

Having got rid of these persons, the king sent for Punchinello, and advised him to travel a little, in order to complete his education. Punchinello saw that this was a polite way of sending him off; but he was very glad; for he had long known that he was like a fish out of water amongst so many foolish persons, and that the city of Naples was not the stage which suited him. He was also so far advanced in his studies, that his masters had nothing more to teach him; while he actually made discoveries in science of which they themselves

were totally ignorant. In a word, Punchinello, like all clever persons, felt himself attracted towards England, as it were to his native land. He, therefore, agreed with the king that it would be better for him to travel; and it was settled that he should depart in two days without delay.

The news of this intention on the part of Punchinello could not be kept secret; and it gave great comfort to the heart of Lord Bugolino and to the twelve learned men of the college. To speak the truth, the entire court, with the exception of the princess, felt rejoiced at the idea of getting rid of one who was always a source of fear,—for wit is ever dreaded by stupidity.

But the people of Naples took quite another view of Punchinello's idea of leaving them. "He is going away!" they said, in the great squares, through all the streets, from door to door, from window to window, from pillar to post: "he is going away, our dear Punchinello! the only one who ever punished that wicked Bugolino!—the people's champion! He is going to leave us:—let us shed all our tears, and drink all our wine to his health! Alas! alas! we shall lose him for ever—the dear humpback! Let us get tipsy with our good wine to drown our grief! We will pass the night in feasting and dancing! Alas! alas!"

Thus spoke the people of Naples, my dear young readers—half laughing, half crying, like the sun in an April storm. Bugolino was indeed greatly disliked, because it was his duty to levy the taxes, and he performed the task in a very cruel manner; so that, as there is no other comfort for the wretched than to laugh at the expense of those who make them suffer, it was not without cause that the Neapolitans were sorry to lose Punchinello.

While the humpback was tying a cord round his box, and packing up his books, his guitar, and his mathematical instruments, a deputation of the fishermen and the poorer orders of Naples was announced. Punchinello received those excellent people with proper modesty, being quite astonished at the honour done him. The spokesman stated, how deeply Naples grieved at the idea of Punchinello leaving them, and wound up his flattering speech in the following manner:—"Yes, Master Punchinello, you do well to depart, since you have the power; but we, dear friend, cannot! We have children; we are old; and we are bound to this country. We shall now be left, when you are gone, to the cruelty of this hated lord steward, unless you can find some means to prevent it."

"I will think of what can be managed, my good friends," answered Punchinello, melting into tears.

The deputation then retired, overjoyed at the hope which their favourite had held out.

Punchinello was well aware that the king would forgive his great lords almost any thing save a breach of etiquette. Thus Lord Bugolino had lately killed a man with a horse-whip; and all the punishment he had received was a gentle box on the ears. On the same day, a courtier, who, by an oversight, had put on his cap while in attendance on the king, during a walk, was immediately seized and put to death. It was, therefore, necessary to induce Lord Bugolino to commit some breach of etiquette; but, unfortunately, no one was more skilled in that science than is lordship; and rather than fail in any single point

in that respect, he would have suffered any thing. Etiquette was all he knew; but he knew it well—just as all simpletons are well versed in some one particular subject.

Still Punchinello did not despair of making the lord steward commit some great error, which should not only be a grave offence against the rules of the palace, but at the same time a breach of etiquette altogether unequalled. I must tell you that Lord Bugolino was very fond of snuff; and he would not remain five minutes without taking a pinch.

Punchinello knew how to act, and passed the night in making a mixture of snuff and of the powdered root of a certain plant, which he had found out while studying botany. This root was of so strong a nature, that it gave an immediate cold to any one whose nose it touched, and produced such a violent desire to sneeze, that sneeze one must, or die of the pain. Punchinello having well mixed the snuff and the powdered root together, put it all into a box exactly like the one which Lord Bugolino carried.

On the following evening (the one before the day fixed for Punchinello's departure), Lord Bugolino was on duty as principal lord of the bedchamber; and his office was to hand the king his night-shirt, when that monarch retired to rest, according to the custom of those times.

Before Lord Ernest ascended to the royal chamber to fulfil that ceremony, the page who attended upon him, cunningly took the snuff-box and handkerchief from his master's pocket; for Punchinello had desired him to do so. When the lord steward was in the king's presence, he felt in his doublet for his snuff-box; and, not finding it, he desired his page, who was in the antechamber, to go and fetch it. This page met Punchinello on the stairs; and the humpback gave him the box containing the prepared mixture, saying, "Please to hand it to your master just at the moment when the king is about to put on his night-

shirt." The page, thinking that some mischief was intended, was too fond of a joke not to do as he was desired. He accordingly waited in the antechamber, peeping through the key-hole into the royal apartment, until the proper moment had arrived. Then, hurrying into the chamber, and pretending to be out of breath, he gave the box to the lord steward, who was already holding the royal night-shirt in his hand. Lord Bugolino could not resist the desire to take a pinch; and he indulged himself with a good one. At that instant the king took off his day-shirt; and at the very same moment the lord steward suffered from the effect of the prepared snuff. He felt suddenly taken with a desire to sneeze, and quickly sought for his handkerchief. It was not in his pocket; and he could not wait another minute—no, not a second longer. His head seemed to swim round; and, behold! the lord steward sneezes over the night-shirt which he holds in his hand!

"What!" cried the king, "is that you, Ernest—blowing your nose on the night-shirt of your king!"

"Sire," said Lord Bugolino,—but another sneezing

fit came on; and again, and again—half-a-dozen times—did the nobleman use the royal night-shirt as a pocket-handkerchief.

"Ernest!—lord steward! Bugolino!—my lord!" cried the king, who was shivering in the cold. But that nobleman heard nothing; and, to wind up his disaster, he rolled the shirt into a ball, and placed it in his pocket.

"Give me another night-shirt!" said the king, in a furious rage; "and arrest that insolent blower of noses—that false advocate of etiquette!"

"Sire—sire!" cried the nobleman.

"These are kitchen manners!" exclaimed the sovereign, who, in his turn, would now hear nothing that was said: "our royal shirts are nothing but common jack-towels in your eyes!"

But, alas! an event which it was not easy to foresee, threw on Punchinello's head all the peril which for a moment seemed to threaten the lord steward. The king, who was dotingly fond of snuff, took a pinch from the fatal box, which Lord Bugolino had placed open on a table close at hand; and, as his majesty, in the rage and fury of the instant, completely crammed his nose with the mixture, he was attacked with such a fit of sneezing, that he was forced to get rid of the pain in his nostrils. Not finding a handkerchief within reach, he did not hesitate a moment to use the royal day-shirt in the same way as Lord Bugolino had treated the royal night-shirt.

This occurrence served as an excuse for the conduct of the lord steward; and Punchinello, who had hurried into the room at the noise,—as well as all the other inmates of the palace,—saw well that he was undone.

"Sire," he exclaimed, fearful that the blame of his fault should fall upon the young page who had aided him

in playing off the trick, "there is only one guilty person—and he is at your royal feet!"

"Let him be hanged this moment!" cried the king, between two sneezing fits. "Let his father and mother be driven from the palace, and his donkey drowned without legal process!"

CHAPTER VI.

HOW PUNCHINELLO DESTROYED AN ARMY OF A HUNDRED THOUSAND FRENCHMEN WITHOUT A SPARK OF GUNPOWDER—PUNCHINELLO LEAVES NAPLES FOR ENGLAND.

THE king ordered that the execution of Punchinello should take place that very night, by the light of torches; for no delay could be granted in the case of a person who had exposed the royal dignity to such a gross affront. Without losing any time, the gibbet was set up in the middle of the court-yard of the palace; the foot-guards were ranged round in battle array; and behind them were

the people, all dumb with grief. At the palace window stood the king and Lord Bugolino, eager to view the cruel sight. The executioner, having fixed the halter round the neck of poor Punchinello, was already half way up the ladder, and the king gave the signal to turn the victim off. But, at that dreadful moment, a great noise was heard amongst the crowd; and a soldier on horseback, all covered with dust and blood, galloped up to the palace. Stopping beneath the window at which the king was seated, he cried, "Sire, I bring you the sad news that your army has been cut to pieces by the French general, Mic-mac, who is marching against Naples, at the head of a hundred thousand men, and by to-morrow evening he will be at your gates!" Scarcely were these dreadful tidings

uttered, when the foot-guards were seized with a sudden panic, and ran away in all directions.

"Alas!" said the king, "I have not a single soldier left to fight for me against my enemies. Who will now save me and my people from that general slaughter which must befall us by the close of this day, which I now see dawning in the east?"

"I will," cried Punchinello, "if you will not proceed any farther with this hanging business!"

At these words, which were received by the multitudes with the liveliest joy, the king hurried away from the window, and came down to embrace Punchinello, whose pardon he begged for having been too hasty in wishing him hanged. The king then ordered every one to obey Punchinello's commands throughout that day, as they would his majesty himself.

No sooner had Punchinello received this authority, than he directed all the looking-glasses in Naples, of whatever shape, great and small, round and square, even to the most tiny pocket mirrors, to be brought into the great square of the palace. Then, having found out the road by which the French were coming, he had all the looking-glasses conveyed in wagons outside the city, and hung them along the walls and across the road. So numerous were those mirrors, that they covered the entire wall of the rampart for a distance of nearly a mile and a half; and they were all so close together, that there was not room, my dear young readers, for you to put even the tips of your little fingers between any of them, however small those little fingers may be. Punchinello then placed along the outer edge of the moat beneath the walls, a thousand

candles with good long wicks, ready to be lighted in a moment. These preparations being complete, Punchinello and thirty men, all holding lighted candles in their hands, stationed themselves along the ramparts, to await the coming of the enemy.

As soon as it was night, the great French army reached a hill near Naples, and halted awhile to breathe, in case of an attack. General Mic-mac, the French commander, ordered his spy-glass to be brought to him, and, looking towards the plain where he supposed Naples to be situated, he began to spy right and left; but as it was pitch dark, he could not see any thing.

At that moment Punchinello, who knew by the sound of arms that the enemy were drawing near, gave a signal to his men; and they immediately lighted all the candles along the edge of the moat, by means of long poles which they thrust over the rampart. Startled by this sudden illumination, General Mic-mac called for his lieutenant in

a loud tone:—"Come hither, Colin Tampon," said he; "there are our enemies, lighting the lamps in their watch-towers."

"Yes, indeed," answered Colin Tampon; "I see the Neapolitan army very plainly."

But, dear readers, what he saw was nothing more nor less than the French soldiers themselves, infantry and cavalry, reflected in the looking-glasses with which the walls were covered. "Well, upon my honour!" cried General Mic-mac, looking more attentively than ever through the spy-glass, "they are numerous enough! But what astonishes me is, that so large an army makes so little noise! What order! what discipline! Ah! what do I see? The Neapolitan general is quizzing me through a spy-glass! Oh! the rascal! He has had the impudence to dress himself like me! But, how dreadfully ugly he is!" This was a good joke, my dear readers, because General Mic-mac was taking his own shadow all the time for the Neapolitan commander.

"Let me have a look," cried Colin Tampon, taking the spy-glass in his turn. "What did you say, general? Why that impudent commander, who is quizzing us, is exactly like me!"

"No such thing!" said General Mic-mac, once more putting the telescope to his eye. "He is like me, I tell you."

"And I say that he is like me," exclaimed Colin Tampon, getting into a rage.

"Like you, insolent fellow!" cried the general drawing his sword. And those two great chiefs would have fallen together by the ears, if at that moment Punchinello and his thirty men had not begun to shout, and then to blow trumpets with all their might.

"Attention! To arms!" cried the French general, immediately forgetting his quarrel with Colin Tampon; "The enemy are advancing! March—and at them!" Then

seeing the reflection of his own army in the looking-glasses, he exclaimed, "They are coming—they are coming! March forward in double quick time! Let the trumpets sound! And you, my brave cavalry, gallop!"

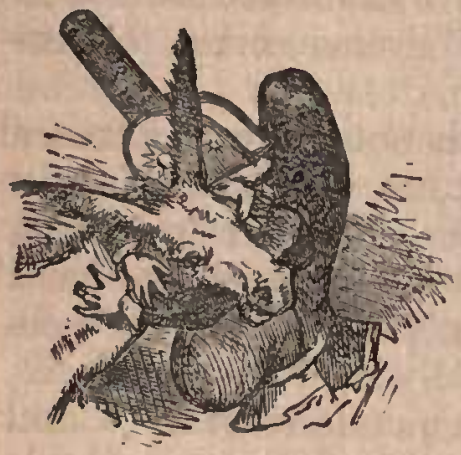
In obedience to this order, the French horse-soldiers rushed headlong towards the town, followed by the infantry. The nearer they came to the ramparts, the more vivid grew the reflection in the mirrors, and consequently the nearer seemed the enemy. On, on went the French troops,—frightened themselves at the fierce gestures and terrible grimaces which they thought the Neapolitans were making at them, but which they really beheld in the looking-glasses. On, on they rush, General Mic-mac, Colin Tampon, and all—as fast as their legs would carry them. And now they have reached the walls: they fancy themselves close to their enemies—they raise their weapons to attack them—but, ah! away they go—horses and men—one over the other—all tumbling headlong amongst the lighted candles, and over into the moat which was full of water!

The hundred thousand Frenchmen were every one drowned; and you may suppose, my dear young readers, how cordially the people of Naples received Punchinello when he came down from the ramparts. "Behold our deliverer!" they cried in all directions; "long live Punchinello!"

In the meantime the king, owing to the popularity of Punchinello, was suddenly seized with a dreadful fit of jealousy: he thanked him coldly for his services, and then shut himself up in his private room with Lord Bugolino. Those two envious persons laid a plot to get rid of Punchinello by means of poison; and this was to be done the very next morning, by mixing the drug

with some chocolate and cream, of which poor Punchinello was very fond.

Fortunately for our little friend the princess overheard all that passed; and she hastened, as quickly as her light feet could take her, to the chamber of the page, to whom she owed all her present happiness. When Punchinello learnt the sad tale, he was almost broken-hearted at such base ingratitude, and let a tear fall upon the hand of the good princess, who was not angry with him for it, then, stopping only a few minutes to embrace his father, his mother, and his beloved donkey, he went that night secretly on board a Spanish ship, that was bound for England.



CHAPTER VII.

THE DREADFUL DANGER WHICH PUNCHINELLO INCURRED DURING THE VOYAGE—HOW HE ESCAPED FROM IT—HIS INTERVIEW WITH A TURKISH PIRATE.

THE sailors on board the Spanish ship, not having the same motives for treating Punchinello with civility as the good people of Naples, soon began to make game of him on account of his deformity and his two humps. The captain, who was very ignorant of his duty, and, like many stupid persons, ill-natured into the bargain, could not lose so good an opportunity of having some fun; he, therefore, began by asking Punchinello if he did not mean to ease himself of some of his luggage, pointing at the same time to the humps.

Punchinello replied, with a smile, that he made it a rule always to carry his baggage about with him, for fear that any one should steal it.

The captain retorted by saying, that Punchinello was quite right to go to England, where handsome men were a great deal thought of, and where he was certain to captivate the heart of some princess.

Punchinello declared, that he was not going to England on that account, but because he had heard that the English looked upon those persons as very ignorant who made game of their fellow-creatures. Having said this, he turned on his heel and went to his cabin, leaving the captain quite sulky and ashamed of himself.

Early next morning, when Punchinello went upon deck to see the sun rise, he met the captain, who pushed him rudely away, saying, "Go back to bed: you can't come here when I 'm busy in giving orders."

Punchinello declared, that so far from wishing to get in the captain's way, he meant to make himself useful; and, to begin, he warned the captain that a dreadful storm would soon come on.

"You are a pretty fellow," cried the captain, "if you think to teach me my duty."

"As you please," said Punchinello; "but if you do not take my advice, the vessel will be wrecked."

The captain only laughed at the humpback's prophecy, and was amusing himself at the poor little fellow's expense, when the wind suddenly changed, the waves rose mountains high, and the ship began to dance up and down like a shuttle-cock. Punchinello then approached the captain, who was quite frightened at the storm,—for those who are cruel towards the weak, are always cowards in the face of danger,—and said to him very coolly, "I told you, sir, that you would be wrecked."

The captain flew into a dreadful rage; and, instead of placing his vessel in a state to weather the storm, he

thought only of punishing Punchinello for having made him look silly before his men.

"Wicked humpback!" he cried, "if I must be wrecked, you shall be drowned first! And it will serve you right; for you must have dealings with the Evil One to be able to foresee a tempest, when I, who have been a sailor for five-and-twenty years, never thought that it was coming. Now, my lads," he continued, turning towards his affrighted crew; "it is this vile humpback, this wizard, that has brought the tempest upon us. Let us throw him into the sea!"

"Yes, overboard with him!" shouted the crew. And, in a moment, poor Punchinello was hoisted over the ship's side, and suspended between heaven and ocean. In that desperate state he did not lose his presence of mind.

"Shal-la-ballah! my good fellows," he exclaimed, "you will not have much time to make yourselves merry with my death; for I see in the distance a certain somebody who will soon punish you for your conduct to me."

All eyes were now turned towards the point which Punchinello indicated; and at the distance of about a mile they saw the sails of a pirate vessel.

"Alas!" cried the captain, "we shall all be stuck upon spikes!" and, throwing himself upon the deck, he rolled about whimpering like a child.

"My good friends," said Punchinello, "your captain is a dreadful coward. If you were not going to drown me, I could save you from the pirate without even firing a pistol, as I know the Turkish language well."

At these words the sailors replaced Punchinello on the deck, and throwing themselves on their knees around him, implored him to forget the past, and not to leave so many poor men, who had large families at home, to the barbarity of the Turks. As for the captain, they tied him hands and feet, and begged Punchinello to take the post of that cowardly fellow.

Thus is it, my dear children, that, sooner or later, virtue and knowledge reach their proper place in the world, and obtain their reward at the hands of men.

Punchinello ordered the sailors to carry the captain down into the hold, so that his piteous moans might not be heard. He then went to his cabin, and dressed himself like a Turk, which gave him the most comical appearance in the world. He had, moreover, sprinkled his clothes with a liquid, the smell of which made every one around him feel sick; and, having thus prepared himself, he leapt into a boat, which very soon put him on board the pirate vessel.

At sight of this extraordinary being, in a Turkish costume, and smelling so very

disagreeably, the corsairs, who held their noses, could not help feeling greatly surprised.

"It is nothing," exclaimed Punchinello; and, moving on, he at length arrived in presence of the pacha who commanded the pirate ship.

"Salamalek, my lord pacha," said Punchinello, speaking in the Turkish language.

"By Mahomet!" murmured the pacha, holding his nose, "there is a very strange smell."

"Oh! it is nothing at all," exclaimed Punchinello. "Friend pacha, I was made a prisoner by those vile Spaniards, whose vessel I hope you intend to take. I have had the good luck to escape, and ——"

"But, my dear humpback," interrupted the pacha, "what diabolical smell is this?"

"It is nothing at all, I can assure you," returned Punchinello. "I was informing you, that I had the good luck to escape, and ——"

"But you smell dreadfully bad," again interrupted the pacha.

"It is nothing," once more observed Punchinello.

"I escaped from those Spaniards, friend pacha, and I hope ——"

"By my beard!" quoth the Turkish chief, "between you and me, young man, you are really unbearable with this smell."

"It is nothing," said Punchinello.

"Nothing!" exclaimed the pacha; "I can put up with it no longer. In one word, you poison me!"

"It is nothing, I assure you," returned Punchinello; "it is only the plague!"

"The plague!" cried the pacha, stopping his nose more firmly than before: "the plague!"

"Yes, my dear pacha," said Punchinello; "it is only the plague. Nothing more, I can assure you. All the sailors on board the Spanish ship are dying of it; so that you will not have the least difficulty in taking the vessel!"

"By Mahomet!" exclaimed the pacha, "I will have nothing to do with either you or the vessel, plaguy little humpback that you are! Off with you! Throw him into his boat! The rascal has got the plague! Make all sail to get away, my lads: the Spanish ship is plague-stricken!"

Scarcely had the Turkish chief uttered these words, ere Punchinello had gained the boat, which very soon conveyed him back to the Spanish vessel, where he was received with transports of joy: for the pirates were already sailing away with all their canvas spread, and were soon out of sight.

Punchinello, after a fine voyage, brought the ship into Portsmouth harbour; and the poor Spanish sailors, who had discovered in him as much kindness of heart as intelligence, wept when they took leave of him.

CHAPTER VIII.

IN WHICH THE GREAT BLACK CAT APPEARS ONCE MORE—PUNCHINELLO'S JOURNEY—WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM ON HOUNSLOW HEATH.

THE moment Punchinello had landed at Portsmouth, he resolved to buy a horse on which he might ride straight to London; for he was in a violent hurry to reach that famous city. At the very inn where he stopped, he met with a good horse, full of spirit, and that could gallop with any other horse in the world. While Punchinello was standing in the yard bargaining with the landlord, a huge black cat came and rubbed itself against his legs, mewing gently all the time.

"Is that your fine cat?" asked Punchinello.

"Yes, good stranger," answered the Boniface, who was a roguish kind of fellow.

"He is very handsome," said Punchinello.

"He is my best postilion," returned the landlord, rattling in his pocket the money which the humpback had just paid him.

"I really don't understand you, my good man," said Punchinello. "Explain yourself."

"I mean that this cat knows the road to London as well

as anybody. I often give him as a guide to people going that way; and they have been quite delighted with him."

"Oh! since that is the case," said Punchinello, "I will take him with me, if only for the purpose of seeing how far you are a rogue." He then paid for the hire of the cat, as he had paid for the purchase of the horse; and leaping upon the latter, he galloped off at a brisk pace.

Away, away went Punchinello as hard as he could go; while the cat ran onwards in front with wonderful speed.

"Well, that is certainly a most singular animal," said Punchinello.

But in a short time his surprise was changed into alarm, when he observed that the cat every moment went quicker and quicker, and that the horse followed as if bewitched.

Punchinello tried to check the speed of the animal on which he rode; but all in vain. The cat and the horse

seemed to be both mad. In a short time the traveller saw the trees, houses, towns, and steeples pass by like things in a dream; while the people cried out in astonishment, "Stop! stop!" But before even the words were uttered, cat, horse, and rider were out of sight!

"Who can he be?" asked the country people one of another.

"Shal-la-ballah!" cried Punchinello, "friend cat! little darling! sweet puss! do stop! sha'n't we dine anywhere? What can it all mean? Why do you go at this rate? Holla! Shal-la-ballah! Pray let us stop!"

But all these appeals only served to make the cat go the more quickly; and Punchinello continued to cleave the air, holding himself on one side in order to breathe. Listen, my dear children, to the end of this strange adventure. At nightfall, the great cat, the horse, and Punchinello reached Hounslow Heath in the same rapid manner; when the entire party were suddenly swallowed up in the earth, disappearing as if by magic.

CHAPTER IX.

SHOWING WITH WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE PUNCHINELLO FOUND HIMSELF; AND HOW HE STUCK THEM ALL ON A SPIT IN THE MIDST OF THEIR DIVERSIONS.

IN the middle of Hounslow Heath, and at the very spot where Punchinello had been swallowed up, there was a large trap-door that moved upon an axis or pivot; so that with the least pressure the trap-door gave way: and it only required a person to place his foot on either side of it, in order to be swallowed up that moment.

Punchinello and his horse had fallen, neck and heels, amongst about thirty people, whose faces were almost entirely covered with hair. Besides wearing plumed hats

slouched nearly down to their mustachoes, their legs were buried in boots that came up to their waists. Add to all this, a fierce aspect, and the fact of their being armed to the very teeth, and you may then easily imagine how terrible this band of robbers looked by the light of twenty torches.

"Good evening, gentlemen," said Punchinello, who came head foremost into the midst of that amiable company.

"Hurrah! you are welcome, Master Punchinello," exclaimed the robbers, laughing; for such they really were.

"Call me Punch, if you please," said our humpbacked friend; "for now that I am in England, I mean to stay here, and make myself and my name quite English, I can assure you."

"Hurrah!" again shouted the robbers. "Welcome, worthy Punch!"

The chief of the band now came towards Punch (for so we must call him in future, since he has expressed his desire to shorten his Neapolitan into an English name). This chief was called Captain Griffinhoof: a large black patch covered one of his eyes and half that side of his face; and, as if this were not enough to please him, the dreadful man had a nose so ridiculously long that he could not help looking at it.

"Master Punch," said Captain Griffinhoof, "we wanted

amongst us a clever fellow, and we know you well by name. That is why I sent my great cat, Black-skin, and one of our band, who acted as the landlord, to Portsmouth, for the purpose of getting you into our company. I hope you will stay with us; because if you refuse, I shall be obliged (with great regret) to boil you alive in a cauldron."

"I know myself so well as to feel convinced that I should be worth nothing boiled," said Punch: "I am therefore yours, gentlemen, without another word."

"Give us your hand, then," cried Griffinhoof, "and follow me."

The robbers then left the little platform which was beneath the trap-door, and began to descend into the subterranean cavern, by means of a sloping path, so steep that Punch was scarcely able to keep his legs. On reaching the bottom of that neck-breaking road, which was at least five hundred feet long, Punch, arm-in-arm with Captain Griffinhoof, entered a row of caverns into which the sun never shone, and which were lighted day and night by lamps hung to the roof. It was there that this band of robbers lived; and consumed in a riotous manner the produce of their depredations. Punch, in spite of the civility with which he was treated, soon saw that he was always watched, and that he must not think of escaping from the dreadful place by ordinary means, unless he was prepared to leave his skin behind him. He passed the night in thinking of a bold plan by which he might get away, and resolved to brave a thousand deaths rather than stay there.

That very evening Captain Griffinhoof was obliged to go out of the cave on business; and as he took with him about ten of his men, our hero thought the opportunity a good one for the bold plan which he had formed; he therefore resolved not to put it off.

On the following morning, as soon as they were up and dressed, the robbers placed Punch amongst them at table, where they began to eat and drink like gluttons and drunkards as they were. When Punch saw that they were warm with their wine, he said, "Well, upon my word, gentlemen, you lead a charming life here! but I must confess, that after these feasts I greatly regret the loss of

the game of play, which aided the digestion so well at the court of Naples."

"And what was that?" asked every one of the band.

"I mean," said Punch, "'the game of railroad.'* Nothing is more easy. It consists only of running down a

* It is therefore clear that Punch was the first who imported the idea of Railroads into England.—*Translator.*

very sloping path, in little carts which roll in a straight line by means of grooves, or of pieces of iron fixed on each side of the road; so that, in either way, the wheels must run properly. Now nothing would be more easy than to arrange every thing fit for the game on that sloping path by which I came down here yesterday."

"By my whiskers!" cried the robbers on all sides, as they jumped up from the table; "what a clever fellow this humpback is! Comrades, to work! You must help us, Punch. In a couple of hours we will begin the game."

And now behold all these rogues falling to in good earnest, with hatchet, saw, plane, and hammer; some making little wheels, which they presently fastened to large boxes that served as carts; and others fixing on each side of the sloping path large beams with grooves cut in them for the vehicles to slide comfortably in. Punch went about from one to the other, looking at the work, giving advice, and, when he was not observed, leaping and capering with joy.

In a short time all was ready. Twenty carts (for each robber would have one to himself) were rolled up to the little platform beneath the trap-door on the heath, and they were then fastened one behind the other on the railroad. By the advice of Punch—and to make the whole scene more splendid—the roof and the sides of the cavern were lighted up with a vast quantity of torches, so that the place looked very brilliant.

Punch asked to be allowed to remain at the bottom of the sloping path, so as to have a full view of the game; and this request was granted. The robbers even begged

him to give the signal for setting the train in motion, by clapping his hands together three times.

This he did; and the twenty carts, each containing a robber, began to descend the path with an awful speed. But what is Punch doing now? Suddenly,—and just when the train is in the midst of its whirling course,—he takes from behind his back a kitchen-spit about twenty-five feet long, and holds it straight out, point first, towards the foremost robber. Ah! dear readers, what fright was shown in the faces of all those banditti! You can almost hear their cries! And, behold! there they are raving like madmen in their carts, from which they cannot get out without being dashed to pieces, so great is the speed of the train! They are therefore forced, willing or unwilling, to rush upon the spit! On they come—on—on! and now there is the foremost, thundering down in his cart, while twenty-five feet of steel pass through his body! The others, seeing the fate of their comrade, made dreadful faces, as you may suppose. But it is all of no use: on—on they come,—one after the other,—spitted like larks on a skewer, in a manner that would have pleased the best cook in all Europe! It was a fearful death—but one which such rogues well deserved.

Punch, after this grand exploit, did not wait for the return of Captain Griffinhoof. He placed the spit, with

its novel sort of joints, in a cart which he found in the stables of the cavern; and, having harnessed six of the robbers' horses to it, led it safely out of the place. He then took the first road which offered itself, and in a short time reached the town of Brentford.

CHAPTER X.

THE SURPRISE THAT WAS IN STORE FOR PUNCH AT BRENTFORD.

AT the sound of the cart rattling through the old town of Brentford, the people were soon at their windows; but they only remained there a few moments, for as soon as they saw Punch with his strange show (the spit of the robbers being stuck upright in front of the cart), they made only one leap from their windows into the street.

Punch soon told them how he had killed the robbers; and those who were at first inclined to laugh at his comical dress and ugly person, now shook him by the hand; for the people of Brentford were continually in fear of being attacked by this band of robbers infesting Hounslow Heath.

Punch, anxious to escape from the caresses of the crowd, inquired where the magistrate lived, as he was resolved to acquaint him with all that had happened. But the people, having taken the horses from the cart, insisted in dragging the conqueror of the robbers to the house of the magistrate.

When Punch entered the parlour where the magistrate was sitting, he was for a moment struck dumb; for behind the magistrate stood a person with a nose exactly like the one which he had seen the night before belonging to the face of Captain Griffinhoof. This nose was not, indeed, such an one as you meet every day in the streets, or which you would very soon forget after having seen it, if only for a moment; it was a nose that stood out straight

—like the pole of a coach; and near the end was a large mole, from which sprouted three long red hairs, waving like a plume of feathers.

Two such noses never existed at the same time under the sun. Punch could not, therefore, be mistaken; and, in spite of the absence of the black patch which the day before covered Captain Griffinhoof's eye, he was not at a loss to perceive that this person joined together the offices of a robber chief and Jack Ketch. For that he was actually the Jack Ketch of the county, Punch discovered by something which the magistrate said to him almost at the same moment that Punch entered the room. It was not, therefore, a matter of surprise that the Brentford police had never been able to find out the robbers' hiding-place; because Jack Ketch had always been employed to head the officers of justice in their search.

Punch wisely pretended not to know Jack Ketch again; and Jack Ketch was very glad on that account. Our hero gave the magistrate a complete history of his escape from the robbers' cave; and Jack Ketch did not lose a word that was said, though he pretended to be very busy playing with his great black cat which purred at his feet.

The magistrate was much pleased with all that Punch told him; but as he was forced to go to London that moment on particular business, he ordered Jack Ketch to take care of Punch, and invite him to dinner.

CHAPTER XI.

SHOWS WHOM PUNCH MET IN PRISON—THE MAGIC TAIL—A MEANS OF ESCAPE TILL THEN UNKNOWN.

AS soon as the magistrate had left the room, Jack Ketch said, "Come with me, Master Punch, to my house close by; and I will give you for dinner a beautiful pigeon-pie, a nice hash, and a bottle of good wine."

Alas! my dear young readers, it is in vain that we have hidden from you up to this moment the weak point in our hero's character; but, perhaps, his liking for sweetmeats and oranges has already made you guess that Punch was as fond of good eating and drinking as of doing good to his fellow-creatures. Jack Ketch's offer was therefore a tempting one at the moment, when poor Punch was very hungry after the fatigue of the morning.

"With pleasure," said Punch; and, forgetting all his prudence, he went with Jack Ketch to his house, and

sat down to a table, on which the pie, the hash, and the wine were already served up.

Jack Ketch was on one side of him, and the black cat on the other. But what passed at that dinner we cannot for the life of us tell; Punch himself having confessed afterwards, that he forgot all about it. We must, therefore, suppose that he drank so much wine as to lose his memory; which is certainly a great stain upon his character!

There is, however, no doubt about one thing; which is, that when Punch awoke next morning, he found himself lying on straw in a nasty damp place, into which the rays of the sun could only penetrate through a small loop-hole of a window. He knew directly that he was in prison; and he was also quite sure that Jack Ketch had sent him there to get him out of the way. Poor Punch was now very unhappy: he was afraid that he should never again see the beautiful fields; and, with his head leaning on his hand, he called to mind the pretty cottage in which his father and mother lived, the kind things those good folks had said to him when he left them, and the mournful look which the donkey threw on him when he bade the poor animal "Good by," for ever. All this made Punch weep and sigh.

"Who is it moaning here?" suddenly exclaimed a voice near Punch.

"I am," said our hero, "the unhappy son of a fisherman; I am humped behind and before, and am tired of glory."

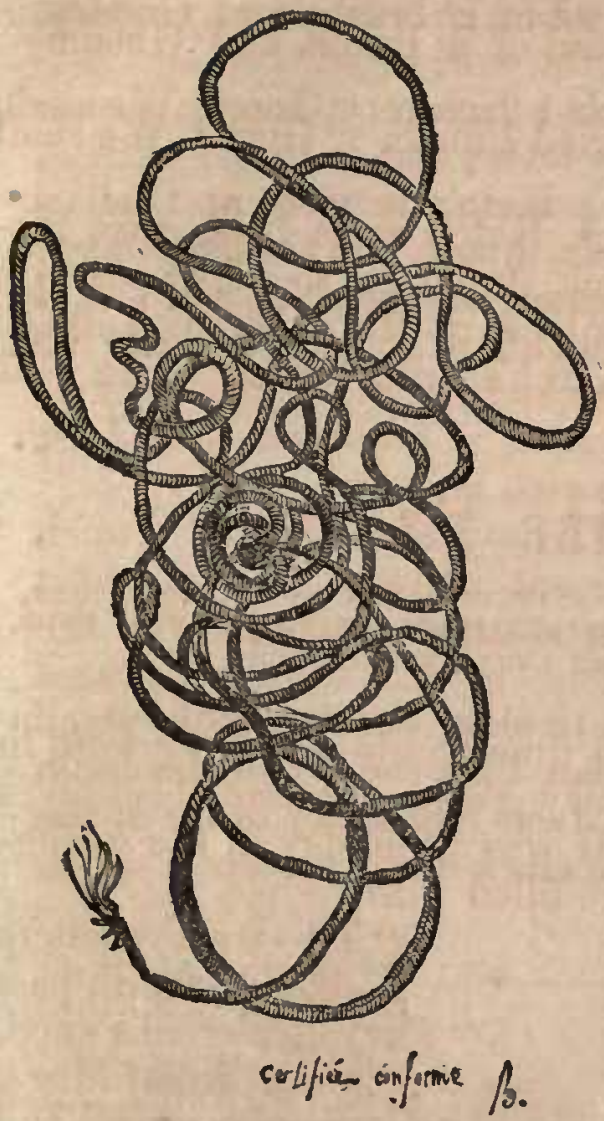
"What do you mean?" asked the voice.

"Alas!" replied Punch, "I was anxious by my wit and talents to make people forget the deformity of my person: it was in vain that I obtained an entry into palaces, and access to great men; injustice and enmity thrust me forth again. But who are you, my unhappy comrade?"

"I am Goodman Patience," said the voice; "and my business is to go about with a puppet-show to amuse poor

people and little children, from whom I never take any money. To do better I am waiting till the world itself becomes better, which must happen sooner or later; and, in the meantime, I expose the vices and follies of the world on the little stage where my puppets play. It was this that provoked the wicked magistrate against me; for he is no better than Jack Ketch himself."

"By my nose!" cried Punch—but he was stopped short in a cruel manner; for the door of the dungeon grated on its hinges, and the magistrate entered, followed by Jack Ketch and the huge black cat. By the light of a torch which the gaoler brought in, Jack Ketch (by order of the magistrate) read to the two prisoners their sentence, which was, that they were to be hanged within an hour, under the pretext that they had belonged to the band of robbers. Punch cried out against this great injustice; but the magistrate walked coolly away, and Jack Ketch laughed in our poor hero's face, as he shook the halter at him. Punch was furious at this impudence; and he banged the door so hard behind Jack Ketch that the black cat's tail was caught, and cut off at the very root. In a few



moments the tail began to change its form, and took the shape of a rope entangled in a strange manner. This was the shape of it. "Ah!" cried Punch, holding this wonderful tail in his hand, "my dear friend, Goodman Patience, do you think that we should do well to wait until that rogue Jack Ketch comes to fetch us to the gallows?"

"By no means," returned Goodman Patience; "but what can we do?"

"I will tell you," said Punch. "Either I am very wrong, or else this tail is some magic tail. Now, I have read in an old book of a witch, who, when she travelled, had no other means of conveyance than her black tom cat's tail; and that all she did was to name the place to which she wanted to go."

"Let us try it," said Patience: "it is proper to use the weapons which fortune provides us with, in order to vanquish the rogues who have confined us in this dungeon. Good people like us may surely do this;—and, besides, we have no choice." Punch placed himself astride on the tail, the

tuft of which he held instead of a bridle, and Goodma Patience got behind him.

"Are you all right?" cried Punch. "Good! We shall now see! Off to London!"

The magistrate and Jack Ketch came in at that moment; but they were struck dumb in the door-way on seeing the two prisoners disappear up the chimney; and the three red hairs on Jack Ketch's nose turned white that very instant.

CHAPTER XII.

PUNCH IN LONDON—WHY THIS HISTORY, IN ORDER TO BE QUITE TRUE, STOPS SHORT OF THE USUAL WINDING UP.

SCARCELY had Punch time to observe they were in motion, when he and Goodman Patience found themselves in the middle of London. It was a fine day in the spring-time, and all the streets were filled with people.

"This is a city where I should love to pass my life," cried Punch, "away from kings, lord stewards, and Jack Ketches."

"And what can hinder you, my dear friend," said Goodman Patience.

"The only objection is," answered Punch, "that I have not a penny in my pocket, all my few things having been left at Brentford; and, unfortunately, I am just this kind

of person—that I love to eat too much rather than not at all."

"Listen," said Goodman Patience; "I have an idea in my head, and I think it is a good one. I will establish my little theatre in the streets of London; and it cannot fail to succeed if you will be the chief actor. With your wit and strange appearance (pray forgive me, Master Punch) we must gather crowds about us."

"I have no doubt of it," said Punch; "and I must confess that I thought of the same plan. Since I have found amongst great people only envy and wickedness, what better use can I make of the wit which heaven has given me, than by employing it to amuse those poor folks who have no money to spend in pleasure, and the little children, too, who are so innocent and so good! I am poor myself, and of humble birth: the wickedness of men, while it continues so great as it now is, will never allow me, I see well, to raise myself up as I once wished, that I might be better able to comfort those who suffer. In the meantime, I will devote to the world the only gift with which heaven has endowed me, and which is mine to use as I will. I will make people laugh! Then, when I see the rosy cheeks of dear children expanding into smiles, I shall feel happy."

"Shake hands," said Goodman Patience; "to-morrow we will begin."

"One moment," cried Punch; "I have a condition to propose. It is that one of your puppets shall be dressed up as Jack Ketch, so that I may thrash him as much as I like, in remembrance of the rogue with the long nose at Brentford."

"With all my heart!" cried Patience; "and I should have proposed the same to you, if you had not forestalled me."

On the following morning Punch made his first appearance. I leave you, my dear young readers, to judge

how great were the surprise and pleasure of the people, when there suddenly burst upon them that amusing show called "PUNCH." Every one was delighted with the strange appearance of our hero—his two large humps—his long crooked chin—his hoarse and yet charming voice—and the dexterity with which he handled his stick! But no words can explain the joy of the crowd, when Jack

Ketch came on the stage, and the following conversation took place:—

Jack Ketch.—Do n't you know me?

Punch.—Oh, yes! I know you very well; and I hope you are very well, and that Mrs. Ketch is very well, and all the little Ketches are very well?

Jack Ketch.—Mr. Punch, you are a very bad man Why did you kill the doctor?

Punch.—In self-defence.

Jack Ketch.—That will not do!

Punch.—He wanted to kill me.

Jack Ketch.—How?

Punch.—With his physic, to be sure!

Jack Ketch.—That's all nonsense! You must be hanged.

Punch.—You would not be so cruel?

Jack Ketch.—Why were you so cruel as to kill the doctor?

Punch.—That is no reason why you should be cruel, and kill me too.*

Jack Ketch.—I have come on purpose for you; and I will have you to hang. My name is Jack Ketch.

Punch.—I knew that before: so *ketch* that.

And Punch belaboured his enemy with such hearty good-will, that the crowds were obliged to hold their sides for laughter.

In a word, Punch found himself so happy in England, after such numbers of unpleasant adventures in Italy, that he resolved to settle in this country, Every evening, however, when the day's diversions are over, he gets astride on the black cat's tail, which he has carefully preserved, and hies off to Naples to say "Good night" to his parents.

It was on the occasion of one of those nocturnal visits, that he thought of recalling himself to the memory of the good people of Naples, and to ridicule once more the great men of the country, by whom he had been so badly treated. He went, with this intention, to one of the most crowded theatres in Naples; and, covering his face with a mask, appeared upon the stage between the acts. The people thought that one of the performers had put on a

* Here is a proof how the ready wit of Punch never forsakes him. In a single sentence he refutes the doctrine that man by law should be allowed to exercise power over the life of his fellow-creatures.—*Translator.*

dress so famous, in order to play some particular part; and no one imagined that it was Punch himself. The people were not the less excited by the idea; but their transports knew no bounds when Punch spoke. Nosegays and garlands showered upon him from all parts. Next day the whole city was busy in repeating the sallies of the mysterious actor, to the great mortification of the courtiers and the wise men of the college, against whom all those sayings were levelled. Encouraged by this success, Punch appeared every evening on the stage at Naples, and amused the people at the expense of their enemies. Thus is it that up to this very day he is thought so famous in Italy. He remained faithful all the same to England, his adopted country. On one occasion only Goodman Patience did not behold him return at his usual hour, and for a fortnight the little theatre was not set up in a single street of London. All the little children went into mourning. Where was he? At Naples, no doubt! But what was he doing there? What business could detain him? On this point, dear readers, all we can do is to guess; for Punch never spoke upon the subject. Only when he re-appeared on his little stage, it was observed, that his usual gaiety was mixed now and then with a shade of sorrow; a wrinkle, which appeared to have been traced by some cruel fate, changed the placid serenity of his countenance; and now and then he was seen to wipe away a tear in secret—thus showing a strange contrast with the humours of his performance. Every thing, in a word, seemed to prove that our joyous friend had passed from youth to the mature age of manhood by the common path—that of affliction.

From that time forth Punch insisted that another person, dressed as a woman, should appear with him on his litttle stage, and receive no small share of blows until then allotted to Jack Ketch. Such a caprice must appear strange on the part of so good a creature as Punch; and

we can only account for it by supposing that the new puppet was meant to represent some faithless young lady to whom Punch had given his heart.

On this head I heard from a learned Neapolitan (and

I am inclined to believe the story), that Punch was really detained at Naples during the fortnight in question by the love that he felt for a certain Miss Judy, the daughter of old Mr. Pantaloon, whom you have all seen in the Pantomimes. Miss Judy, however, who had other admirers, was deaf to the sighs of poor Punch; and even made game of him, and this is the reason why he punishes her by means of a person dressed like herself, and whom he brings upon his stage.

Here ends all that I am permitted to tell you con-

cerning the history of Mr. Punch. As he not only appears in person every day before the public, but also addresses the world weekly in that famous paper which bears his name, and which so well expresses the sentiments of a mind that is generous to the humble weak, but terrible to the overbearing strong, it would be very bold on my part, and very unwise, not to let him speak for himself in future, either with his own tongue, or by means of his journal. Go, then, and see him in the streets, dear young friends, the first fine day; or read his useful and witty sayings; and, in either case, you will be sure to find me amongst the number of his admirers.

GENIUS GOODFELLOW.

A LONG while ago there was a race of beings called genii. So there would be still, if we chose to believe every man who sets himself up for a *genius;* but we must not take him at his word.

Now the genius whose story I am going to tell you was none of your prodigies, or first-rate geniuses. He was only a poor second class genius, who took his seat in the council of the genii merely by right of birth, and with the good-will and sanction of the titled members. The first time he appeared amongst them,—it makes me laugh to think of

it,—he had taken for his motto, and put upon his little flag of state:

> Do as you ought, come what come may.

And so they called him "Genius Goodfellow." Ever since then this nickname has been given to those plain and guileless spirits who do good either from instinct or habit, and who have not discovered the art of resolving virtue into a principle. As for the nickname of *a genius*, people have used it and abused it times out of number. But that is no matter to us.

Now more than a hundred miles off, and long, very long before the Reformation, there lived in an old lordly castle, a rich old dowager, whose name the gentlemen at the Herald's College have never yet discovered. The good lady had lost her daughter-in-law at an early age, and her son had fallen in battle. She was therefore left with none to comfort the sadness of old age save her little

grandson and granddaughter, both of whom seemed to have been created to delight the eyes of all who saw them:—even Painting, which always vies with Nature, never drew such pretty children's faces. The boy, who was twelve years old, was named Sapphire; and the girl, who was only ten, bore the name of Amethyst. It was thought, but this I will not vouch for, that these names had been given them on account of the colour of their eyes; and this, by-the-by, reminds me I should tell you that the sapphire is a precious stone of transparent blue, and the amethyst is another stone partaking of the violet colour.

You might travel far and wide without meeting so good an old lady as the grandmother of Amethyst and Sapphire. She was really too good, a fault which most

grandmothers easily fall into, but one that rarely makes us uneasy. I shall distinguish her by the name of *Lady Toogood*, so as to prevent any confusion arising.

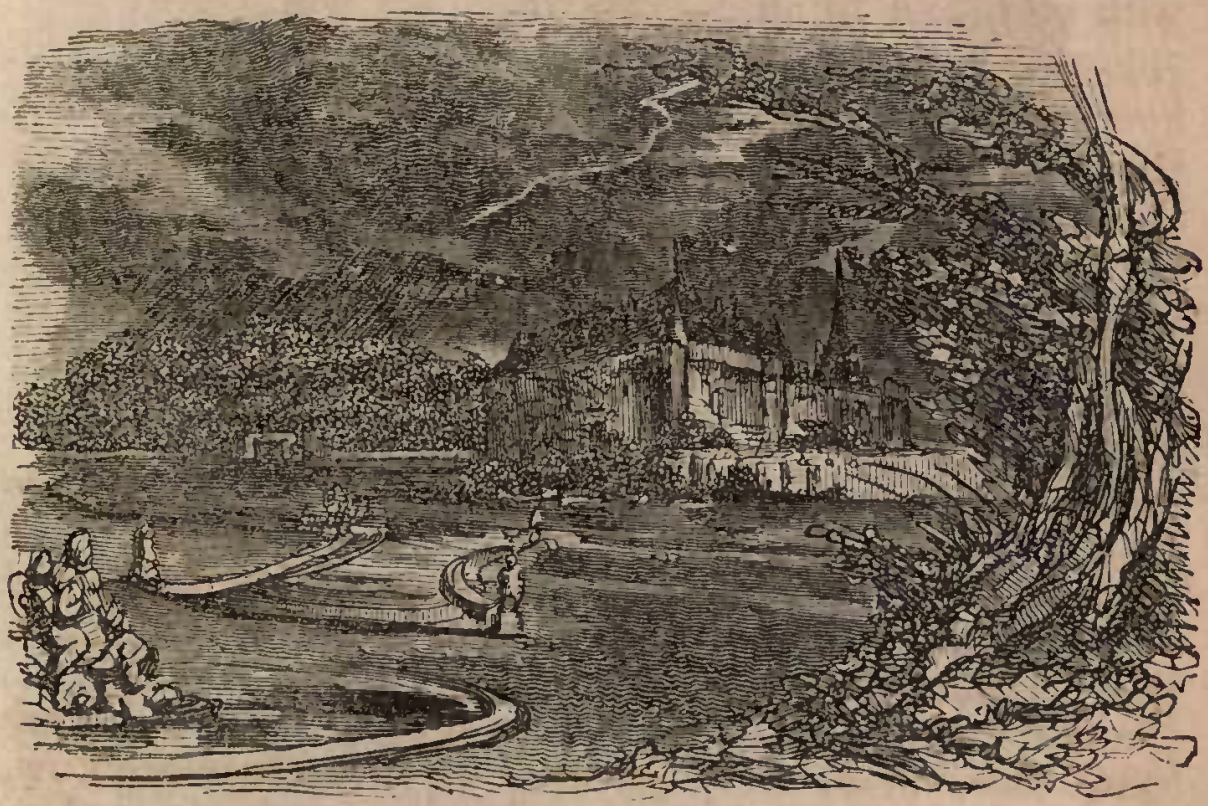
Lady Toogood was so fond of her grandchildren that she brought them up as if she had not the least regard for them. For she allowed them to do as they liked, never spoke to them about their books, and used to play

with them, to stimulate their pleasure, or revive it when she saw they were getting tired of their sports. Now the consequence was that they knew scarcely any thing, and if they had not been inquisitive, like many other children, they would have known nothing at all.

Now it happened that Lady Toogood had for many years been on excellent terms with Genius GOODFELLOW, whom she had met in her youth at some place or other. I don't think it was at court. She often upbraided herself to him, in their private interviews, for not having had sufficient strength of mind to attend to the education

of her two little darlings, who might lose her some day or other. The genius had promised to think of the matter so soon as his business would let him; but he was at that time engaged in seeking for a remedy against the ill effects of education, as conducted by the ignorant pedants and quacks, who were then beginning to palm their systems on the public. The poor genius had work enough on his hands.

One summer evening, however, Lady Toogood had gone to bed betimes, as was her custom; good people have such quiet sleep! Little Amethyst and Sapphire were in the grand drawing-room talking over those airy projects which so often fill up the leisure hours of childhood, and they no doubt would soon have grown tired of



such unprofitable speculations if Nature had not withdrawn their attention to one of her most awful yet most common phenomena. The tempest raged without.

Every minute the lightning filled the atmosphere with flame, or wheeled about its serpentine flashes against the quivering panes. The trees in the avenue were cracked and split into shivers; the thunder rolled along the clouds like a noisy chariot of brass; even the steeple of the church seemed to vibrate with alarm, and to mingle its long lugubrious wailings with the din and clatter of the elements. It was indeed both awful and sublime.

Suddenly the servants came in to announce that they had admitted a little old man drenched with rain, pierced with cold, and to all appearance dying of hunger, because the storm had obliged him to stray out of his road. Amethyst, who in her fright had sought refuge in her brother's arms, was the first to go to meet the stranger, but as Sapphire was the strongest and most active, he would soon have overtaken his sister, if he had not wished to let her have the pleasure of being there first; for these dear little children were as good as they were handsome. I leave you to judge how the stiff and benumbed limbs of the poor man were comforted by a light sparkling fire, and whether there was plenty of sugar and spice in the generous wine

which Amethyst herself warmed for him over the burning charcoal; whether he made a good supper, and had a

good bed, and whether above all, his little hosts gave him a hearty welcome. I shall not even tell you the old

man's name, because, by-and-by, I wish you to enjoy the pleasure of a surprise.

When the old man had recovered a little by resting

his limbs and appeasing his hunger, he became lively and talkative, and the little people took pleasure in listening to him. The young folks of that day were too wise to disdain the conversation of the old, for they were truly conscious they might benefit by it and improve themselves. But now, old age is far less respected than it was then, nor can I wonder that it is so. Youth has so little to learn!

"Children," said the old man, "you have treated me so kindly, that my heart rejoices to think of your happiness. For I doubt not that in this noble castle, where you possess all you can wish for, your days must glide away most pleasantly?"

Sapphire cast his eyes down.

"Happy indeed!" answered Amethyst. "Our dear Grandmamma is so kind to us, and we love her so much! We want for nothing most certainly, and yet we often feel dull."

"You feel dull!" cried the old man, showing signs of surprise and astonishment. "Whoever heard of children of your age feeling dull, when blest with fortune and intelligence. Dulness of mind is a disease which only afflicts useless, idle, foolish people. Whoever is smitten with this infirmity is a burden to society as well as to himself, and deserves nothing but contempt. But to be endowed by Providence with an excellent disposition like yours, is not enough, you must improve it by study. Do you ever work?"

"Work!" replied Sapphire, somewhat mortified; "we are rich, as you may easily see by this castle."

"Beware!" replied the old man, unable to suppress a smile of bitterness, "the thunder, which has hardly ceased to roar, might have crushed your dwelling as it fell."

"My grandmother has money enough to provide us with every luxury."

"The thieves might carry it off."

"By the road you came," continued Sapphire, with assurance, "you must have crossed through a plain, which is thirty miles in extent, and filled with orchards and corn-fields. On the western side of the hill which overlooks that plain, stands an immense palace, which belonged to

my ancestors, and in which they collected, after a great outlay, the wealth of ten generations."

"Alas!" said the stranger, "why must I repay your hospitable welcome by such ill tidings? Time, which is ruthless and spares nothing, has not spared the strongest of your hopes. I coasted for many hours the plain you speak of. It has been succeeded by a lake. I wanted to visit the castle of your ancestors. There was nothing left of it but ruins; and its shattered walls have now given refuge to a few birds of night and beasts of prey. Wolves contend for one half of your inheritance, and owls for the

other. So fragile, my little friends, and of so little worth, are the riches of mankind!"

The children looked at each other.

The old man, without further seeming to notice them, thus proceeded:—"There is but one thing which protects us from these hard vicissitudes, and it is only acquired by study and toil. Against this benefit in vain the waters overflow, or the earth quakes, or the sky heaves its bolt. Whoever is blest with it need fear no reverse, so long as he preserves one faculty in his mind, or a single craft in his hand. The pursuit of industrious arts is the true fortune for a husband, and domestic skill is the best ornament of a wife. The man who is master of a useful trade, or a profession of general interest, is richer in effect than the richest; or rather he is the only rich and independent man on earth. Any fortune but his may prove transient and deccitful. It is far less valuable, and does not last so long."

Amethyst and Sapphire had never yet heard such reasoning before. They looked at each other again and

again without answering. But whilst they kept silent, the old man was undergoing a change. His haggard features recovered the graceful lines of youth, and his

crazy limbs, the sound and robust attitude of strength. This poor man was a benevolent genius with whom my young readers are already acquainted. The two children had little expected his visit.

"I will not leave you," he added, with a smile, "without giving you a trifling proof of gratitude for the kind attention you have shown me. Since dulness alone has hitherto disturbed that happiness which nature has so freely bestowed upon you, take these two rings, which are talismans of great power. By pushing against the spring which opens the collet, you will always find the instruction it unfolds an infallible remedy for this disease of the heart and mind. Still if the mysterious art which made them

should for once deceive my hopes, we shall meet again in another year, and then resort to other means. Till then these small presents will keep our friendship alive, and I

only annex two easy conditions with them: first, you must not consult the oracle in the ring without need, that is to say before your spirits sink; secondly, you must faithfully perform whatever it shall decree."

Having said these words, Genius Goodfellow departed,

or, as an author, endowed with a more poetic fancy, would perhaps express it, he vanished. That is the way these genii used to take leave.

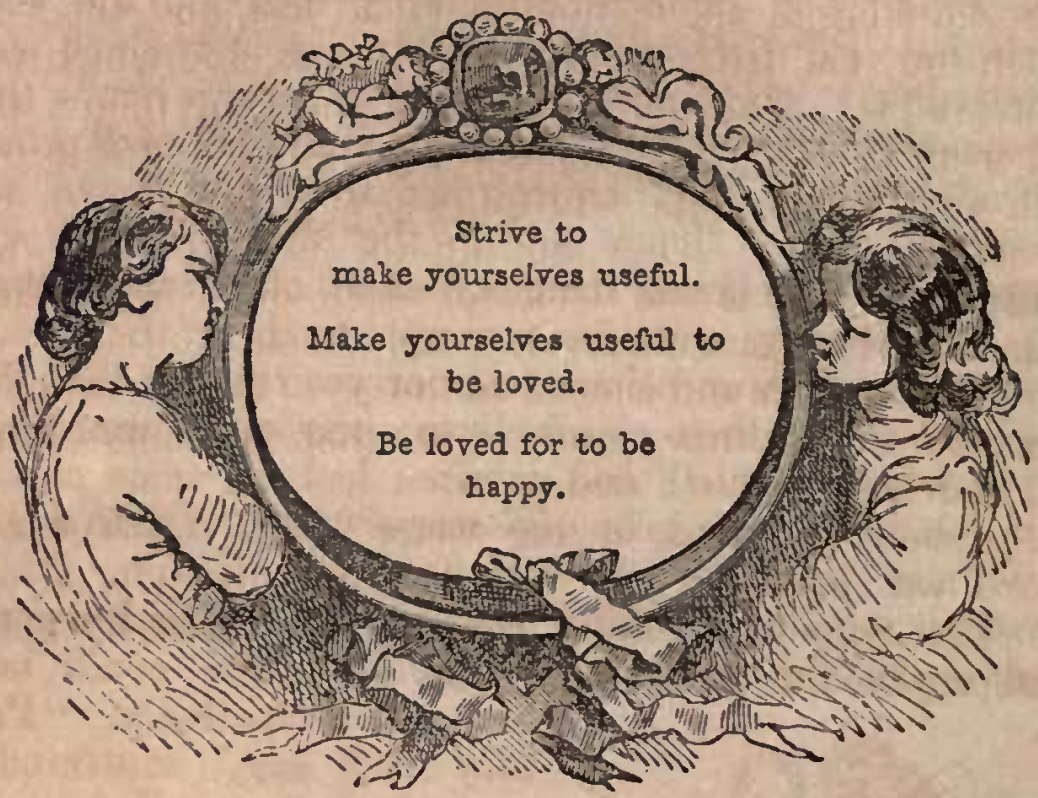
Amethyst and Sapphire did not feel dull that night, though I should suppose they had but little sleep. They were thinking of the fortune they had lost, and the years which they had frittered away in idleness, and which were irretrievable. They now regretted the many hours they had spent in vain frivolities, and which might have proved both advantageous and fruitful, had they but known how to employ them. They got up the next morning with heavy hearts, went to look for each other with dread, and, whilst they embraced, tears stood in their eyes. After a moment's uneasiness, the force of habit triumphed once more. So they returned to their old amusements, and were less diverted than ever.

"I think you are growing weary?" said Amethyst.

"I was going to ask you the same question, sister," answered Sapphire; "but I was afraid my curiosity might be reproached as an excuse for my dulness."

"I declare," replied Amethyst, pushing against the spring of the collet, "that I am as dull as death!"

And thereupon she read the following inscription, neatly engraved on the inner plate; whilst, on his side, Sapphire read it also:—



"That is not all," observed Sapphire, seriously. "What the oracle in the ring decrees, we must punctually perform. Believe me, let us try it. Who knows whether labour is more wearisome than idleness."

"Oh! as for that, it is impossible!" replied the little girl. "And besides, the ring will surely afford us some other resource against dulness. Let us try, as you say. One bad day is soon over."

Without being exactly a bad one, as Amethyst seemed to dread, this first day was not very pleasant. They sent for the master and teachers, who had so often been turned off; because they spoke in a language which seemed

difficult because it was strange, but which at length appears pleasing when once we become used to it.

This brother and sister had not yet reached that point. Twenty times during each lesson the collet was applied to, and half opened; and as often had the same obstinate inscription appeared in the same place. Not a single word had changed.

The very same thing continued for one long week, and again the week following. Sapphire could hardly endure his impatience. "People may well say," muttered he, as he was scrawling a *task*, "that our modern geniuses repeat themselves! And besides," added he, "it must be confessed it is a strange way to cure dulness, to make us more dull than before."

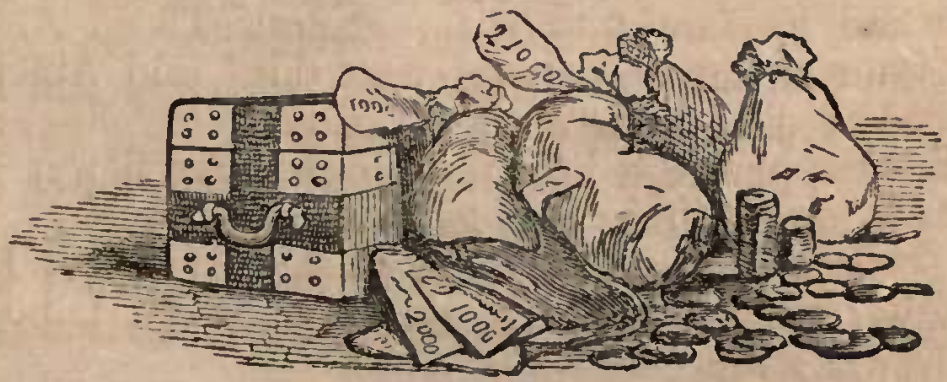
After the first fortnight they felt less weary, because their self-conceit began to be interested in their studies. After the first month they felt hardly weary at all, because they had already sown something to reap. They read to divert themselves during play hours, and even during their work; the books they read were entertaining

as well as instructive; some in Italian, some in French, some in German: they took no immediate part in the conversation of enlightened people; but they were able to profit by it, now that their studies had enabled them to understand it. They began *to think;* and that life of the soul, which idleness destroys; that life, new to them, seemed sweeter than the first, for they possessed much natural sense. Their grandmother, too, was so happy to see them study of their own accord, and enjoyed their success so delightedly! I can still remember, that the pleasure they give their parents is children's purest joy.

The spring was certainly touched a great many times during the first half year; in the seventh, the eighth, the ninth month it was pushed open now and again; but in the twelfth month the rust grew over it.

Then it was that the genius kept his word and returned to the castle; for a genius of those days was very punctual to his promises. At this second visit, he displayed rather more pomp, like a wise man who knows how to use his fortune without parading it, because he knows its real value too well. He sprang towards his little friends, and hugged them in his arms; and, although they did not yet fully understand what they owed him, they made him tenderly welcome before they had summed up in their minds what benefits he had conferred upon them. For real gratitude, like true charity, never reckons what it gives away.

"Well, my children," said he, pleasantly, "you were very angry with me at first, for knowledge is not free from dulness. I have often heard people say so, and there are learned men in the world who make me believe it. But now, no more study, no more science, no more serious labour! but, instead of these, pleasure, if there be such a thing, playthings, theatres, and holidays! Sapphire, you shall teach me the last new step. Amethyst, I beg the favour of your hand in the first country dance. I have the pleasure to inform you that you are richer than ever.



The waters of the lake have subsided, after increasing tenfold the fertility of the land. The ruins of your palace have been cleared away, and a treasure ten times its original value have been found in the vaults below."

"The thieves might carry it off," said Amethyst.

"The lake may return and overlay the land," said Sapphire.

The genius had not heard, or seemed as if he had not, these last observations. He had entered the drawing-room.

"This worthy man is very frivolous for his years," said Sapphire.

"And very stupid for a genius," said Amethyst; "perhaps he thinks I shall not finish the flower vase which I am now painting for grandmamma's birthday. My master says he could not do better himself."

"I should be sorry, my good little sister," replied Sapphire, "to surpass you in any thing on that day; but I hope grandmamma will feel all the delight she can feel, when she sees my six crowns."

"Still you must work to effect this," said Amethyst; "for your course of lessons is not ended."

"And you must work to finish your flower vase," replied Sapphire; "for it is not done either."

"So then you mean to work?" said Amethyst kindly and endearingly, as if she wanted to solicit indulgence towards herself.

"To be sure I do," said Sapphire; "and I see no reason why I should leave off working, whilst there is any thing still to be learned."

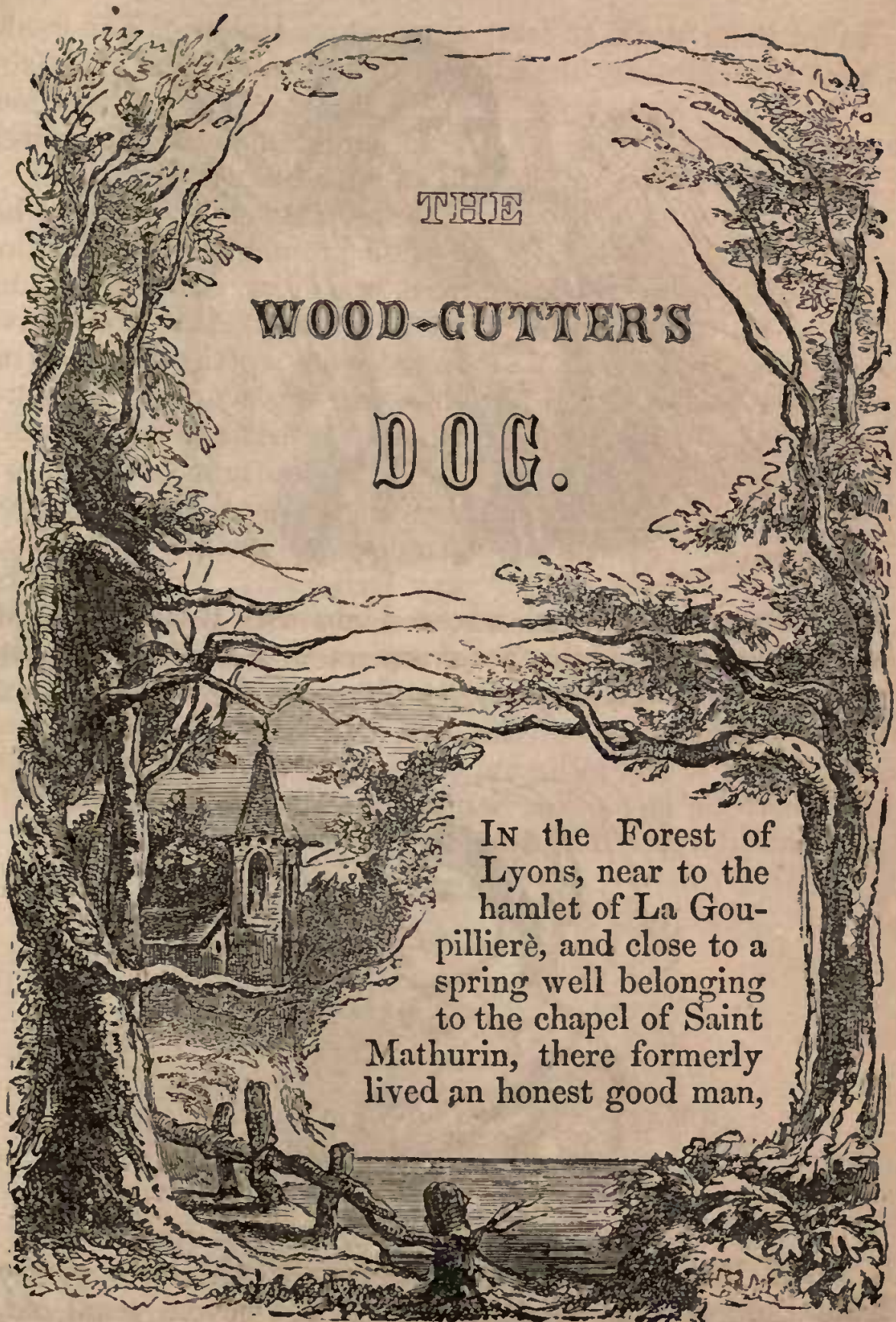
"We have plenty to do then," cried his sister, jumping up with glee.

And so saying, our little friends came close up to Lady Toogood, who was too happy. Sapphire drew near her first as he was the boldest, and begged his grandmamma

to let them work at least three years longer. The genius who was amusing himself by cutting capers and practising

opera figures, broke into a loud fit of laughter, until his eyes were filled with tears of joy.

"Work, dear children," said he; "your grandmamma will allow you, and you can see by her emotion the pleasure she derives from your application. Work then moderately, for too much labour breaks the strongest mind, as too much culture will dry up the most fertile ground. Amuse yourselves sometimes, nay frequently, for at your age bodily exercise is necessary, and whatever relieves the mind after labour, enables it to endure a new task. Return to your toil before you feel pleasure grow tedious. In fine, learn to be useful that you may be loved; and, according to the talisman, be loved that you may be happy. If there be any other happiness on earth than this, I for one could never find it out."



THE WOOD-CUTTER'S DOG.

In the Forest of Lyons, near to the hamlet of La Goupillierè, and close to a spring well belonging to the chapel of Saint Mathurin, there formerly lived an honest good man,

by trade a woodcutter, whose name was Brisquet, which signifies cleaver with the sharp axe, and who, with his wife Brisquetta, lived very poorly upon the scanty profits of his bundles.

God had blessed this poor couple with two pretty little children, one of whom was a boy seven years old,

with a dark sunny complexion, named Biscotin; and the other was a fair little girl, just turned six, whose name was Biscotina.

Besides these children they had a mongrel dog, with thick bushy hair, as black as coal all over the body, except at the muzzle, where it grew of a light brownish colour; and there was not another dog like him in all

the country round for fidelity to his master and his family. This dog was called Bichonne.

Now it happened, during a very severe winter, that a great many wolves appeared in the forest of Lyons. Well,

in that year, when we had such heavy falls of snow, and when the poor people found it so hard to get their living, these savage wolves, and the severe winter together, distressed the country people in a fearful manner. But Brisquet, who went to his work all the same, and who, on account of his sharp axe, did not fear the wolves, said one day to his wife Brisquetta, "Goody, I caution you not to let either Biscotin or Biscotina go out until the chief of the wolf-hunters has arrived. It would be highly dangerous for them. They have plenty of room to run about in between the pond and the hill, and you

know I have planted stakes all round the pond to prevent

their falling into the water. And I likewise warn you, Brisquetta, not to let Bichonne go out, for the dog is too fond of gadding away from home."

Every day before he went out, Brisquet repeated his warning to his wife Brisquetta. One evening he did not come home at his usual time. Brisquetta kept going to the step of the door, then came in, and went out again, and, joining her hands in great distress of mind, she exclaimed, "Alas! how

late he is to-night!" Then she went out once more, and cried, "Brisquet, where are you?"

And the little dog leapt up to her shoulders, as much to say, "Do let me go."

"Down!" said Brisquetta. "Come, Biscotina, you shall go towards the hill to see whether the good man is coming. And you, Biscotin, shall go along the path by the pond, and mind you take care there are no stakes missing. And cry out as loud as you can, Brisquet! Brisquet!"

"Down, I say, Bichonne."

So the children went on and on, until they met again, at the spot where the path by the pond crossed the path towards the hill.

"I don't care," said Biscotin; "I'll find my poor father, or the wolves shall eat me!"

"And so they shall eat me too!" said little Biscotina.

In the meantime, Brisquet had returned home by the high road, because he had a load of small wood to leave with Pierre Packer.

"Have you met the children?" said Brisquetta to him, as he crossed the threshold.

"The children!" said Brisquet; "the children! heavens! did you let them out?"

"I sent them to look for you at the pond and the hill: but you must have come another way."

Brisquet immediately darted out of the house, with his sharp axe in his hand, and ran first to the hill as fast as he could.

"Suppose you take Bichonne with you?" cried Bris

quetta after him. But Bichonne had already scampered forth.

The little dog ran so fast that Brisquet soon lost sight of him. And it was to no purpose that the poor

woodcutter shouted out, "Biscotin! Biscotina!" Nobody answered him.

Then the poor woodcutter began to cry, for he thought his children were both lost.

Now after he had run about for a long, long time, looking everywhere, the poor woodcutter thought he heard the bark of Bichonne. So he went straight to the spot from whence the cry seemed to come, and entered among the trees with his axe uplifted.

The faithful Bichonne had come up just at the moment when Biscotin and Biscotina were on the point of being

devoured by a large wolf. He had thrown himself before them, and began to bark, to give Brisquet notice. With

one stroke of his sharp axe Brisquet slew the big wolf;

but it was all over with poor Bichonne, he was dead already.

Then the wood-cutter, with his two children, returned home to their mother Brisquetta. They were all glad to meet again, and yet every one wept. Every eye was turned on poor faithful Bichonne, who lay lifeless on the floor.

And the woodcutter dug a grave at the back of his

little garden, and buried Bichonne beneath a large stone, upon which the village schoolmaster inscribed in Latin:—

HERE LIES BICHONNE,
THE POOR WOODCUTTER'S DOG.

And since then it has passed into a common proverb:—*As unlucky as the woodcutter's dog, who went only once to the wood, and the wolf eat him.*

THE SUBTERFUGE.

CHAPTER I.

AUNT LEONARDA.

THE four children of a rich husbandman of Pau were grievously bewailing their father's death the day after his funeral, when they saw an old woman approach the door, whom they knew directly to be their father's sister.

"Good day to you, Aunt Leonarda," they exclaimed all four together. "Welcome you are, but you come too late!"

"Alas! my children, at my time of life (for I shall be full seventy come next Michaelmas) a poor woman cannot go sixty leagues without stopping: I have been three days on the road. After all, here I am at last," said she, sitting down, and looking sorrowfully about her. "Poor brother! he is gone before me, and waits for me above; I have but little time to weep for him, for I shall soon be called away to join him."

"Drive away those painful thoughts, aunt," said the elder boy.

"My children," continued Leonarda; "I have something of importance to communicate to you, so listen to me. Marcel, your poor father, you know, was twice married. His first wife, Martha, the mother of Victor and Blanche, was very rich; his second, whose name was Ligna, the mother of Louis and Katherine, was very poor. Your father had nothing of his own; so that the whole property,

lands, farms, cows, and sheep, ploughs, harrows, and all the farming implements, belong to the two eldest children, to

Victor and Blanche, the offspring of Martha. Ligna's children have nothing to claim; the papers left with the notary will prove what I say. However, it was not merely to tell you these things that I came hither, for the notary, or any body else, could have told you all at a proper time and place. The motive of my journey was this:—You, Victor, and you, Blanche, possess an ample fortune, you are rich! Your other brother and your other sister have nothing; share your store with them, I beg you; remember they are the children of the same father, and that if God has given you a fortune, it is that you may use it well. But I see that you are already tired of listening to me," said she, perceiving that the two elder ones, thinking only of their new fortune, had ceased to attend to her; and the two others, overcome with grief, hearkened as little. "It is I who am wrong—I have done; and all I ask of you is, to let me have a chamber to rest in until to-morrow."

The four children hastened to gratify the old aunt's desire, and took the greatest care of her; and the next day

she set out on her return, accompanied by one of the farm servants, pleased with the kind treatment she had experienced from all her nephews and nieces.

When it was time to go to the fields, Louis, holding his pruning-knife in his hand, called to his brother: "Are you coming, Victor?"

"No," answered the other; "it is fit for you to work, and earn the bread you eat here; but for me, I am rich, and take my ease."

Poor Louis, stung to the quick by this answer, said not a word, but went off to the fields.

At the same time Katherine went to look for her sister; she found her in bed, and asked her if she was ill?

"No!" replied she.

"Come, then, get up," said Katherine to her; "the lye is steeped—you must"——

Here she was interrupted by Blanche, who, in a shrill voice repeated, "*You must, eh!* Katherine, you must now do the work all alone, and save me the expense of a servant. It is fit the poor should wait on the rich; and I am rich, you know!"

Astonished at so different a style and manner, Katherine seemed riveted to the spot, she could not stir. Her sister drew her from her fit of apathy by adding, "Well! what are you doing, stuck there like a finger-post in the highway? Come, make haste; I am willing to keep you in my house, but at least you must earn what you cost me."

Katherine hurried away, whilst the tears ran down her cheeks.

That very evening she and her brother spoke together; after which, they both came to the rich children.

"It is too painful for us to be servants to our brother and sister," said Louis, speaking for both; "we are all children of one father, and therefore we leave you."

"To go whither?" asked Victor and Blanche with some degree of concern, to do them justice

"To any house but yours, cruel sister!" said Katherine, weeping.

"As you please," returned Blanche; "only I entreat you both to say in the village that it is your own wish to go; for I would not for the world have the neighhours suppose that either my brother or myself had driven away our own father's children."

"Don't be alarmed, Blanche," said Louis, taking his sister's arm to lead her away; "we shall tell the truth."

The moment that Ligna's children were crossing the door-way, Victor was smitten with remorse, and cried out to his brother:—"Louis, you are wrong to be proud; were I in your place, I would be your servant." Then, seeing that he went his way without turning back his head, he added, "At all events remember, when you want work, come to the farm, and you will find it."

Louis and Katherine did not even look back to signify that they heard them. Victor rejoined his sister Blanche.

CHAPTER II.

THE CHILD, THE LOAF, AND THE DOG.

AFTER leaving their father's house, Louis and Katherine took up their abode in a little cottage on the margin of a small river abounding in fish. Louis employed himself in

fishing, and going to market to sell what he caught; Katherine took care of their home, and turned her spinning wheel. Things went on pretty well until winter; but then the river was frozen, and there were no fish to be had

the thread that Katherine spun was no longer sufficient for the wants of the two poor orphans, and so poverty and extreme distress found their way into the little cot.

However, spring returned again, and summer came after; and just at harvest time a man called at the humble dwelling of the friendless children.

"I have undertaken the crops of this part of the country," said he to them; "I am now mustering my reapers; will you join my band?"

"Willingly! willingly!" said Louis and Katherine at once, delighted at the prospect of earning a little money. Saying which, they followed the stranger. But judge how astonished were these poor children, when they discovered that the field they were going to reap was one belonging to their brother and sister: however, they were already hired, so they went to work. Victor saw them at their task: he came up to them, and observing how poorly they were clad, he said to them:—"Oh! oh! I see distress has brought you back to me. I might send you about your business; but I am a good brother, and therefore you may continue to labour in this field as long as aught remains to be done."

Then off he ran, wicked brother, to tell his sister of the meeting; and she heard his story without pity.

The next day, however, whilst the reapers were taking their meals, Blanche wished to show herself to Ligna's children in the fine clothes she had worn since her father's death, which had been made for her in town, for she had thrown by her country garments. So she came out, dressed like a young lady, leaning on her brother's arm, and walked up to a large elm, beneath which she expected to meet her poor brother and sister; but all she found there was a child and a dog. The child was eating a slice of bread and butter; the dog, which lay down at the foot of the child, seemed so earnestly to beg for a bit, that Blanche told the child to give him some. The child refused.

"Fie, you little glutton, not to give this poor little dog his share!" said Blanche.

"Ah, Blanche! Blanche!" said a voice behind the elm; "what you say to that child might be applied to yourself, since you have kept all your mother's fortune, not only without sharing it with your father's children, but without even giving them any part of it."

Blanche turned her head round to see who was speaking; she saw her old aunt Leonarda, resting upon her stick. Without leaving the young girl time to answer her, the old dame continued:—"I came up through the meadows; and when I saw both Louis and Katherine so poorly clad, I made my inquiries, and the reapers told me all—the bad behaviour of your brother and you, and the noble pride of Ligna's children, who refused to be servants where they had been masters. Fortunately, I am come to turn the tables upon you."

"How, Aunt Leonarda!" said Victor and Blanche together.

The old aunt sat down on the bench by the side of Blanche, and beckoning to Ligna's children to come forward, she said to them:—"I have great news to tell you: the fortune did not belong to Martha, but Ligna; all the property, therefore, goes to her children, instead of Martha's."

"Are you serious, aunt?" cried the four children together.

"Very serious; I only wanted to prove you," replied the old aunt. "I had come to an understanding with the notary for that purpose, with a right to restore things to their place in due season. That time is now come; Louis and Katherine, it is your turn, my children, to be masters here. Come, Louis, give your sickle to Victor, and order him to go and roast himself in the sun, to increase your wealth; come, Katherine, sit you here in the shade, and send your servant Blanche to get your dinner ready.

Assume the masters, my children; be proud and haughty; it is your turn to drive them away—you are rich now!"

But without seeming to understand Aunt Leonarda's last words, Louis and Katherine looked at each other. Louis then went and sat down at the feet of Blanche, who looked down with shame and confusion, whilst big tears were gushing from her eyes.

"Stay with us, dear sister," said he, "and let there be neither master nor servant in this house, but only fond sisters and loving brothers. Say, shall it be so?"

Katherine, who had glided silently into the arms of her brother Victor, said to him at the same time:—"Let us do as we used when our father was living, Victor: he would cut a fine pear into four pieces, and all his children were alike and equal. Say, shall it be so?"

You are too good," returned the two children of Martha; "we do not deserve so much kindness; we have been very cruel towards you. Do as we did, and we shall deserve it all."

"Heaven forbid!" cried Ligna's children. And then Louis added, in an earnest voice, "We are all children of but one father; let us have one fortune, one house, and one field."

When she saw this noble revenge, Aunt Leonarda burst into tears.

"Come, Aunt Leonarda," said the four children at once; "come and enjoy the result of your SUBTERFUGE."

And ever since that day, nothing was talked about in the village but the harmony and the good feeling which prevailed among the four children of Marcel.

HONEST HUBERT:

Or, the Cottage and the Castle.

One morning, in the fine month of April, 1790, farmer Hubert called his son Giles, a boy about twelve years old, and said to him: "My lad, this is the cottage in which you were born, as well as your sister Cicely; on yonder hill stands the church where I married your poor mother who sits weeping in that corner: what then? why, to-morrow they mean to turn us out of the cottage, and out of the

village too; not because we have done any thing wrong; no, my boy, your father has not disgraced his grey hairs; but the hail-storm has destroyed his crops, and he has fallen behind with his landlord, and cannot pay his rent. The bailiff is severe and ill-natured, but somehow I think his master, the lord, is not so bad. It would be a dreadful thing, indeed, if there were two such wicked men in so small a hamlet as Gentilly. The Marquis of Gentilly returned home last night, as I hear; so Giles, you must put on your best Sunday clothes, and take your sister Cicely with you, and go together to the castle. Besides, my lad, you are a scholar, and the schoolmaster says, that if you continue to mind your book as you do, you will be able to read next year, and that you already know your letters pretty well. This is saying a great deal, but still I don't doubt it may be true. So then, my lad, as you wend your way, you will contrive a neat little compliment to greet his lordship with very prettily; you will tell him that it is true we owe the money, but that for two seasons now

the crops have been injured by the hail, that we only want time, and that we will pay him, for we are honest people. You must not, however, say it all in a heap as I do, but settle it as nicely as you can, and fit for my lord's ears; so that you may come by degrees to touch his heart, and prevent him from turning us out of our cottage. And now, my lad, you understand what I mean?"

"Perfectly, father," replied Giles.

"And so do I understand you, father," said Cicely, whom her mother was just finishing to dress; "and if Giles should forget any thing, I'll be his prompter."

"God send that his lordship may only listen to two poor children like them!" said the farmer's wife, wiping her eyes.

"His lordship is a man, and a man is not a tiger, Goody," returned honest Hubert.

"He surely cannot eat us," said Giles.

"Take heart, my children," said the farmer, making a sign to Giles to set out; "and, Goody, in the meantime let you and I go and pray to God to bless the mission of these poor innocent lambs."

And then as they went together along the path which led to the castle, said Giles to his sister Cicely:

"What have you got there in your hand?"

"A basket of nice ripe fruit, and a bunch of flowers," answered his sister, "to present to his lordship."

"That's not amiss," said Giles, "you are a thoughtful girl; all I fear is that his lordship w'on't care a button for our fruit and flowers."

"What! not for such nice flowers as these? returned Cicely.

"Hush!" said Giles, pointing towards two persons at some distance, who were coming along the path.

"Bless us!" cried the little peasant girl, in a tone of surprise, "how fine those people are dressed; see how nicely the young gentleman's hair is powdered, what a neat coat, and what nice polished boots!

"And look at the little girl, too," said Giles in turn, "look at the fine feathers in her hat! and her gown with its long skirt behind! I suspect, Cicely, the stuff cost more than yours did."

"How neat, how pretty, they are both!" cried Cicely.

"They must be my lord and my lady," said Giles, "now's the time for me to begin my address."

"I rather think, Giles," said Cicely, these are the children of his lordship, the Marquis of Gentilly, though they are much taller than they were the last time they came down to the country, about two years ago."

"Yes," returned Giles, "I remember they did not visit us last year, because their mother died, and their father was with the army; it was the schoolmaster told me so; and the children of a marquis, you know, never come to the country all alone."

"Where are you going, little girl, with your fine pears and flowers?" said the little powdered gentleman, chucking Cicely under the chin, and then taking out a pear, and giving it a bite.

"Adrian," said the young girl to her brother, I think I know who they are. Are you not farmer Hubert's children?" added she, turning and speaking to the little peasants.

"The same, at your service, Miss," replied Giles, looking down abashed, and twisting the brim of his hat between his hands.

'And what's your pleasure, youngsters?" said Adrian, assuming a look of patronage.

"We want to speak to my lord, your father, my fine young gentleman," answered Cicely.

"Say on," replied Adrian, "it's the same as if you spoke to himself."

"This is the matter, Master Adrian," said Giles: "we owe my lord a great deal of money, I don't exactly know how much it is; but I think it must be twenty crowns, or ten at least; father did not tell me the amount."

"Well," added the little girl, laughing outright, "what next?"

"Well!" repeated Giles, blushing and stammering, for that burst of laughter had confounded his ideas, "we are not able to pay . . . and the steward wants to turn us out of our home . . . and that vexes father . . . that makes mother sad; and that cottage, you see, Miss Angelica and Master Adrian, is the same where sister and I were born, as father says; for it's so long ago, and I was so little then, I can't remember it. It was there too, hard by, in the church, that he was married to mother. In short, the church, the village, and the cottage," continued Giles, more and more embarrassed every moment; for at every word he spoke the merriment of his little auditors revived, "In short . . . saving your presence . . . the cottage" . . .

"We wish not to leave it," added Cicely, coming to her brother's relief.

"It is a fine cottage, truly, to regret," interrupted the little marquis, and speaking to his sister.

"Nay! it is not a castle," Giles ventured to say, "but we can sleep in it, and take our meals in it; in summer it shelters us from the sun, and in winter from the rain."

"I can't conceive how any one can live in a cottage, and still less how they can cry to leave it," replied the little girl, in so disdainful a voice as to bring tears into the poor children's eyes.

"If you had nothing else though," returned Cicely warmly, "you would be very glad to keep it."

"Nothing else!" repeated Angelica, raising her voice; "you are a saucy girl, little one, to compare yourself to me,

and my brother would do well to give you a few lashes with his horsewhip to teach you better manners."

Terrified at this threat, and still more at the tone in which it was delivered, the little peasant girl screamed with fear, and Giles added in a passion:

"What! my sister! beat my sister!" said he, placing himself before her, and clenching his fists as if to defend her.

"And you too," replied Adrian.

"Me! if you like, my lord, you have the right to do it," replied Giles, "you may, perhaps, have the same right to beat my sister, but, blow me, so long as I can stand on my legs, I won't allow it!"

"Well! Master Adrian, well!" said a voice which made farmer Hubert's children tremble from head to foot, for it was the bailiff who spoke, "why do you hesitate to trounce these two troublesome little fools?"

"O dear! we are undone!" cried the two poor children, bursting into tears.

As soon as they saw the children's grief, both Adrian and Angelica were ashamed of the fit of anger which they had for a moment felt towards two beings so harmless as those little peasants; they ran up to them, Angelica took hold of Cicely's hand, and Adrian took hold of Giles's.

"Don't cry," said both together, "don't cry, no harm shall be done to you, that I promise you."

"Oh! certainly not, no harm shall be done to them," replied the bailiff; "we shall put them out of the cottage very quietly and gently, and after that, out of the village as peaceably as possible."

"What," said Adrian, "could you be so cruel, Mr. Bailiff?"

"Good Mr. Bailiff," said Angelica, looking serious, "before you turn my father's tenants out of their home, you will wait till he returns. He will be home again in a week, in three days, perhaps to-morrow."

"I am very sorry to refuse you any thing. Miss, but I cannot wait an hour," said the bailiff, strutting with a look of self-sufficiency in his robe of office.

"Mr. Bailiff!" cried Adrian, with a flushed face.

"How children do change!" said the bailiff, "just now you were going to thrash these little peasants, and now you step in to intercede for them."

"Just now I was wrong, Mr. Bailiff," replied Adrian in a tone at once sad and dignified, "and I beg of you"——

"Impossible! Mr. Adrian; the law must take its course; they must pay, or go to prison."

Adrian was about to make an angry reply, when his sister took his arm. "Never mind, Adrian," said she, "we are not the most powerful in this case, but we have another means to comfort these children."

"Yes, fifty crowns which my grandfather gave me when I took leave of him yesterday," answered her brother.

"I have a trifle more," rejoined Angelica, which my grandmother gave me to buy a new dress." Then she turned to Cicely, and said,—

"Follow me to the castle, Cicely, and don't cry; my brother and I will take upon us to settle with the bailiff."

"Nor will you have far to go, my dear children," said a middle-aged man, suddenly issuing from behind the base of a statue, where, without being perceived himself, he had seen and heard all; "you are two little angels, whom your mother when she died left to console me for all my cares and sorrows. Mr. Bailiff," said he, changing his voice, "you have exceeded your authority. As for you, Giles, you are a good brother; go home and tell your father, that for your sake, I forgive him the money he owes me, and that I release him from his farm rent for two years to come, on condition that he shall devote the money to your education. And do you, my children, accompany me in the tour I am about to make in my estates. Let us endeavour to dry our neighbour's tears, that God may one day do the same for us!"

After this speech, the baffled bailiff withdrew covered with shame, the marquis walked off on one side with his two children, whilst Cicely and Giles bent their way to the cottage.

As soon as they got home, they related all that had passed; joy once more took the place of grief, and night came on before these worthy people had left off praising their noble landlord's goodness. At length the farmer's wife said to her husband:

"Methinks, Hubert, you ought to go and thank my lord before you go to bed."

"True," said Hubert, standing up, "what could possess me that I never thought of it?"

"Are you going by yourself, father?" asked Giles.

"Yes," said Hubert. "Go to bed, children, it is late."

He went out. But joy has more power to keep the eyes open than sorrow has; so when Hubert returned, he found his wife and children still up.

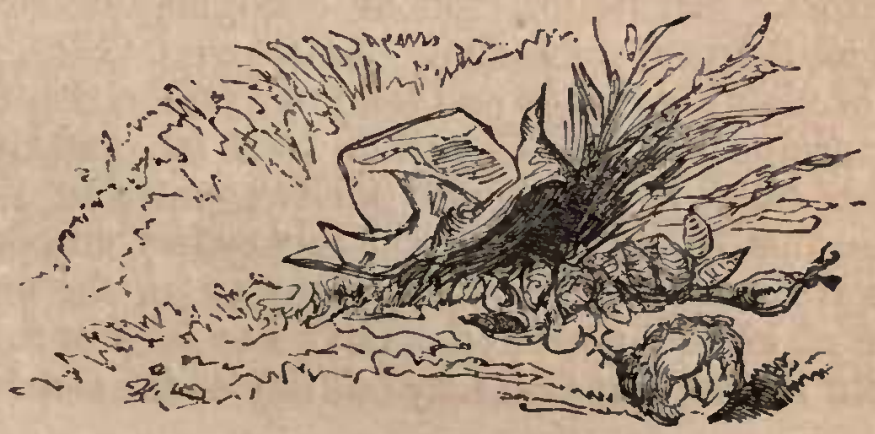
"Have you seen his lordship?" said his wife.

"Yes," said Hubert, as pale as a ghost, and with a careful heavy brow.

"And have you thanked him, Hubert?"

"Yes . . . no . . . don't question me, wife, I cannot tell you any thing, good night."

So saying, the farmer took up a candle, and went into the next room, leaving his wife and children amazed at the answer.



PART II.

THE COTTAGE AND THE CASTLE.

In 1805, in the heat of summer, and in the merry month of August, two country women belonging to the village of Gentilly, in the environs of Paris, were returning thither from the capital, when they observed a young woman in black pass by them, holding a child by the hand. This meeting by itself would probably not have been noticed had it not been for the lady's appearance; her dress, which at the first glance, appeared costly, was torn and soiled at the skirt by the brambles and the dust on the highway

whilst her handsome face was bathed in tears; and all about her excited to the utmost the curiosity and the concern of the two villagers.

There was another point, too, which puzzled them. That stranger, whom neither of them knew, though they were amongst the oldest residents in the place, went directly forward without asking her way of any one, without looking for it herself, and with all the confidence of long and familiar habit. Watching her only, for they were afraid to intrude themselves upon her, because, in spite of her mournful looks, there was a dignity about her that kept them at a distance, they saw her advance with faltering steps towards honest Hubert's cottage, and knock softly at the door. Next she listened to catch the sound of the steps of any approaching inmates; but the deepest silence prevailed within the walls of the cottage, and the strange lady glanced around her, as if hesitating how to act. Then observing that the window shutter, being half withdrawn, allowed any one to look inside, she ran up to the shutter, opened it, looked anxiously for a few moments through the window, then suddenly uttered a piercing shriek, and, would have fallen backward on the earth, but for the two country-women, who by that time had reached the cottage, and supported her in their arms.

"Dead, dead, they are all dead then!" said she to the two women.

"Who are dead?" replied one of these; "not honest old Hubert, certainly, nor his wife, nor even his children."

"But here is no furniture, the cottage is empty," stammered the poor lady.

"Even so; but every day is not alike," said the other country-woman: "old Hubert, whom the whole country set down to be as poor as Job, went up to the castle of the Marquis of Gentilly, on the day it was put up for sale. Perhaps, madam, you do not know, how some time back, in 1794, when the soldiers of the revolution were quartered

in these parts, and when many of us poor villagers were turned out of house and home by them, because we stood

his lordship, the marquis, who had always been a very kind landlord to all of us, that his lordship fled away from the castle, and, as I've heard emigrated with his chil-

dren; and they all died, as report says, in foreign parts. It was thus the castle came to be sold, and as I had the honour to say just now, when the day of the sale was come, who do you think was surprised?—Why the whole village, to be sure; for there at the sale was honest old Hubert, bidding, and bidding, and bidding, higher than all the company—so at last he pulls from beneath his great

coat a large bag full of gold, pays for the castle, and becomes the owner of it, as sure as my name's Susan. That is the reason why the cottage is empty. But old Hubert and his wife, and his daughter Cicely, are not a bit prouder for

that; I do n't say a word about the son, who is with the

army, and who is become a general, or corporal, I do n't well know which, but something in *al*, at all events. If you desire to seek their hospitality"——

"Never! never!" cried the strange lady, who was seized with a nervous trembling from head to foot, "I should never be so bold!"

"As you think fit," replied the good woman; "but for all that, the Huberts are a worthy set of people. The father, for his part, still goes on tilling the land, just the same as if he had no castle at all; dame Hubert is become blind, and pretty Cicely has always refused to get married, because she would not leave her mother. Now it seems to my mind, that a person may, without shame, knock at the door of such like people. But, look! here comes Cicely herself, added the woman; and before the strange lady had had time even to guess what she meant to do, the country-woman cried out—

"Come hither, Cicely, here is a lady who was going to knock at the door of your old cottage, and who refuses to knock at the door of the castle."

On hearing the name of Cicely, a young peasant girl came running up; she was no longer the little delicate girl of 1790: Cicely had grown up; and, notwithstanding her peasant's garb, which she still wore, there was a certain dignity of manner, the result of her new education, which was observable in every movement. She advanced quietly towards the stranger, and with the polite and soothing tone of one who is anxious not to give offence by too officious an offer to oblige, she said,

"If you are fatigued, madam, the castle is close by?"

"Oh! my brother!" were the only words the lady could give utterance to.

"Is he near at hand? we will send for him," said Cicely.

"I left him unwell on the way, at an inn close to this," answered the fair unknown, struggling to overcome her feelings; "and I came on before with his child, who, since his mother's death, has always lived with me, to solicit shelter at this cottage."

"Do you not believe then, madam, that hospitality may be met with in a castle as well as in a cottage?"

Before the stranger could reply to this question, she was astonished by the appearance of her brother, supported by a young officer dressed in a splendid uniform, and coming towards them.

"Sister!" cried the officer, addressing Cicely, "hasten to the castle, order the best bed to be got in readiness; I have brought you a guest, who though he declines to tell his name, shall be equally welcome to our father's house."

"And so have I found a guest, or rather two guests," said Cicely, taking the little girl up on one arm, and presenting the other to the lady.

The two strangers had exchanged together a look of grief and affection; and, without speaking to each other, but with mutual assent, they followed their guide.

On their entrance to the castle, it was observed that tears were flowing abundantly from the eyes of the two strangers; and, when afterwards they were ushered into the grand drawing-room, they fell down on their knees, exclaiming:

"Father! father!"

"What voice do I hear!" cried Dame Hubert, "Giles, Cicely, who was it spoke?"

"Two unfortunate travellers, two strangers whom my sister and I met in the village," answered the young officer, stepping up to his mother.

"Travellers they may be, but strangers they are not, my son," replied the dame. "Alas! whoever you be who called upon your father, speak, and tell me, who are you?"

"Two unhappy travellers, as your son told you, madam," replied the fair stranger, in a tremulous voice.

"The marquis's daughter!" said the blind woman, rocking herself in her chair; "'t is the marquis's daughter! 't is Miss Angelica, and probably her brother! Do n't deny me," she added with emphasis, "the eye does deceive,

but the ear and the heart never do. My children, these are your masters who have come back."

"Well! so it is, Dame Hubert, it is I," said Angelica, springing forwards, and taking the old woman's hands in hers; "I, my brother Adrian, and his little girl. Alas! my father died on the field of battle in a foreign land, and

we were coming to Hubert's cottage, that same cottage which my brother and I once made mockery of, to beg for a refuge against want, for we are ruined, Dame Hubert, and have lost all."

"Who says that the children of the Marquis of Gentilly are ruined, and have lost all?" spoke the voice of honest Hubert, who had just before come in, with a spade thrown over his shoulder.

"Is not this castle sold?" asked Adrian.

"Yes," returned Hubert.

"Have you not bought it yourself?" inquired Angelica.

"Yes; but with whose money?" the farmer in his turn inquired.

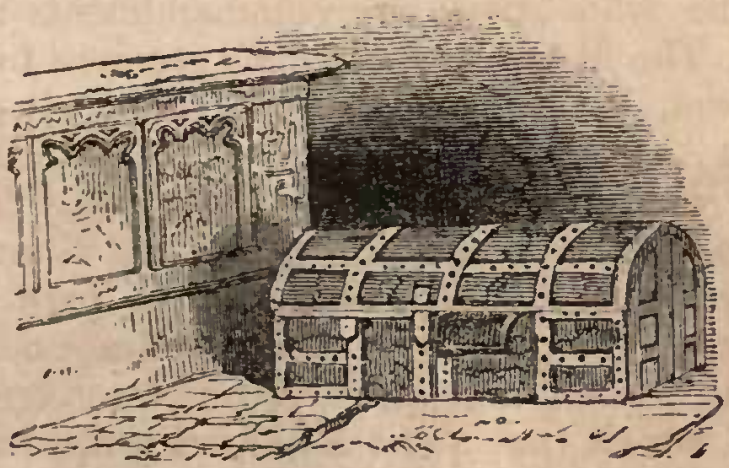
"With your own, of course," said Adrian.

"With yours," the peasant replied.

"How can that be?" cried the brother and sister in a breath.

"O just God!" exclaimed the farmer with pious reverence, "he who obeys thy commandments is always rewarded. The Marquis of Gentilly receives to-day through his children, the reward for his former benefits to me. Listen to me, then; listen too, wife and children, till I reveal to you a secret, which I should only have acknowledged on my death-bed. You must all of you remember, fifteen years ago, the meeting in the park between my children and those of the marquis; and not only the release of the debt I owed his lordship, but, moreover, the round little sum which that night Mr. Adrian handed over to me, in his sister's name and his own, to enable me to educate my children. Just at nightfall, my wife had the lucky thought to tell me that I could not go to bed and rest peaceably in it, until I had been to his lordship to thank him for his goodness; so I took up my hat and stick, and off I set. To shorten the way to the castle, I went towards the back of the park. I had a key in my pocket to let myself in by the little door; so in I got that way.

But I had not gone far along the dark gloomy walks, before I saw a faint light at a distance. It struck me there might be thieves; so I stole softly on to surprise them, see how many there were, and detect their present object. I moved forward as quietly as possible; but when I had come close to the light, lo! it was my lord the marquis, who was digging a hole. Just as I came up he flung a bag in, which as it fell, jingled like metal; then he covered it over again with earth, scattered some dry leaves at the top, and went away. It was a secret, therefore, that I had unwittingly discovered, and my duty bade me be silent. You can guess the remainder, marquis," said Hubert, turning to Adrian. "As soon as I found the castle was going to be sold, I dug up the money, and bought the estate. Since then, I have turned the land to good account. I am unable to read or write; but the money I have received, is locked up in your honoured father's chest; you



shall count it yourself. Your castle is in good order. I have but little in it belonging to me, and this I ask your permission to carry home to my cottage. So, my lord, this house is now yours; I shall return to my cottage. But, first, have the goodness to come with me, and I will settle accounts with you."

"Settle accounts! honest Hubert," repeated the mar-

quis, tears starting to his eyes, and pressing in his own white hands the bronzed and horny palms of the old farmer; "accounts, indeed! and why should you return to your cottage? Remain in the castle, honest Hubert; and if your pretty Cicely has not yet made choice of a husband, you shall be my father; and we will all live together as one family."

"You say as one family, noble marquis," said Giles bashfully "so if this young lady does not disdain a peasant risen to be a general?"

"Together as one family!" repeated Angelica smiling, and giving her hand to the young officer.

Not many days afterwards, the villagers of Gentilly were assembled together, to celebrate the marriages of the children of the marquis with the children of the farmer.

BEAN FLOWER AND PEA BLOSSOM.

THERE was, once upon a time, a poor man and his poor wife, who were very old indeed, and had no children;

now, this they were sorry for, because they felt that in a few years time they should no longer be able to cultivate

their beans, and carry them to market to sell. So one day when they were at work weeding their bean-field

(it was all the property they had, besides a little cottage, and I wish I could say I had as much); one day,

then, when they were digging up the weeds, which grew apace, the old woman espied in a snug little corner beneath the thickest tufts, a neat little bundle, very nicely packed, and which enclosed a very fine boy, who appeared by his looks to be eight or ten months old, but who was

as wise as other little boys are at two years old, for he

was weaned already. So wise then was he that he did

not refuse to eat boiled beans, which he would raise to his mouth in a very genteel manner.

When the old man heard his poor wife exclaim, he came running up from the other end of his field; and when he also had considered, in his turn, the beautiful child which God had sent them, the good old couple embraced each other, and wept with joy; after which they

hastened to return to the cottage, lest the evening dew, which had begun to fall, might hurt their foundling.

Now as soon as they had ensconced themselves snugly by the hearth only think — how great their surprise must have been! — for the little child held out his arms, and smiled most lovingly upon them, calling them *mama* and *papa*, as if he had never known any other parents.

Then the old man perched him upon his knee, and cantered him up and down like the young ladies we see on horseback, saying all the while some pretty things to amuse him; and which the child responded to in his own merry way, that he might take his part with the old man in so agreeable a conversation. All this while the old

woman was making a fine clear fire with dry bean-stalks, which lighted up the whole room; and this she did to comfort the little limbs of their new visitor by its genial

warmth, and to make him some nice bean pap with a spoonful of honey melted in it, which gave it a delicious taste.

By-and-by she put him to bed in his swaddling clothes made of fine linen, and which were very white and clean, choosing for his bed the nicest bean-stalks she could find at home, for these poor people did not know what it was to lie upon fine down or feather beds.

The child slept very snugly on this bed of stalks; and when he had gone to sleep, the old man said to the old woman, "There is one thing which puzzles me, and that is, what name we ought to bestow upon this beautiful boy, for we do n't know who are his parents, or where

he comes from." Now the old woman, who had a quick fancy though she was but a poor village crone, answered immediately, "Let us call him BEAN FLOWER! because it was in our bean-field that we found him, and because he is to be the delight and consolation of our declining years." The old man agreed that there could not be a fitter name.

I think it useless to tell you how he passed every day and every year, for that would make my story too long. Suffice it to say that the old people grew older every day, whilst little Bean Flower grew stronger and finer at the same time. Not that he became very tall, for he was only two feet and a half high at twelve; and whenever he worked in his bean-field, which he was very fond of, you could hardly have perceived him from the highroad: but he was so well shaped though small, his face and his manner were so becoming, he was so mild, and yet so firm in his language, he looked so bold in his sky-blue frock and red belt and his fine Sunday cap with a bean flower for a feather to it, that nobody could help admiring him, and many people thought he really must be the child of some fairy.

I must admit that there were many things which favoured the supposition of these simple people. In the first place, the cottage and its bean-field, on which a single cow would not have found wherewithal to graze a few years before, had become one of the richest domains in the country without any body knowing how. Nothing to be sure can be more common than to see bean-plants growing, blossoming, and ripening in their pod; but to behold a bean-field itself grow wider, without having

been extended by purchase, or by unjust encroachment on other people's ground, that indeed is a matter beyond the understanding even of the wisest.

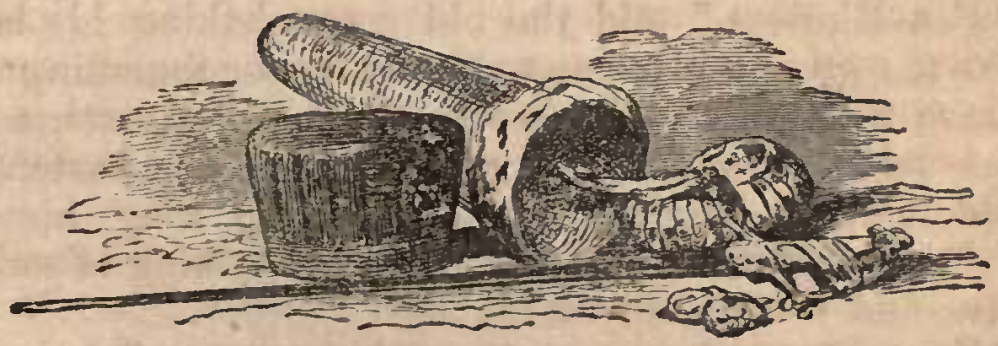
For all that this lucky bean-field kept growing and growing; it grew towards the north, it grew towards the south, it grew towards the east, it grew towards the west; and all in vain was it that the neighbours measured their grounds, for the measure was always right with an odd patch or two over, so that they began, very reasonably, to think that the whole country was increasing in size. On the other hand, the beans grew so thick, that the cottage never could have held the crop, had it not widened considerably; and, as one year the bean-fields had every where failed for a distance of five miles off, the value of

of our good people's crop was greatly increased, on account of the vast consumption of beans which took place at the tables of lords and kings.

In the midst of this plenty, Bean Flower did all the work himself, he turned the earth over, he picked out the seed, he smoothed the beds, he pulled up the weeds, he dug the ground, he raked, he reaped, he shelled; and besides all this, he kept the hedges and fences in good order, and then employed the rest of his time in receiving and dealing with the market people, for he could read, write, and cipher, though he had never been to school; he was indeed a blessing to these poor people.

Now it happened, one night when Bean Flower was asleep, the old man said to his wife, "Little Bean Flower has been very serviceable to us, since he has enabled us to pass away quietly, and without any toil, the few years we have still to live. Though we have bequeathed him

in our will the whole of this property, we have only restored him his own rights; and we shall prove ungrateful to the child, unless we manage to get him a more suitable lot in life than that of a bean-seller. Pity it is that he should be too modest to take his degree as doctor in a university, and a little bit too short to become a general."



"It is a pity," said the old woman, "that he has not studied enough to know the names of five or six diseases

in Latin, for then there would be nothing so easy as to have him dubbed a doctor."

"As for your law-suits," continued the old man, "I am afraid he has too much sense and judgment ever to make out one of them."

"I have always fancied," returned the old woman, "that he would marry Princess PEA BLOSSOM when he came of age."

"Pea Blossom," said the old man, shaking his head, "is far too great a princess to marry a poor foundling who will have nothing to call his own but a little cottage and a bean-field. Pea Blossom, my old girl, is a match for an alderman, a lord mayor, or even the king himself, if he should become a widower. We are talking of serious matters, and you are unreasonable."

"Bean Flower has more sense than we two," answered the old woman, after a little bit of reflection. "Besides, this business is not ours, but his, and it would be ungracious

to carry it further without consulting him." And thereupon the good old couple shut their eyes and fell asleep.

The day began to peep, when Master Bean Flower jumped out of bed, like a diligent boy, to run to the fields according to his custom. But, guess his astonishment, when he found his Sunday clothes on the box, where he had laid his old ones the night before.

"And yet it is a working day, if there be one, or else the calendar deceives me," said he, aside, "and my mother must intend to keep holiday without my knowing the reason, since she has got ready my fine frock and ornamental cap. But let it be as she wishes, for I should be sorry to cross her mood in any thing at her great age, and a few hours loss may easily be borrowed from the week, by getting up earlier, and going to bed later."

And then Master Bean Flower decked himself as smartly as he could; but first he knelt down and prayed to God for the health of his good old father and mother, and the success of his crop.

As he was preparing to go out, and look upon the

field before the old couple awoke, he met the old woman on the threshold, bearing in her hand a hot smoking porridge, which she placed on his little table along with a wooden spoon.

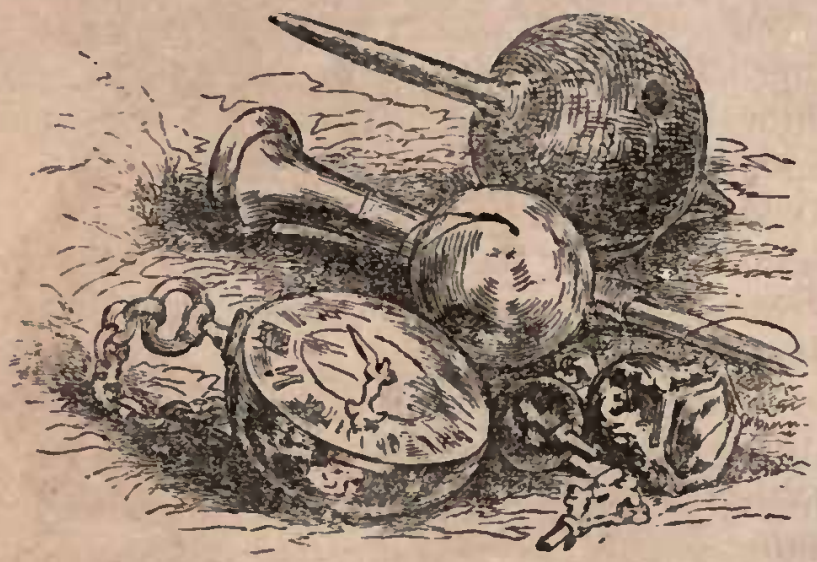
"Eat, eat," said she to him; "and do n't go out without first taking this nice sweetened porridge mixed with green aniseed, as you used to like it when a child; for you have a great, a very great way to go to-day my darling." "This is very kind of you," said Master Bean Flower, looking at her with surprise; "but whither do you send me?"

The old woman sat down upon a stool that was by the table, and rested her two hands upon her knee: "You are going in the world," answered she, smiling, "into the world, my pretty flower; you have never seen any but us, and two or three other poor hucksters to whom you sell your beans to provide for the house expenses, like a worthy lad as you are; and as you are destined some day to be a great man, if the price of beans should not decline, it is but proper, my darling, that you should try and form some respectable connexions. Now I must tell you, then, that there is a large town, about five miles off, in which at every step you go, you will meet with great lords in gold habits, and fine ladies in silver robes, with bunches of roses all about them. Your pretty looks, so affable and lively, cannot fail to strike them with admiration; and I am

much mistaken if the day closes before you have obtained some honourable appointment, in which you may gain a great deal of money without doing any work, either at court or in some public office. So eat, eat, my darling, and do n't go without partaking of this nice sugared porridge mixed with green aniseed. Now, as you know the value of beans better than you do that of money," continued the old woman, "you must sell these six quart measures of pickled beans at the market. I do n't give you more for fear of

burdening you, besides which, beans are so dear at the

present time that you could not bring home the price of them, even though it was all paid to you in gold. And, therefore, we have agreed, your father and I, that you should keep half the sum to spend in proper diversions suited to your age, or in the purchase of well-wrought jewels, to put on every Sunday, such as silver watches adorned with rubies or emeralds, an ivory cup and ball, and humming-top. The remainder of the money you can carry to the Savings Bank. Go then, my little flower, now that you have finished your porridge, and take care you are not benighted whilst running after the butterflies, for we should die with grief if you did not return before night. And mind you keep in the beaten track for fear of the wolves."



"You shall be obeyed, good mother," said Master Bean Flower, kissing the old woman, "although I should feel more pleasure if I spent the day in the field; as for the wolves, with my hoe I don't fear them."

So saying, he hung his hoe boldly to his belt, and set out at a steady pace.

"Return home early," cried the old woman after him, already beginning to regret she had let him depart.

Bean Flower walked on and on, taking terrible strides like a man five feet high, and looking about him here and there, at the new and strange things which he met on his way, for he had never conceived that the earth was so large and wonderful. However, when he had walked on for an hour, as he reckoned by the sun's height,

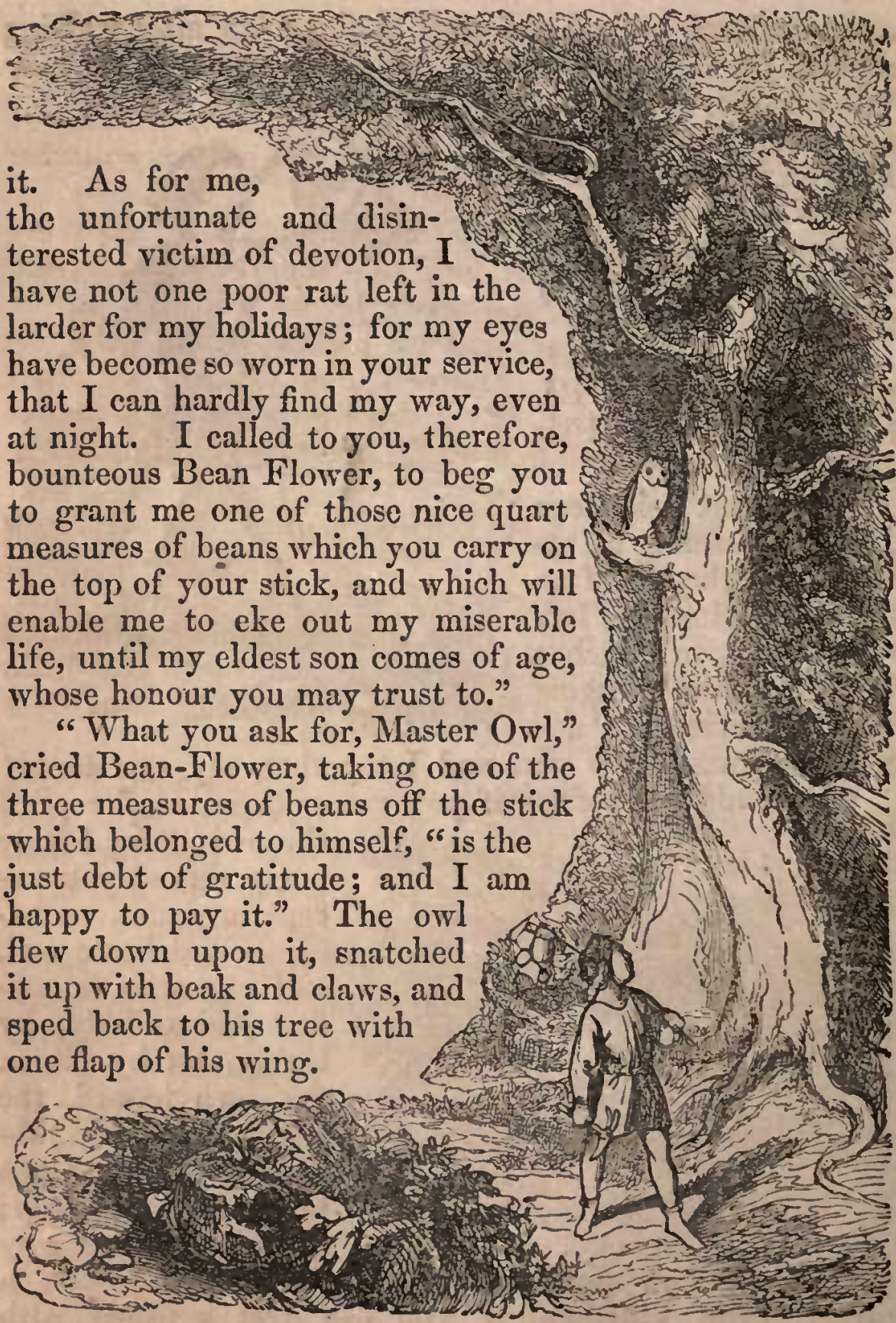
and wondered he had not reached the town after walking so fast, he thought he heard some one crying after him "Bo, bo, bo, bo, bo, bo, tee! stop, Master Bean Flower, if you please."

"Who calls me?" said Master Bean Flower, clapping his hand firmly to his hoe.

"Pray stop here, Master Bean Flower! Bo, bo, bo, bo, bo, bo, tee! 'tis I who speak to you."

"Is it true," said Bean Flower, directing his attention to the top of an old hollow pine tree, half decayed, upon which a large owl was swinging with the breeze; "and what business have you and I together, my fine bird?'

"It would be strange if you remembered me," replied the owl; "for I have never served you except in secret, as becomes a delicate owl, and one who is modest and orderly, by eating, bit by bit, at my own hazard, the nasty rats who nibbled every year one half of your crop; and that is why your field now produces you enough to buy you a pretty little kingdom, if you can rest satisfied with



it. As for me, the unfortunate and disinterested victim of devotion, I have not one poor rat left in the larder for my holidays; for my eyes have become so worn in your service, that I can hardly find my way, even at night. I called to you, therefore, bounteous Bean Flower, to beg you to grant me one of those nice quart measures of beans which you carry on the top of your stick, and which will enable me to eke out my miserable life, until my eldest son comes of age, whose honour you may trust to."

"What you ask for, Master Owl," cried Bean-Flower, taking one of the three measures of beans off the stick which belonged to himself, "is the just debt of gratitude; and I am happy to pay it." The owl flew down upon it, snatched it up with beak and claws, and sped back to his tree with one flap of his wing.

h! what a hurry you are in!" resumed Bean Flower. "May I inquire, Mister Owl, whether I am far from the city my mother has sent me to?"

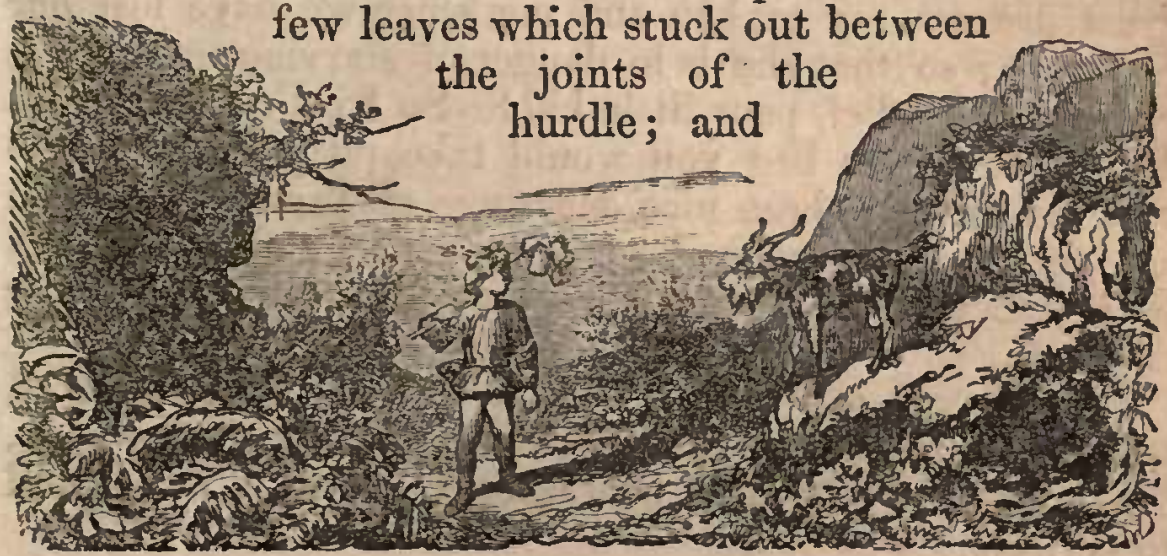
"You are just entering upon it, my friend," said the owl; and having said this, he flew away, and perched upon another tree.

Master Bean Flower went on his way again, with one measure the less for his burden, and almost sure that he was about to reach the great city; but he had not gone more than a hundred yards when he heard his name again.

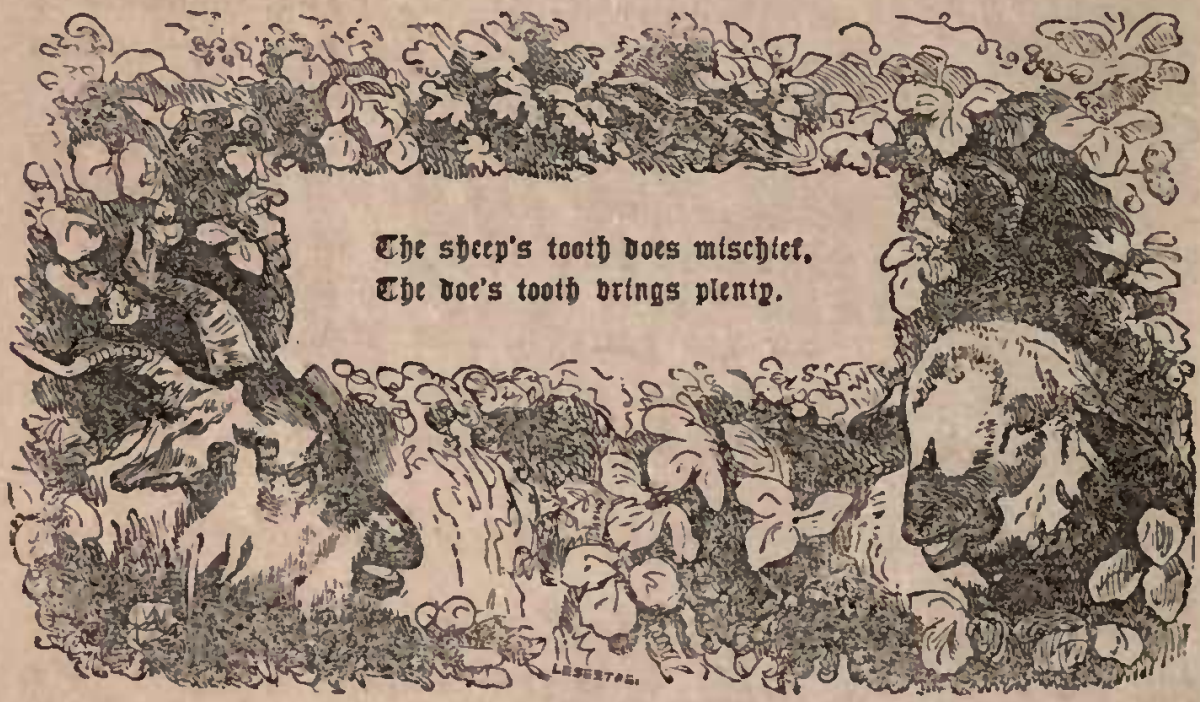
"Ba-a, ba-a, ba-a; bakkee! Stop here, Master Bean Flower, if you please."

"I think I know that voice," said Bean Flower, turning about. "Yes, truly, it is that impudent rogue of a mountain doe, which used always to roam with her little ones about my field to filch a good mouthful. So there you are, Mrs. Marauder?"

"Why do you speak of me, as a marauder, Pretty Flower? Ah, your hedges were too well cut, your ditches too deep, and your fences too close for that. All that one could do was to clip off the end of a few leaves which stuck out between the joints of the hurdle; and



when we prune, it is good for the plants, for what says proverb:—



"That is enough," said Bean Flower, "but tell me, why did you stop me, and what can I do for you, Mrs. Doe?"

"Alas!" answered she, shedding big tears; "ba-a, ba-a, bakkee. I wanted to tell you how a naughty wolf had eaten up my husband, the buck, and that we are in great distress, my orphan and me, since we have lost our protector; so that she is in danger of starving unless you come to her relief, poor little kid! So I called you, noble Bean Flower, to beg you would take pity on us, and to give us one of those nice measures of beans which you are carrying at the end of your stick, and which will be a sufficient supply until we receive succour from our relatives.

"What you ask of me, Mrs. Doe," cried Bean Flower, taking another of his own measures of beans off the stick, "is a deed of pity and benevolence which I am bound to perform."

The doe snapped up the measure with her lips, and with one bound vanished into the thicket.

"Oh! how you hurry away," exclaimed Bean Flower,

"may I inquire of you, my neighbour, whether I am still far from the city which my mother has sent me to?"

"You are in it already," cried the doe, plunging in among the brambles.

Then Bean Flower went on his way once more, relieved of two of his measures, and looking about for the walls of the town, when he perceived, by a slight noise which came from the skirts of the wood, that he was closely pursued. He advanced quickly to the spot with his hoe in his hand, and it was well he did so, for the party who

followed him so slily and stealthily, was neither more nor less than an old wolf, whose countenance was not very prepossessing, I assure you.

"So it was you, malignant beast," said Bean Flower,

'who destined me the honour of figuring at your supper table! Luckily my weapon has two prongs as sharp as all your teeth put together, without prejudice to them; and take my word for it, good fellow, you shall sup to-night without me; and do n't be too sure that I shall not revenge upon your ugly person the killing of the doe's husband, who was the father of the kid, and whose family your cruelty has reduced to the lowest brink of wretchedness. I ought perhaps to do so, and it would only be an act of justice, had I not been brought up to shudder at the sight of blood, so as even to spare a treacherous wolf.

The wolf, who so far had listened very humbly, suddenly heaved a long and plaintive cry, and raised his eyes as if to call heaven to witness.

"Oh, divine powers! who gave me the form and honours of the wolf," said he, with many sobs, "you know my heart never admitted evil thoughts. You are still at liberty, my lord," he continued, inclining his head respectfully towards Bean Flower, "to take my wretched

life, which I deliver to your clemency without either fear or remorse. I shall die without repining at your sentence, if you think fit to sacrifice me, by way of expiation, to the manifest crimes of my brethren of the wolfish tribe; for I have ever most tenderly loved you, and greatly honoured you, since the day when I used to hang over your cradle with true delight, and fondle you, whilst your respected mother was away. You were even then so comely and so stately, that it was easy to tell, by your very looks, that you were fated to become the noble and powerful prince that you are. All I ask of you, before you pass sentence upon me, is to believe that I am guiltless of steeping my paws in the blood of the un-

fortunate husband of the doe. Brought up and educated according to the strictest principles of temperance and

self-denial, from which I have never swerved throughout my whole career as a wolf, I was absent at that time, diffusing the sound doctrines of morality among the lupine tribes, which belong to my community; hoping to bring them gradually, by precept and example, to the practice of frugality, which is the grand object of wolfish perfection. That is not all, my lord: the husband of the doe was my friend; he was endeared to me by many good qualities and kindly feelings, and we often travelled together and conversed, on account of his native wit and good taste. A melancholy contest for precedence (you know how punctilious the bucks have ever been on this point) was the occasion of his death whilst I was abroad; and I shall never cease to bewail his loss." And thereupon the wolf began to weep, and the tears seemed to issue from his very heart, as if the doe herself had shed them.

"For all that you were following me," said Bean Flower, still keeping his two-pronged weapon wide open.

"Twice, my lord," answered the wolf, with a soothing voice, "I did follow you, because I hoped to engage your interest in my benevolent and charitable purposes, but in some place better suited to conversation than this is. Alas! said I to myself, if my Lord Bean Flower, whose reputation is so high and so widely spread, would only contribute his share to my plan of reform, he would have a fine opportunity to-day; I will answer for it that the expense shall not exceed one of those nice measures of beans which he carries on the top of his stick, to provide

with dainties a whole ordinary of wolves, she-wolves, and their cubs, used to a vegetable diet, and to preserve a countless generation of bucks, does, and kids."

"It is the last of my own measures," thought Bean Flower; "but what need have I of watches, cups and balls, and tops? and what comparison is there between a childish amusement and a good action? There is your measure of

beans," said he, taking off his stick the last of the measures which his mother had given him for his pocket money. "It is the last of my fortune," he added; "but I do not regret it, and I shall be grateful, friend wolf, if you make so good a use of it as you promised."

The wolf stuck his teeth into it, and carried it off like a shot to his den.

"Oh! how you hurry away," exclaimed Bean Flower; "may I inquire of you, Mr. Wolf, if I am still far from the world my mother has sent me to?"

"You have been in it some time," replied the wolf, laughing aside; "and if you stop in it for a thousand years,

you will see nothing else in it but what you have seen already." Bean Flower went on his way again, relieved of his three measures, and looking about for the walls of the town, which never appeared. He began to feel tired and weary, when his attention was roused by cries of distress proceeding from a small by-path. He ran towards the spot. "What's the matter?" said he, raising his weapon; "who calls for help? Speak, for I see nothing."

"It is I, good Bean Flower; I, PEA BLOSSOM," answered a low, soft voice, "who beg you to deliver me from my present embarrassment; if you only have the will, it will not give you much trouble."

"Let me assure you, madam, I am not accustomed to mind what it costs me to oblige a person. You may dispose of all my fortune and patrimony," continued he,

"save and except the three measures of beans which I carry on the top of my stick; because they do not belong to me, but to my father and mother, and because I have just now given those which were mine to a venerable owl, a very godly wolf, who preaches like a hermit, and to the most interesting of mountain does. I have not got a single bean left to offer you."

"You are jesting," replied Pea Blossom, somewhat piqued. "Who talks of beans, my lord? I don't want your beans, forsooth; and in my buttery we don't know such a thing. The service I ask of you, is to put your finger on the handle of my carriage, and throw back the top, beneath which I am almost smothered."

"I should be happy to oblige you, madam," cried Bean Flower, "if I could see your carriage; but there is no sign of any carriage in this path, which does not look like a place fit for carriages to drive in. However, I shall not be long before I find it, for I can hear that you are very close to me."

"What!" said she, laughing aloud, "can't you see my carriage; you well nigh crushed it, like a careless fellow! There it is, right before you, kind Mr. Bean Flower; and it is easy to distinguish it by its elegant appearance, which slightly resembles a small pea."

"It resembles a small pea so closely," thought Bean Flower, stooping, "that I would have laid my life it was nothing else but a small pea."

A single glance was enough to show Bean Flower that it was a very large pea, as round as an orange, and as

yellow as a lemon, supported by four golden wheels, and furnished with a small portmanteau made of a small peas-cod, as green and bright as morocco leather. He hastened to touch the handle, and the door flew open. Pea Blossom emerged, and alighted gaily on her feet. Bean Flower arose in astonishment, for he had never conceived any thing so lovely as Pea Blossom; she had, indeed, the most perfect face that a painter could invent: her eyes as long and oval as almonds, as blue as violets, as piercing as daggers; and a fine laughing mouth, which, when it half opened, allowed you to see

a set of teeth as white as alabaster, and of the brightest enamel. Her short robe, which was slightly puffed out,

and streaked with rosy flakes, like the blossom on the sweet peas, hardly reached lower than her knees. Her legs were formed in perfection, and encased in smart silk stockings as tightly drawn as if a capstan had been used, and below which were two small feet, so delicately shaped that any one might wish to be the maker of her shoes, only to have the privilege of trying them on.

"What are you staring at?" said Pea Blossom, an evident proof that Bean Flower did not look very sprightly at that moment. Bean Flower blushed, but soon recovered himself.

"I was wondering how it could be," he replied, modestly, "that a princess so beautiful, who is about my own size, could be shut up in that pea."

"You underrate my carriage out of reason, Bean Flower," returned Pea Blossom; "it is very comfortable to travel in when open; and it is only by chance that I

have not got with me my chief equerry, my almoner, my steward, my secretary, and two or three of my ladies in waiting. I am fond of driving out alone; and this whim was the cause of the accident which happened to me. I

do n't know whether you have ever been in company with the King of the Crickets, whom you may easily know by his shining black mask, like Harlequin's, with stiff straight horns, and by his harsh-toned voice. The King of the Crickets did me the honour to love me; he knew that my minority would terminate this day, and that it is the custom for the princesses of our house to choose a husband when they are ten years old. So he threw himself in my way, according to etiquette, to pester me with the horrid din of his jangling declarations; and I answered him, as I always do, by stopping my ears."

"O joyful news!" said Bean Flower, delighted, "you will not marry the King of the Crickets?"

"I will not marry him," answered Pea Blossom, with dignity. "My choice was already made. But I had no sooner signified to him my refusal, than the odious Cricket sprang upon my carriage, as if he would swallow it, and threw down the top. 'Now go and get married,' said he to me, 'you conceited little minx! get married if you can, and see whether any husband will come to you in this state! As for me, I care no more for you and your kingdom than I do for a pea!'"

"Do but tell me in what hole the King of the Crickets has hid himself!" exclaimed Bean Flower, in a rage. "I will soon dig him up with my weeding-fork, and will bring him to you, princess, bound hands and feet, to await your decree. I can feel, however, for his despair," added he, dropping his head sorrowfully. "But do n't you think I ought to accompany you to your capital to protect you from his pursuit."

"That would indeed be necessary," generous Bean Flower, "were I far from the frontier of my kingdom. But, lo, there is a field of sweet peas, all of them faithful subjects to me, and which no enemy dare approach." So speaking, she struck the earth with her foot, and hung suspended by her two arms to two bending stalks which

bowed beneath her, and then rose up, sprinkling their sweet leaves over her hair. Whilst Bean Flower stood looking at her with pleasure, as I should have done had I been in his place, she transfixed him with piercing glances from her eyes, and spell bound him with her smile, to such a degree, that he could have died from the joy of beholding her, and would have perhaps stood there till now if she had let him.

"I have detained you too long," said she to him, "for I know that the bean-trade is very busy in these times; but my carriage, or rather your own, will soon enable you to recover your lost time. Do not offend me, I entreat you, by refusing so trifling a present. I have millions of such carriages in the granaries of my palace; and when I wish for a new one, I pick it from out a handful, and fling the rest to the mice."

"The smallest favour from your highness would be the pride and glory of my life," replied Bean Flower; "but you do not perceive I am yet laden with these beans.

Now I can readily conceive however full my measures may be, that there would still be plenty of room in any one of them for your carriage; but to put my measures into your carriage, that would be impossible."

"Try it," said Pea Blossom, laughing, and joyfully swinging to and fro upon the cluster of sweet peas; "try it, and do not wonder at every thing like a child who has seen nothing at all." In truth, Bean Flower had no difficulty in stowing his three measures in the boot of the carriage, which might have held thirty of them, and upwards. At this he was rather mortified.

"I am ready to go, madam," rejoined he, seating himself upon a well-stuffed cushion, the fulness of which allowed him to place himself at his ease, in any posture, even to stretch himself out at full length upon it, if he liked. "It is my duty to my kind parents not to leave them in suspense the first time I am absent from them; and I now only wait for your coachman, who, I suppose, fled in terror at the gross insult of the King of the Crickets, carrying off the horses and the shafts along with him. I shall then leave this happy spot, with the everlasting regret of having seen you once without hoping to see you again."

"Good!" replied Pea Blossom, without noticing the latter part of Bean Flower's speech, which was so very pointed; "good! my carriage has neither coachman, nor shafts, nor horses: it is propelled by steam, and it goes fifty thousand leagues an hour. Now, let me ask you whether you still fear getting back in your own good time. You have nothing to do but to remember the word and action I shall use to set it a-going. In the portmanteau you will find various articles which may be useful on your journey; and they are all yours, without reserve. If you open it as you would a shell of green peas, you will find it contains three jewel boxes, of the same shape and size as a pea, each suspended to a fine thread, which sustains them in their case like three peas in a pod, so that they are in

no danger of knocking against each other and being damaged during a journey. It is a fine piece of workmanship: they will yield to the pressure of your finger, like the spring of my carriage, and you will only have to sow the contents in a hole in the ground, made with the point of your weeding hook, and immediately whatever you wish to have shall shoot up, sprout, and come forth. Is not that a miracle, eh? Only remember, that when the third shall be used, I have nothing left to offer you; for I have only three green peas, as you had but three measures of beans; and the best girl in the world can only bestow what belongs to her. Are you ready to begin your journey?"

Bean Flower having made a sign of assent, for he had lost all power of speech, Pea Blossom clapped her right hand thumb against her middle finger, crying out at the same time, "Go then, little pea!" And the little pea was upwards of fifteen hundred yards from the scented field of Pea Blossom before Bean Flower thought he had left her, and he looked for her in vain. "Alas!" cried he.

Indeed it would be no praise to the rapid progress of the little pea, to say it advanced with the speed of a musket ball. Woods, towns, hills, and seas, vanished far more rapidly on its course, than the Chinese shadows of Seraphim before the wand of the famous magician Sotomago.

The most remote horizon had hardly become visible before it sprang to meet the little pea, and was in a moment after out of sight behind Bean Flower. When he turned his head, it was gone. Finally, he had several times outstripped the sun; several times come back to it, and passed it again, with constant changes of night and day, when Master Bean Flower began to suspect that he

had left behind him the town he was going to, and the market to which he was carrying his beans.

"The springs of this carriage are rather brisk," he suddenly thought within himself; for my little readers have not forgotten that he was endowed with a very keen understanding. "It started off at random, before Miss Pea Blossom had done telling me where I was to go; and I see no reason for it stopping throughout the course of ages upon ages; for that lovely princess, who is as giddy as she is young, told me indeed how to set the vehicle in motion, but not how to stop it." And Bean Flower had tried to no purpose every epithet he had ever heard uttered by the carriers and mule drivers. The plague of a carriage went on faster and faster; and while he raked up his memory to change and diversify his exclamations, the carriage sped through every latitude, and in little time rode over ten kingdoms.

"Plague take thee, thou vixen of a carriage!" exclaimed Bean Flower, and the carriage rattled onwards from the tropics to the poles, from the poles to the tropics, and through every circle in the sphere, without any regard to the noxious changes of temperature. It was enough to roast him or to freeze him had it lasted; but Bean Flower, as we have often repeated, was blessed with an admirable intelligence. "Nay," said he to himself, "since Pea Blossom has hurled her carriage through the world by merely saying, 'Go then, little pea!' perhaps one may stop it by saying the contrary." This reasoning was very logical.

"Stop then, little pea!" cried Bean Flower, clapping his right hand thumb against his middle finger, as he had observed Pea Blossom to do.

I doubt whether a learned academy would have argued more cleverly. The little pea stopped so suddenly that you could not have stopped it better if you had nailed it to the ground. It did not stir. Bean Flower alighted from

his carriage, picked it up carefully, and let it slip into a leathern pouch, which he carried in his belt to put in the samples of his beans. But first he took off the portmanteau. The spot at which Bean Flower's carriage had thus fixed itself at his command, has not been described by travellers. Bruce marks it at the sources of the Nile, Monsieur Douville at Congou, and Monsieur Caille at Timbuctoo. It was an interminable plain, so dry, so rocky, and so wild, that there was not a single bush to lie under, no moss of the desert to lay one's head upon, not a berry to satisfy hunger, or a drop of water to slake one's thirst; still Bean Flower was not alarmed. He ripped up his portmanteau very neatly with his nail, and took out one of the three small jewel boxes which Pea Blossom had described to him. Then he opened it as he had opened

the carriage, and sowed its contents in the ground with the point of his weeding-hook. "Let what will happen of this," said he, "I sadly want a tent to cover me to-night,

were it only made of a pea plant in blossom; a slight repast to nourish me, were it only a pea soup; and a bed to lie upon, were it only the feathers of a humming bird: for I cannot return to my parents to-day, I am too much pressed by hunger, and overcome with weariness."

The words had scarcely passed through his lips, before he saw arise out of the sands a superb tent or pavilion, having the shape of the pea plant, which arose, and grew up, and expanded around, and leaned here and there on ten golden props, scattering about in all directions a graceful tapestry of foliage, enameled with pea blossoms, and rounded into numerous arcades, from each of which hung suspended from the centre of the arch, a rich crystal lustre filled with scented wax lights. The back of every arcade was adorned with a Venetian mirror of enormous size, which reflected such a stream of light as would have dazzled the eye of an eagle accustomed even to the noon-day sun.

Beneath the feet of Bean Flower, a pea leaf had fallen accidentally from the roof; it extended into a magnificent carpet, decorated with all the colours of the rainbow. Moreover, this carpet was covered with tables of ebony and sandal wood, which groaned beneath the weight of pastry and confectionery; or that of iced fruits flavoured with choice cordials; whilst in a large gilt china cup was the very pea soup Bean Flower had wished for.

Amidst this display, he could also distinguish his bed, that is to say, the humming bird's feather which he had so much desired, and which was twinkling in a corner, like a carbuncle fallen from the crown of the Great Mogul; and yet it was so tiny a little bed, you might have hid it beneath a grain of corn. Bean Flower thought at first that this couch did not match very well with the other conveniences in the tent; but, as he continued to look at the humming bird's feather, it began to increase in size so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fast, that it soon became many humming birds' feathers one hand in depth; it seemed to be a couch of sparkling gems, which would have bent under the pressure of a butterfly had it alighted upon them.

"Enough, enough," said Bean Flower, "enough of your humming birds' feathers; I shall sleep too well as it is."

That our young traveller did honour to his banquet, and that he lost no time in seeking repose, my young

readers will not require me to tell them. Love did run a little in his head; but at twelve years old love seldom prevents sleep, and Pea Blossom, whom he had scarcely seen, had only left in his mind the image of a delightful vision, which nought but sleep could restore to his fancy. That was another reason why he should sleep. Be that as it may, Bean Flower was too prudent to give way to this vain and idle joy before he had examined the outside of his pavilion, the pomp and magnificence of which was more than enough to draw to it all

the thieves round about; and such people abound in every country under the sun. So he went out of the magic circle with his weeding hook in his hand, and marched round his tent, to make sure of the good state of his encampment.

As soon as he had reached the furthest frontier (this was a small ravine formed by the running waters, and over which a kid might have skipped), Bean Flower stood still, chilled with that shudder which is peculiar to men of spirit; for even the truest courage has its share in that terror which is common to our frail humanity, and only summons its strength after reflection. And, upon my word, there was a sight for any man to reflect upon.

It was a line of battle, in which amid the darkness of a starlight night, there was glistening at him two hundred fixed and flaming eyes, whilst in their front were perpetually running from right to left, and then from left to right, two eyes so sharp and oblique, that they showed by their expression they belonged to a very active general.

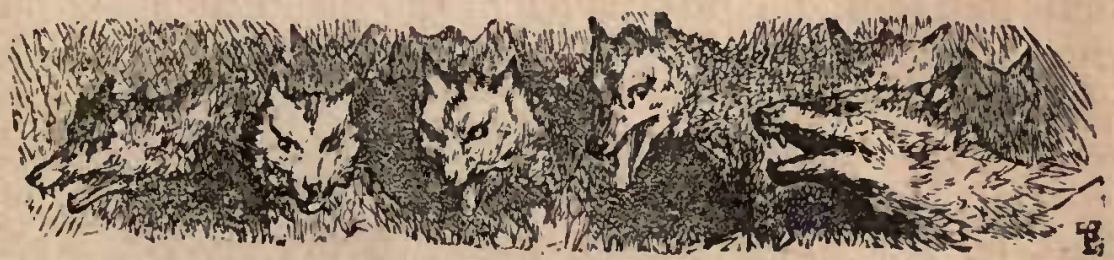
Bean Flower knew nothing of Lavater, Gall, or Spurzheim; he did not belong to the Phrenological Society; but he had the plain natural instinct which teaches all created beings to distinguish the countenance of an enemy; and almost at the first glance he bestowed upon the commander-in-chief of that hungry herd of wolves, he recognized in him the cowardly coaxing wolf who had so craftily swindled him, by pretending to be a philosopher and moralist, out of his last measure of beans.

"Mr. Wolf" said Bean Flower, "has lost no time in

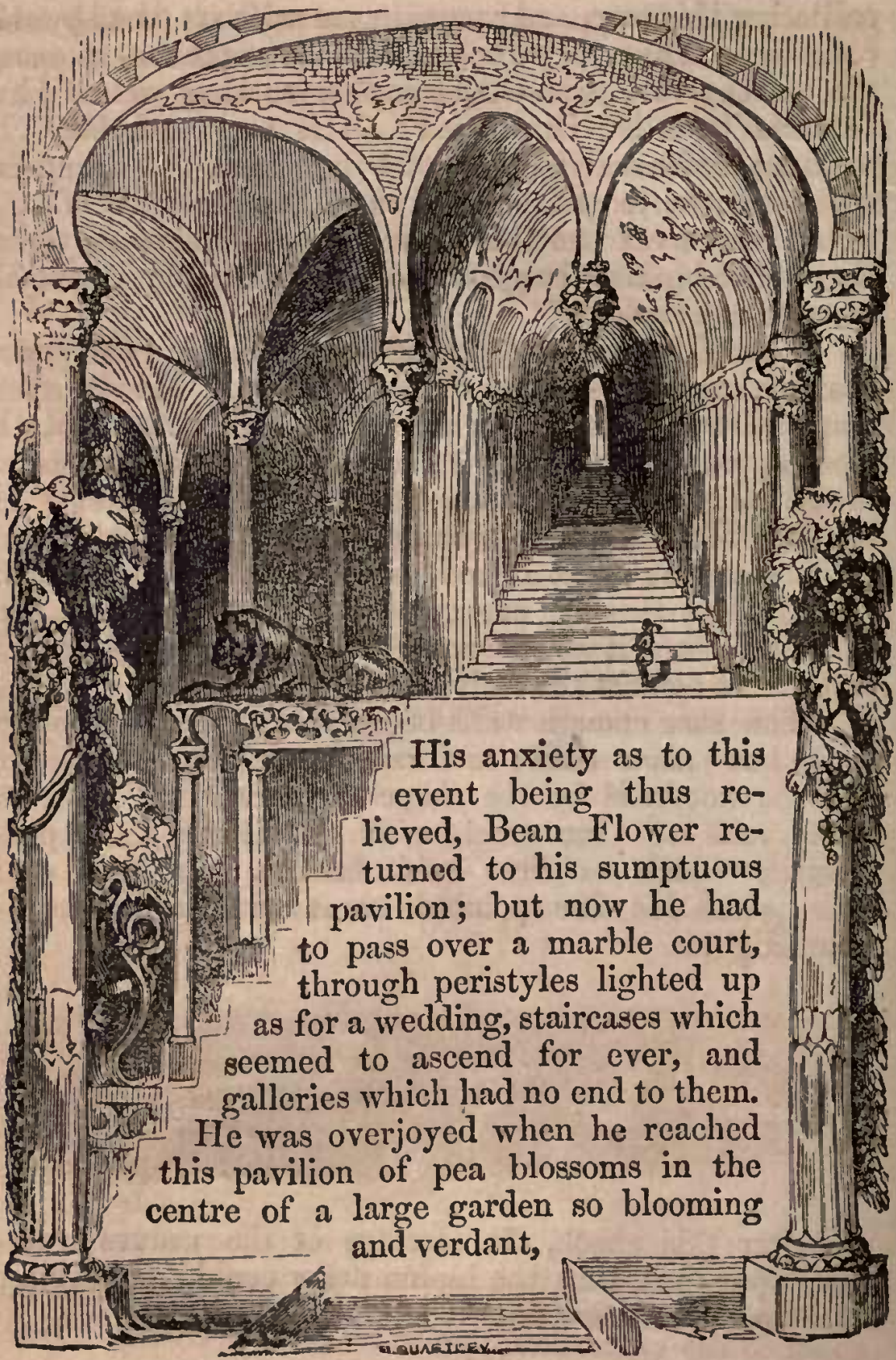
collecting his troop, and pursuing me with it; but by what contrivance have they been able to overtake me, so many too as they are, unless the good-for-nothing wolves have likewise travelled in a pea? It is very probable," he continued with a sigh, "that the mysteries of science are not unknown to the wicked; and now I think of it, I would not swear but they have invented these mysteries in order to initiate the good people in their own detestable schemes and designs."

Bean Flower was slow and steady in his enterprizes, but prompt and sudden in his resolves. He therefore snatched the portmanteau out of his pouch, took out the second pea, opened it as he had opened the first pea, and sowed its contents in the earth with the point of his weeding fork. "Come what come may" said he, "but I sadly want this night a good strong wall, even were it no thicker than that of our cottage at home; and a very close rail, were it no stronger than that of my fences, to protect me against the wolves."

Then sure enough walls began to rise up: not cottage walls, but palace walls: and rails sprang up before every portico; not rails in the shape of fences, but high and lordly rails of blue steel, with gilt shafts and points, through which neither wolf, badger, nor fox, could have poked his fine pointed snout without hurting or wounding it.



After this check, the strategy of the wolves was so hardly put to it, that the lupine army could do nothing at all. So after a few feints it retired in disorder.

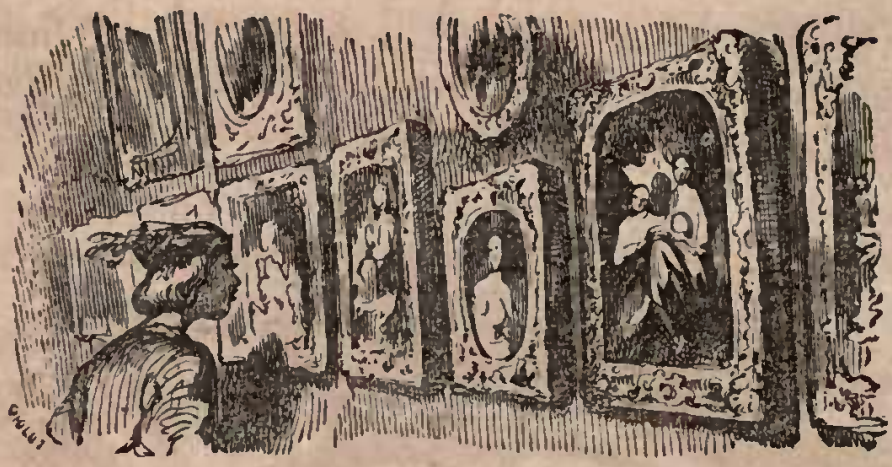


His anxiety as to this event being thus relieved, Bean Flower returned to his sumptuous pavilion; but now he had to pass over a marble court, through peristyles lighted up as for a wedding, staircases which seemed to ascend for ever, and galleries which had no end to them. He was overjoyed when he reached this pavilion of pea blossoms in the centre of a large garden so blooming and verdant,

that he hardly knew it again, and his bed of humming birds' feathers, on which, in presuming he slept as happy as a king, let nobody say that I exceed the truth.

The first thing he did the next day, was to explore the magnificent abode that he had found in a little pea, in which every object, however trifling, was so beautiful

as perfectly to amaze him, for the furniture was quite equal to the external appearance of the pavilion. He in-



spected his picture gallery, his cabinet of antiquities, his

collection of medals, his insects, his shells, and his library,

all of which were still to him wonders both new and charming. His books especially delighted him on account

of the delicate taste which had governed their choice. The finest works in literature, the most useful in science, were collected in that library for the entertainment and instruction of a long life,—as the adventures of the ingenious Don Quixote de la Mancha, and Fairy Tales of every description, filled with beautiful engravings; a

collection of curious and amusing Voyages and Travels, the most authentic of which are those of Gulliver and Robinson Crusoe; some excellent Almanacks; full of amusing anecdotes and faultless information, as to the moon, tides, and the best seasons for planting and sowing; innumerable treatises, written in the clearest and most simple style, on Agriculture, Horticulture, Fishing, both with the rod and the net, and the art of taming nightingales; in a word, whatever can be desired when a man has learned the value of books and the spirit of their authors. There were no learned writers but these, no other philosophers, no other poets; for this incontrovertible reason, that all learning, all philosophy, all poetry, are locked up in them and nowhere else: I give you my word for it.

Whilst he thus proceeded to take the inventory of his wealth, Bean Flower was struck by the reflection of his image in one of the looking-glasses with which every saloon was adorned. Unless the looking-glass was a story-teller, he must have grown, oh, wonder! upwards of three

inches since the day before; and the dark mustachoes which shaded his upper lip clearly manifested that he was beginning to pass from robust boyhood to manly

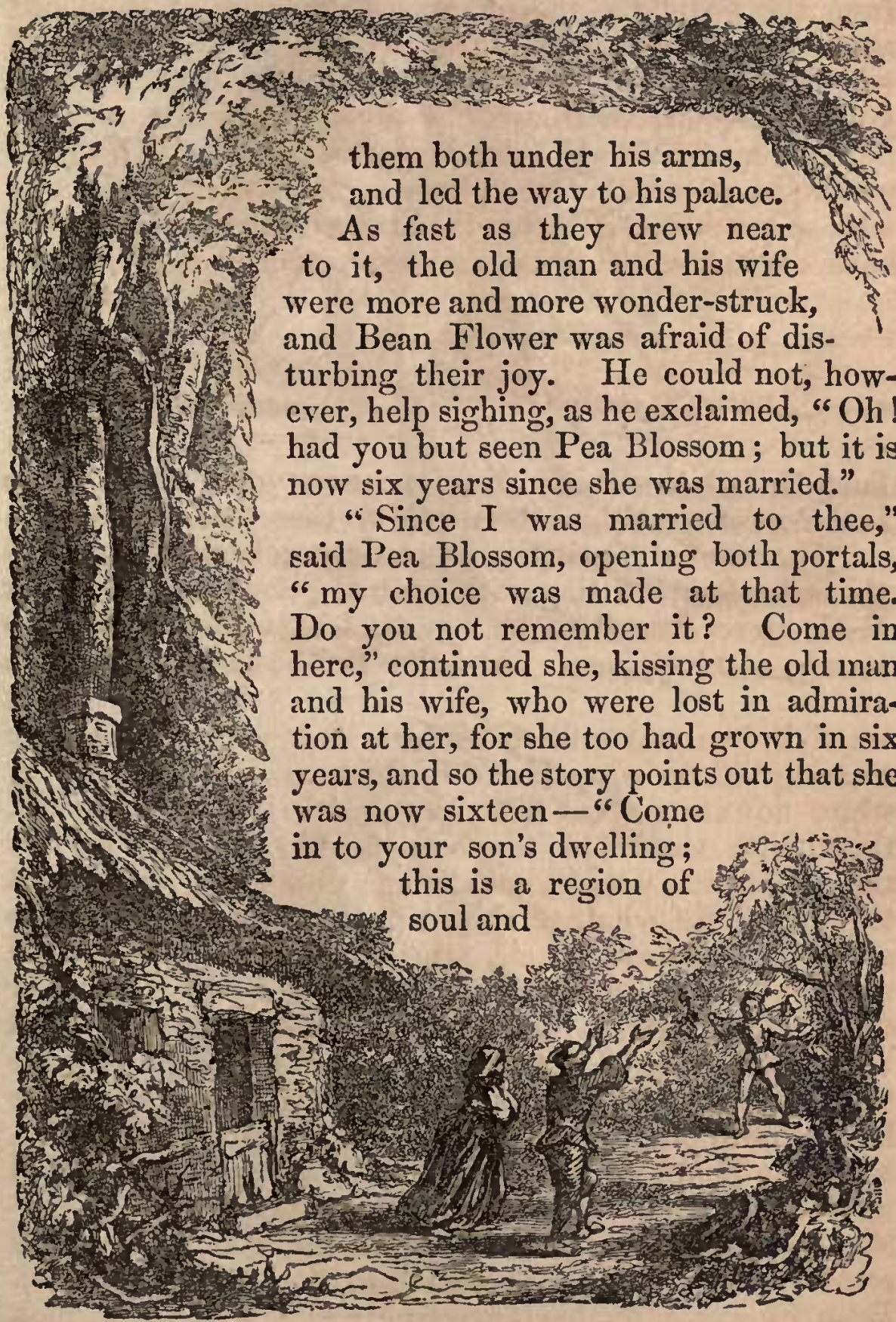
youth. He was a good deal mystified by this phenomenon, and was still wondering at it, when a rich clock, fixed between two pier-glasses, cleared up his doubt to his great grief; for by one of the needles which marked the date of the years, Bean Flower too truly saw that he had really become six years older than he was. "Six years!" he exclaimed; "wretch that I am, my poor parents must have died of old age, or perhaps of want by this time! Alas! perhaps, they died of grief at losing me, and what must they have thought, in their last moments, of my cruel desertion, or my pitiable distress? I now understand, wicked carriage, how you go so far and so fast, for your minutes devour and consume many days at once! Go then, go then, little pea!" he added, drawing the little

pea from his pouch, and darting it through the window. "Go then, detestable little pea, so far that one may never see you again!" And truly I believe no other little pea has since been seen shaped like a post-chaise, and going at the rate of fifty thousand leagues an hour.

Bean Flower came down the marble steps much sadder than he had ever felt when coming down the ladder from his bean-loft. He left the palace without once looking at it; and walked on through those wild and desert plains, without minding whether the wolves had not pitched their tents there to threaten him with a blockade. He mused as he went along, beat his forehead from time to time with his hand, and sometimes even wept with grief.

"What can I hope for any more, now that both my parents are dead?" said he, turning his portmanteau listlessly between his fingers,—"now that Pea Blossom has been married six years? for the day I saw her she had completed her tenth year; and that is the age at which the princesses of her house are married! Besides her choice was made. What is all the world to me? my world being limited to a cottage and a bean-field, which you will never restore to me, little green pea," he added, taking it

from the pod, "for the happy, happy hours of childhood never return. Go then, little green pea, go where God will carry you, and do what you are to do to the glory of your mistress, since I have lost my aged parents, my cottage, my bean-field,and the lovely Pea Blossom! Go, little green pea, go whither you please." So saying, he threw it with so much strength, that the little green pea might easily have overtaken the flying carriage pea, had that been its wish. And then Bean Flower fell on the ground with grief and oppression. When he rose again the face of the whole plain had altogether changed. It had become, as far as the eye could see, a vast sea of brown and smiling verdure, over which rolled, like weaving billows when kissed by the breeze, the most lovely white flowers, a boat-like shape, with butterfly's wings, tinted with violet like the bean flower, or with rose like the pea blossom; and when all their undulating brows bent together to the wind, all these tints were commingled into a new and unknown colour, a thousand times more beautiful than that of the loveliest flower garden. Bean Flower sprang forward, for he had seen every thing again; his field which was enlarged, his cottage which was improved, his father and his mother who were still living, and who were hastening to meet him, with all the speed of their old limbs, to inform him, that since the day of his departure they had received tidings of him every night, besides many kind presents, which soothed their existence, and good hopes of his return, which had prevented them from dying of grief. Bean Flower, after having tenderly embraced them, took



them both under his arms, and led the way to his palace. As fast as they drew near to it, the old man and his wife were more and more wonder-struck, and Bean Flower was afraid of disturbing their joy. He could not, however, help sighing, as he exclaimed, "Oh! had you but seen Pea Blossom; but it is now six years since she was married."

"Since I was married to thee," said Pea Blossom, opening both portals, "my choice was made at that time. Do you not remember it? Come in here," continued she, kissing the old man and his wife, who were lost in admiration at her, for she too had grown in six years, and so the story points out that she was now sixteen—"Come in to your son's dwelling; this is a region of soul and

fancy in which nobody dies, and none grow older." No better news could have been told to those poor people.

The nuptial festivities were duly celebrated with all the splendour befitting such exalted personages, and their abode never ceased to be a perfect example of love, constancy, and happiness. And thus finishes a fairy tale.

THE IDIOT AND HIS BIRDS.

"I CERTAINLY shall not leave these mountains," said I to the landlady, when we had reached the threshold of the inn-door; "I shall not leave these mountains," I repeated, "until I have seen that worthy Mr. Dubourg you speak of. He was one of my father's most cherished friends. It is now only seven o'clock, and nine miles in such fine weather as we have this morning are soon walked. I can very well, too, spare one day from my business. He would be hurt if I did not take dinner with him on my way. Do n't you think he would?"

"To be sure he would," answered the dame, "he would never forgive you for it, since he sends here every week to know when you are coming."

"Nor should I forgive myself, if I were to let slip an opportunity of testing whether my former prophecies were good for any thing. I foretold five years ago that his daughter Rosalie, who was then twelve, would become one of the finest girls in the country; and fain would I now see if the dark blue-eyed lass has made me out a false prophet."

"Take my word for it she has not," cried Dame Gaulther. "You might go as far as Besançon, nay even to Strasburg

(this was the good dame's antipodes), and not meet such another; and then, so well bred too, and as good as a saint; but take care of yourself, and don't return here in despair, as you used to do erewhile. Handsome as you are, you might for once lose your time and sigh to no purpose, for there has been a rumour, these two months, that she is going to be married."

"Lor, now! Mrs. Gaulther, do you still take me for a fond youth? I, who am turned twenty four, and have both a settled fortune and a solid establishment? Do you think that a lawyer in good practice is as soft hearted as a hungry barrister without a brief to occupy him, or an attorney's clerk? Cheer up, worthy dame, and just show me the way to Mr. Dubourg's seat, for I did not know before that his country house was so near."

"You will find your way easily enough for the first half of the road," returned she. "You must keep the narrow path that runs through the meadows, by yonder streamlet bordered with willows; but as soon as you get to the hillock at the end of the vale, you must turn aside; you will then see a wood before you, which, when you have crossed, you will catch the first view of the castle. Now as this wood

is only frequented by the woodmen, who, in their journeys to and fro, have formed several cross-ways, I have been told that the country people hereabouts sometimes go astray in it; but there are plenty of cottages and huts on the skirts of the wood, and you will easily obtain a guide."

Much edified by these useful instructions, I waved my hand to the landlady, and set out; and went along musing and spouting fine passages for the first act of a new tragedy, with that delightful absence of mind which none but poets can appreciate. Thus, after one hour's walk I had strayed far enough from the little path that ran through the meadow, and was very glad to find that the hillock at the end of the vale had not wandered like me from its place.

After rambling some time by the outskirts of the wood, and wending my way through so thick a tuft that I cou'd not conceive how any thing larger than a hare, followed by the hounds, could have opened a passage through it, I was struck by the sight of a small white cottage, newly plastered, which stood close against the wood, and around which was a square palisade, with vine-leaves and streaming garlands of convolvulus and honeysuckle, while branches of sweet-briar, laden with blossoms, were peeping through the closely-crossed palings. I advanced a few steps, and came to the entrance of this pretty little dwelling, which seemed just large enough for two or three, or four inmates, and not more. On a bench, close by the door, slightly raised above a small patch of kitchen-garden, sat a young man. I took time to consider him, because he was not looking at me. He was, probably, too much occupied even to notice my presence.

This young man was as handsome as one of those angels we dream about when we have done a good deed. He appeared delicate and weak, and yet his mild, pale face, with its cluster of flaxen curls, was capable of a manly expression, and in it one could still trace a habit of reflec-

tion and a resolute spirit. This look set me musing as t its cause.

At length he raised his eyes and looked steadfastly upo me. He moved, as if to rise; but I hastened to prevei him, because I thought he looked ill.

"Excuse me, young friend," said I to him, "but ca you explain to me, without rising, the way to Mr Dubourg's. The house cannot be far off."

"Mr. Dubourg's house?" replied he, at length, as i collecting a few scattered ideas. "Dubourg? the house of Mr. Dubourg?—Ah! ah!" he continued, laughing, "there was once a beautiful house of that name, which I

used to live in, when a little boy. There, too, it was I first saw angels in the shape of women, flowers of every season, and the merry warbling birds.—But that was another world to this."

He stopped, and letting fall his head in his open hands, forgot that I stood beside him.

I then felt conscious that he was an idiot, or an innocent, as they say in different parts. What a strange world ours, to repulse those harmless beings who do no one harm!

At the same moment the door was opened by a woman about fifty years of age, better clad than the common sort of country women.

"What! Baptist," said she, "do you greet a traveller without offering him milk and fruit, and requesting him to honour our poor roof with his company, whilst he takes a moment's shelter and rest?"

"Oh! madam!" cried I, "do not upbraid him, I beg you. I have not been here two seconds, and yet his reception has touched me so deeply that I can never forget it."

Baptist had not heard even his mother: he had relapsed into his thoughts; his arms were folded, his head hung upon his breast, and he was muttering some indistinct words that I could not unravel.

I followed the good woman into a pretty large room, extremely neat, which must have been the best apartment in the house. She made me sit down on a kind of chair of state, the seat of which was prettily interwoven with yellow and blue straw, whilst she dismissed to an adjacent room a whole flight of small birds from the fields and hills, that my approach had hardly disturbed, and which obeyed her with an eagerness charming to behold, so perfectly tame had they become.

She then repeated her invitation to take refreshments, and on my second refusal she wished to know in what respect she could serve me.

"I was telling your son when you came out," replied I, "but he quite forgot me. Poor child! he seems to be very badly afflicted. Has he been long in the same state?"

"No, sir," answered she, wiping away a big tear, "nor is he so at all times. He is always sad, as sad as he is good, my poor Baptist: yet there is no want of connexion between his thoughts and actions, unless certain words that I am careful not to utter before him, restore him to his fits. How it is these words disturb him, I cannot tell. I avoid them and know no more. He was born so happily gifted, as to bless us all, and promise honour to our old age, but the Lord has thought fit to revoke all those fair promises."

Fast flowed the worthy matron's tears, as she uttered these last words. I took her hand, and begged her to forgive me for having recalled so much bitter grief.

"I must tell you, sir, since you are so kind as to take

an interest in my poor Baptist," she replied in a calmer tone, "that my husband, Joseph Montaubon, was the best workman in these parts as a builder. Still, for all that, we were very poor, because the times were very hard, and work was scarce, and my family, which was of a better class than Joseph's, had suffered still more severely through the troubles of the times. We hardly knew what to trust to, when by chance a rich country gentleman employed my husband to build a splendid house, that you may see in the wood. When the house was built to the roof, my unhappy Joseph got up himself to the top, as head workman, to set up, as the custom is, the bouquet and flags of honour. He had just reached the pinnacle, when a piece of roofing, which, to our great misfortune, had been left in a loose state, slid and gave way beneath him. He fell—and died! Mr. Dubourg, who was then, and still is, the owner of the building, was sorely grieved at our cruel bereavement. He ordered the workmen to build for my son and me this little dwelling, which, with the fertile piece of ground it stands upon, he made over to us, besides granting us a pension to raise us above want. That was not all. He determined to take charge of Baptiste, who was then only five or six years old, and who already charmed and delighted every body, thanks to his lively humour and pretty face. So Baptist was brought up and educated with the same care, and under the same teachers, as Rosalie, the lovely daughter of his benefactor, three years younger than he. Thus things went on for ten years, and Baptist had turned his time to so much account, that the best judges acknowledged he had acquired many advantages to make his way in the world.

"One day Mr. Dubourg came here, and said to me, in a mild, but serious voice: 'Dame Montaubon, you are a sensible woman, and will feel that it is time now to separate your Baptist from my Rosalie. He is sixteen, she is thirteen and more. These two children are very near the

age when love begins to be felt; although brought up together like sister and brother, they well know they are not, and I have, perhaps, been tardy, as it is, in separating them. You must, therefore, take your son home again, my good woman, until I have got him the respectable situation he has learned and merited to fill by his attention to his studies. Believe me, we must even proceed further still in our cautions, our children must learn to live apart, that by and by they may be able to bear a total separation. Tell Baptist I shall always esteem him to the last, and let him understand, as none but a mother's heart and mind can do, that I have private motives for keeping him away from me. Lastly, as the sight of my house would only shock his feelings, bid him not approach nearer to it than the spot we call the Bée, where the house is still hidden by the trees. As for his obedience, you may trust to it, for he would die rather than break his word.'

"'I know,' continued he, rising to depart, 'that your expenses will increase by this change, but that will not continue, as Baptist is favourably known to my friends, and cannot remain many months without employment. Meanwhile, take these hundred crowns, that he may not be too suddenly deprived, in your little retreat, of those comforts to which he has been accustomed for so many years; and at all times rely upon my friendship.'

"Having said this, he left the purse and went away, without heeding my entreaties to take it back

"This was at the very period when my poor boy used to come home once every year to spend a few weeks with me; he always brought with him his books and instruments. I was very happy! So he did not feel surprised at his customary removal. Never had he looked so handsome, so full of spirits, or so satisfied with every body and every thing, though he had always been of a shy and serious temper from his childhood; and for several days he continued so. One thing only made me uneasy, he studied too much, and

I was afraid his health might give way to such incessant toil. 'You have time enough,' said I to him one evening, 'to turn over and rummage your books! You shall not leave me again until you get some employment.' And now, having broken the ice, I repeated what Mr. Dubourg had said to me

"When I had done, Baptist smiled, but did not answer; he then said his prayers, kissed me, and went quietly to bed.

"The next day, and on the following days, he appeared dejected, and did not speak. This behaviour did not surprise me, for I had often seen him so.

"About a week after, however (it is now four years since then), I thought I observed that his mind was affected. Unhappy mother! it was what I dreaded and foresaw when, in spite of my complaints, he persisted in his studies. From this time he gave up his books; but it was too late. He would utter speeches that had no meaning, or which signified things that I could not understand. He would laugh or weep without reason; he was never happy but by himself; he would speak to the trees, to the birds, as if they minded him and understood him, and what I would not dare to say to you had you not witnessed it, the birds seemed to know his meaning, to judge by the ease with which they suffered themselves to be caught. May it not be, sir, that Providence, who makes these little creatures avoid their enemies by one instinct, has given them another to distinguish the innocent who would not do them an injury, and who loves them only for the sake of loving them?"

This story had touched me to the heart, as it would still touch others, had I the power to repeat it, as I heard it, in its simple and moving eloquence.

"I have too long trifled with your patience," continued the mother; "let us return, I entreat you, to the subject of your inquiry. Every thing here is at your disposal."

"I want nothing, nothing at all," returned I, with

sorrow. "All I wanted to ask for, was my way to Mr. Dubourg's, and my road back, for I must absolutely return this very night."

"You could not have applied to any one who was better able to point it out, sir; you are close to the place you seek, but the path is not easy to find. Baptist shall be your guide. Not a day goes by but he visits the Bée, up to a spot which I have enjoined him never to pass beyond, and this is the very hour he sallies forth. All I beg of you is not to mention Mr. Dubourg's name, because it seems to me that the recollection of his benefactor is hurtful to my poor boy's reason."

I promised I would not, and she immediately struck her hands twice, when all the little birds I had seen shortly before, flew to the door, singing as they came forwards.

"It is not you I want yet," exclaimed she, "impatient little ones! your seeds are not yet picked."

Then she struck her hands a third time.

At this latter signal, Baptist came in, bowed to me, went up to his mother, sat down upon her lap, and threw one of his arms round her neck

"So there you are my good handsome boy," said his mother, kissing his forehead. "Look, sir, is he not a nice dear child! a good and gentle child! as he will be as long as he lives, just as he used to be in his cradle! Now, sir, do you think I have any reason to complain?"

She wept for all she said.

"But no matter, Baptist; you must take some exercise, for you took none yesterday, though the air was so warm and the sun so bright and cheerful! I never saw so many butterflies about. And, besides, you know we have two green canary birds, newly hatched, without mates, and you have long wished to replace your poor goldfinch, who died of old age!"

The youth then testified by his gestures and shouts of joy that his mother only anticipated his wishes.

"Then go now and put on your red gaiters and your Polish cap with its pretty gold tassel, to do honour to this gentleman, and show him the way to the Bée, and there you must stay for him till he returns. I need not tell you it would grieve me very much, if you went any further."

I looked at Baptist with a curious wish to know what effect this forbidding would produce on him; for I thought I had detected his secret in his mother's narrative. But I could not perceive that the name of the Bée called up any thing to his mind. He went and put on his Polish cap and his red woollen gaiters, then came in again, embraced his good mother, and ran on before me whistling as he went; and on hearing his youthful voice, all the choristers of the wood began to sing and flutter around him. I readily conceived that they would have lighted on his cap and shoulders, had I not been there to disturb their confidence.

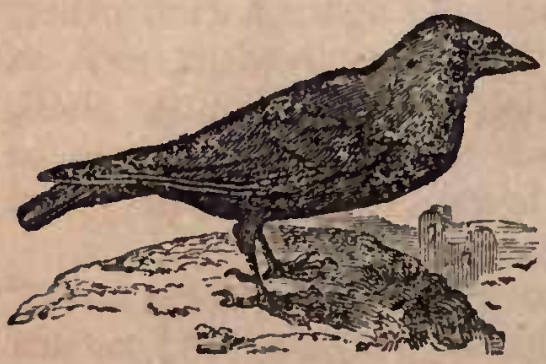
After half an hour's walk, we crossed through the

woodmen's cottages; and the children flocked about us on our passage.

"Oh! there he goes," cried they, "the silly boy with his red gaiters, Dame Montaubon's son, who hunts without

nets. Good luck to your sport, brave Baptist! bring us home some pretty bird, either a large grey owl, or a

ring-dove or a jay, or else one of those naughty wood-peckers that bore holes in our trees; nay, were it but a jack-daw."



"No, no," replied Baptist, "you shall have no more of my birds as you used, and I am very sorry I ever gave you any. You shut them up in cages, instead of keeping them by kindness. You cut off their wings and put them in pain! You shall have no more birds of mine. How good and gentle is the little bird that flies! How cruel and wicked is the boy who cages it, clips its wings, kills it, and eats it."

Then Baptist went forward once more amidst the loud laughter of those wretched children, who wondered no doubt to see him every day grow more stupid and silly.

When we had reached the Bée, the youth stopped short

as if a bar of iron had stood before him; he even fell back a few paces, and turned his face to the forest calling out to his birds.

"Oh! oh!" said he, "where are you then, my pretty ones, my pets, my darlings! Where are you young thistle-finches? where are you Rosetta? where are you Finetta? Must I believe you no longer love me, ungrateful birds, or that the savage owl has eaten you up! Come to me little birds, come, my pretty birds all! I have two green canary birds to mate with you! Here," continued he, throwing his cap upon the grass, and letting his long fair locks flow over his shoulders; "sleep here, my children, without fearing either the fowler or the snake, for I am to watch over you like a mother watches over her children."

Whilst he was speaking, I had walked a little aside, and was delightedly surveying the lovely waters of the river Ain, when the innocent's address to his birds drew me from my contemplation: I stole up silently with timid and halting steps to his cap, inwardly smiling at my own credulity. The little thistle-finches were there nevertheless. They nestled down pressing against each other, spread out their wings to shelter themselves as well as they could, like a tortoise hiding itself within its shell, and hardly allowed the glimmer of their timid eyes to be seen. I therefore withdrew to relieve their anxiety and alarm.

"Although you have had a lucky, and prosperous hunt," said I to Baptist, "it is very likely you may not return this morning to the White Cottage of the Wood. Your mother advised you to take exercise, so I hope to find you again on my return; though, as I have sufficiently noticed my way not to mistake it, I should be sorry to detain you against your wish."

Baptist sat down by the side of his Polish cap, and betook himself again to his thistle-finches.

I stood watching him for a moment, before resuming my way, when I heard my name called out by a group of horsemen who were riding along the road in the same direction as I was bent upon.

"What, Maximilian here!" said they, "Maximilian on the banks of the blue Ain! But come along! the friends of Dubourg must not miss the marriage blessing of the beautiful Rosalie, and it is past noon already."

I was too anxious about Baptist to reply directly. Poor, unhappy boy! thought I. And truly he had fixed his eyes steadfastly upon them, but they contained no definite expression. I waited; I thought I saw him smile, and then rejoin his birds. I trusted he had either not heard or not understood them and I followed my new

companions and fellow-travellers, without losing sight of him. He appeared quite calm and easy.

The wedding was very gay as a wedding should be. Men never look so happy as on the day when they lay down their liberty. Rosalie was a charming creature, still more lovely than I had fancied her, but yet more serious

and thoughtful than most young girls appear on their wedding-days. Her soul was probably revolving those happy, happy days of childhood when she may have dreamt of other loves and a different husband.

Concealing my escape amidst the hurry and confusion of the feast, I set out on my return as early as I could, for I was anxious to see poor Baptist again.

When I came to the corner of the wood, near the spot where the Bée sinks deeply into the earth, I was surprised to see upon the river several light swift boats, which I had not remarked in the morning; I presumed they belonged to some country people who were exerting themselves to supply Mr. Dubourg's house with fish during the nuptial festivities. Suddenly the boats drew together, the country people came out upon the bank, and a tolerably large throng collected round something there. I am not naturally inquisitive; and yet I ran up to them.

"It is really he," muttered an old fisherman, the poor idiot with his red gaiters, the son of Dame Montaubon, who must have drowned himself whilst running after some swallow on the wing, without thinking of the river before him. Baptist, the good, the virtuous Baptist! see what he is come to!"

"Stop! stop!" said I, rousing myself to think and act, and rushing towards the body, "Perhaps he is not dead yet!"

"How can that be, my good Sir?" replied a second fisherman, "since one of our children it was who stood where we are and saw somebody at a distance chasing a bird and run after it into the river, at the moment when the procession of Mr. Dubourg's friends began to enter the wood this morning. On hearing the little fellow's cries we ran up, and have spent seven hours in looking for the body, and have only just found it. He is dead, indeed, and all hope is over!"

"How glad I am!" cried a little thoughtless urchin, some eight years old, running toward the wood. "I know where he has left his Polish cap, which is brimful like a nest of little green canary birds."

When next I passed through the country, the White Cottage of the Wood was shut up and deserted, the little birds no longer fluttered about it, Baptist's mother was gone, and none could tell what had become of her.

GOOD LADY BERTHA'S HONEY BROTH.

WHO AND WHAT THE GOOD LADY BERTHA WAS.

THERE was once upon a time a valiant knight, called Osmond of Rosemberg, who chose for his wife

a lovely maiden named Bertha.

I know that Bertha could never have been compared with the high-born ladies of our time, though she was surely as noble as the noblest of them all; but she could only speak in good old German, she could not sing Italian songs, nor could she read French novels, nor dance the gallopade, nor waltz, nor *do the polka;* but, instead of these, she was good, gentle, full of tender pity, and careful that not even a breath should tarnish the bright mirror of her fame. And when she passed through a village, not in a fine open carriage, with a lapdog on the front seat, but on foot, with

a bag containing alms-money, "*a God reward you,*" from the old man, the widow, or the orphan, sounded more sweetly to her ear than the most melodious ballad of the most celebrated minstrel; for which ballad, however, a piece of gold has been paid by the same people who have refused a small copper coin to the beggar that stood by, half naked and shivering, with his tattered cap in his hand.

THE COBOLDS.

AND thus it was that the blessings of the whole country round about, fell like a gentle dew of happiness upon Bertha and her spouse. Golden harvests studded their fields, their vine trees bent under the burden of enormous bunches of grapes, and when perchance some dark cloud, laden with hail or lightning, came towards their castle, an invisible breeze blew it off im-

mediately towards the dwelling of some wicked noble, above which it would burst, and lay waste the land.

Now who was it blew the dark cloud away, and who protected from lightning and hail the domains of Count Osmond and Good Lady Bertha? I will tell you.

It was the dwarfs of the castle.

You must know, my good boys and girls, that, a long while ago, there was in Germany a race of good little genii, who unfortunately have since disappeared; the tallest of whom scarcely measured six inches, and who were called Cobolds. These good little genii, who were as old as the world, loved to frequent those castles above all, whose lords and masters were, after God's own heart, good

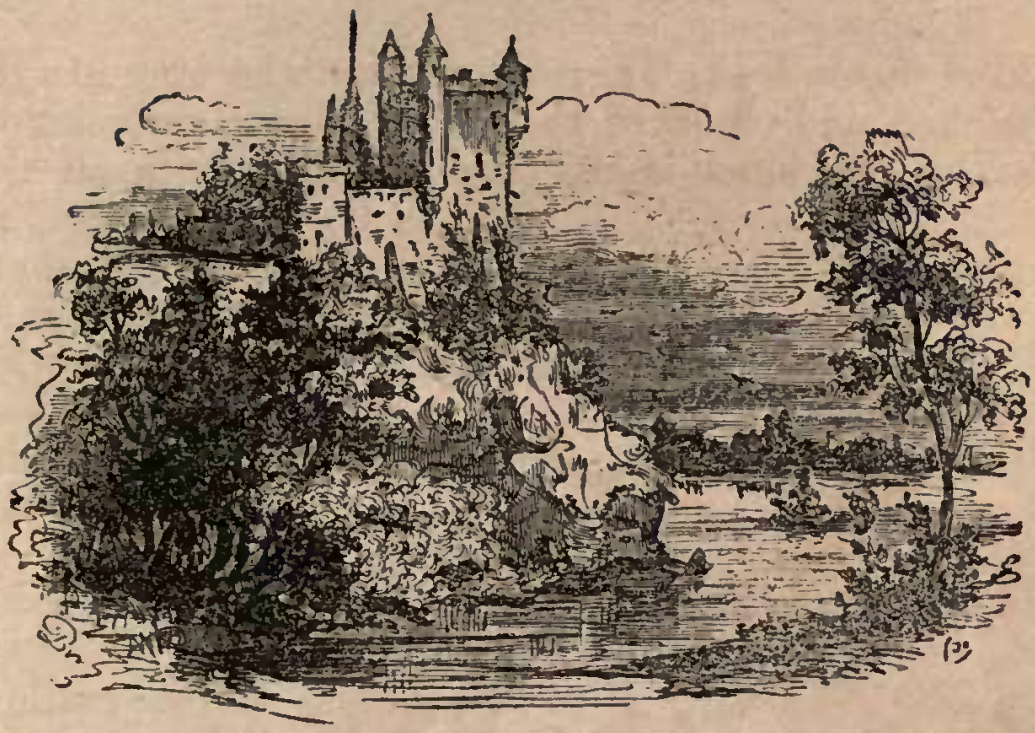
and kind themselves. They hated those who were naughty and wicked, and punished them in a proportionate degree; whilst, on the other hand, they protected with all their might, and this extended over the elements, one and all, those whose good nature resembled their own. This is why these little dwarfs who, time out of mind, had dwelt in the castle of Wistgaw, and who, therefore, had known their fathers, grandfathers, and all their ancestry, were so very fond of Count Osmond and his Good Lady Bertha, and why they used to blow far away from their happy domains the black cloud of hail and thunder

THE OLD CASTLE.

One day Lady Bertha went to her husband, and said to him: "My dear lord, our castle is growing old, and threatens to fall to pieces; we cannot safely stay any longer in this tottering mansion, and I think if your wisdom approves of it, that we ought to build us another dwelling."

"I am of your opinion," answered the Knight; "but one thing makes me uneasy."

"What is that?" asked Bertha.



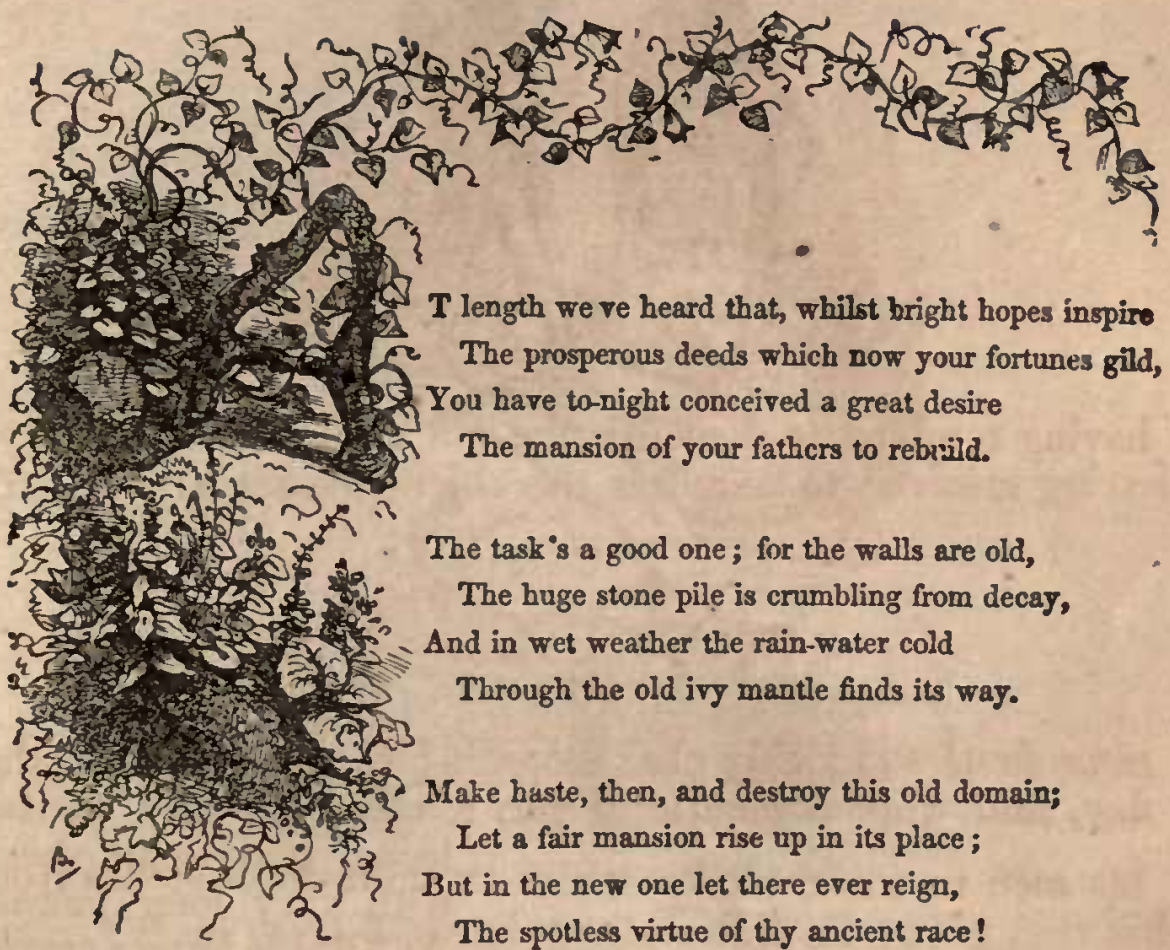
"Although you have never set eyes on them, you must surely have heard tell of those good Cobolds who dwell in the vaults of our castle. My father heard his grandfather, who had it from one of his ancestors, say, that these little genii were the blessing of our house; now it may be that they have grown used to this old pile; and if we were to anger them by the disturbance, who knows but they might leave us, and then, perhaps, our happiness might go along with them."

Bertha thought these observations were very prudent, so she and her husband determined to inhabit the castle as it was, rather than to disoblige in any way the good little genii.

THE EMBASSY.

The following night, the Good Lady Bertha and Count Osmond were fast asleep in their large canopy-bed, with its four twisted posts, when they heard a noise as if a multitude of tiny steps were coming forwards from the drawing-room. At the same time the bed-room door was opened, and they beheld advancing an embassy of the little dwarfs we have been speaking of. The ambassador, who

came first, was richly clad according to the fashion of the day, and wore a mantle of fur, a velvet doublet, pantaloons, and small shoes with very long points. At his side hung a sword of the finest steel, the hilt of which consisted of a single diamond. He courteously carried in his hand his small feathered cap, and drawing near the bed on which lay the two spouses, who looked upon him and his companions with astonishment, he spoke to them in these terms:—



T length we've heard that, whilst bright hopes inspire
The prosperous deeds which now your fortunes gild,
You have to-night conceived a great desire
The mansion of your fathers to rebuild.

The task's a good one; for the walls are old,
The huge stone pile is crumbling from decay,
And in wet weather the rain-water cold
Through the old ivy mantle finds its way.

Make haste, then, and destroy this old domain;
Let a fair mansion rise up in its place;
But in the new one let there ever reign,
The spotless virtue of thy ancient race!

Count Osmond was too much amazed at what he witnessed to make any other answer beyond waving his hand; but this courtesy was all the ambassador required, and, after making a formal bow to the Count and Lady Bertha, he withdrew. The next morning the count and his lady awoke very much relieved; the great difficulty was removed: and, encouraged by the assent of his good little friends, Osmond sent for a skilful architect, who, the same day,

having resolved to demolish the old castle, set a parcel of

his men to work, whilst others brought fresh stones from

the quarry, hewed down the large oaks to make beams,

and the fir trees to make rafters. In less than a month the old mansion was levelled to the ground, and as the new castle could not be built, as the architect asserted, in less than three years, the count and his lady retired in the meantime to a small farm which stood near to the old castle.

THE HONEY BROTH.

Meanwhile the new castle rose rapidly up, for the bricklayers worked at it by day, and the little dwarfs worked at it by night. At first the men were very much alarmed when they saw every morning, on returning to their labour, that the castle had increased by several layers of stones. They told the architect of it, who spoke to the count; and the latter confessed that, without being quite sure, he was inclined to believe it was his little friends the dwarfs, who, knowing how anxious he was to go to his new manor, had betaken themselves to this nightly toil. Now, one day, they found on the scaffolding a small wheelbarrow, no bigger than your hand, but so beautifully wrought in

ebony and bound with silver, that it looked like a pretty plaything intended for a little prince. The mason who found the wheelbarrow showed it to his fellow workmen, and, at night, took it home for his little boy to play with; but the moment the lad offered to touch it, the wheelbarrow rolled off by itself, and ran away so fast, that, although the poor mason ran after it as fast as his

legs would carry him, it disappeared in a trice. At the same instant he could hear short, sharp, strident, and lengthened peals of laughter; but this was only the Cobolds making game of him.

However, it was very lucky that the little dwarfs had undertaken the work; for if they had not done a good part of it, the castle would not have been completed in six years. It is true, that was precisely what the architect had reckoned; for these honourable jobbers in bricks and mortar are accustomed (and I trust my little readers will never learn it at their expense) to leave out one half of the truth in their calculations. So then, towards the close of the third year, just when the swallow, after taking leave of us, was departing for another clime—at

that season when the birds who are forced to remain in our chilly country were becoming dull and scarce—the new castle began to assume a certain shape, but was still very far from being completed. Which the Good Lady Bertha perceiving, one day that she was overlooking the workmen she said to them in her sweet voice:—

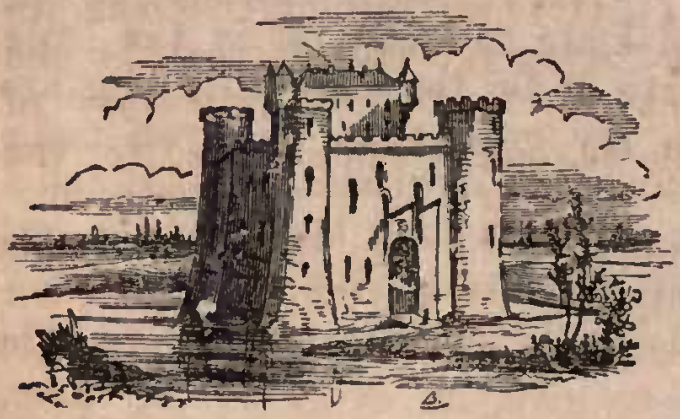
"Well, my worthy men, does the work proceed as fast as you can make it? Here is winter knocking at our doors, and the count and I are so badly off in the little farm, that we long to leave it for the fine castle you are building for us. Come, my good men, will you make haste, and try to let us move into it within a month, and I promise you, that on the day you shall have laid the last stone on the topmost turret, to treat you all to a HONEY BROTH, better than any thing you have ever tasted yet;

and, more than that, I pledge my word that on the same day in every year, you, your children, and your grandchildren, shall continue ever after to receive the same favour from me, from my children, and my grandchildren."

Now you must know, that in old times an invitation to eat a "*Honey Broth*" was not a thing to be despised; for

it was the same as inviting you to a very nice dinner. At that period people used to say, Come to-morrow and take your honey broth with me, as people now say, Come to-morrow, and take potluck with us; in both cases a good dinner being understood.

Therefore, on hearing this promise, the mouths of the workmen began to water; they wrought with double energy, and got on so speedily, that on the 1st of October the Castle of Wistgaw was completed.



The Good Lady Bertha, faithful to her promise, ordered her servants to prepare, for every man who had set his hand to the work, a sumptuous repast; which, owing to the number of the guests, was served up in the open air.

At the beginning, when the soup was served, the weather was perfectly fine, and not one had bethought him of the inconvenience of dining without shelter; but afterwards, when, in fifty enormous tureens, the smoking Honey Broth was brought to table, flakes of snow fell down thick and frosty into every dish.

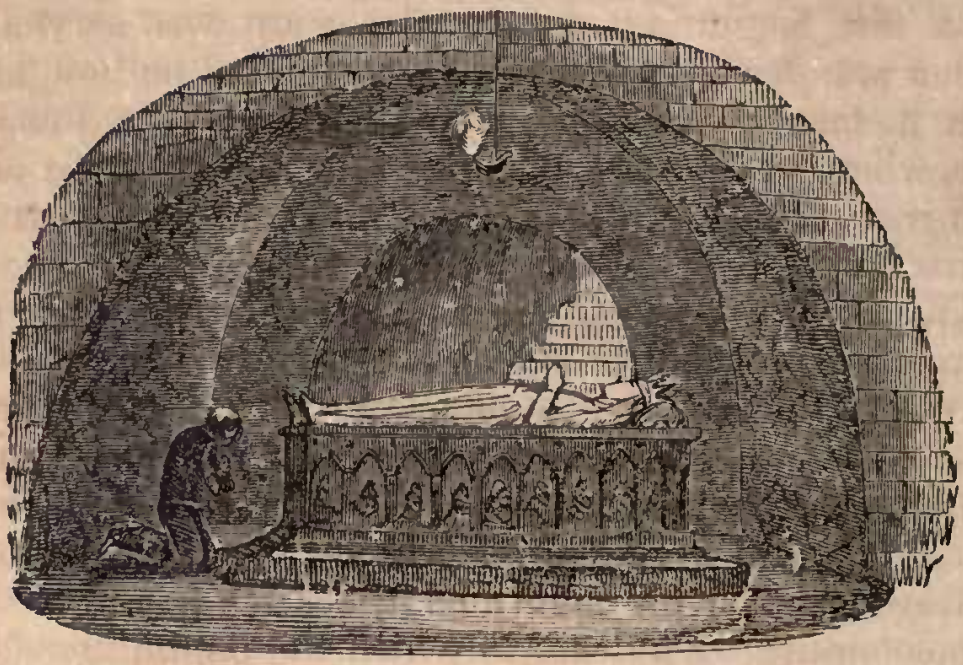
This accident, which disturbed the dinner at its close, so greatly annoyed the Good Lady Bertha, that she resolved for the future to celebrate this festival in the month when the roses bloom; and the anniversary of this famous Honey Broth was henceforward fixed for the 1st of June.

Moreover Bertha confirmed the establishment of this pious solemnity by a deed, in which she bound herself, her descendants, and successors,—by whatever title the castle might revert to them,—to give, on every 1st of June, a Honey Broth to her vassals, declaring that she should not rest peaceably in her grave unless this observance were strictly adhered to.

This deed, engrossed by a notary on parchment, was signed by Bertha, sealed with the count's coat of arms, and deposited among the records of the family.

THE APPARITION.

For the next twenty years Lady Bertha presided with the same goodness and magnificence at the festival which she had founded; but at length, in the course of the twenty-first year, she died in holiness and purity, and was buried in the vault of her ancestors to the grief of her husband and the regret of the whole country. Two years



later, Count Osmond, after faithfully observing the custom which his wife had established, died in his turn, leaving behind him but one successor, his son, Count Ulrick de Rosemberg, who, inheriting both the courage of Osmond and the virtues of Bertha, made no change in the happy condition of his peasantry, or rather did his best to improve it.

But all of a sudden a great war was declared, and numerous bands of the enemy sailed up the Rhine, and took possession of the different castles which stood on its banks. These soldiers came from the further end of Germany, for it was their Emperor who was then at war with the Burgraves.

Ulrick was not strong enough to resist the enemy; still, as he was a bold and brave knight, he would have

buried himself beneath the ruins of his castle, had he not reflected on the cruel misfortunes which a resistance so desperate would bring upon the country. For the sake of his vassals he retired into Alsatia, leaving old Fritz, his steward, to watch over the estates and domains which were about to pass over into the hands of the enemy.

The general who conducted the troops marching upon this point was called Dominick. He took up his abode in the castle, which he thought very comfortable, and quartered his soldiers about the neighbourhood. This general was a man of low origin, who had started as a private soldier, and who, rather by the favour of his prince than by his own bravery and good qualities, had risen to be a commander.

I tell you this, my good boys and girls, for fear you should suppose I am condemning those who from low beginnings contrive to make their way upwards: now I myself very much esteem such men, when they have deserved the change in their fortunes. But there are two sorts of soldiers of fortune; those who attain rank by their bravery, and those who are preferred to it through favour.

Now, this General Dominick was no better than a

brutal and ignorant favourite, brought up to eat the barrack bread and drink plain water; but he now feasted abundantly on the most delicate viands, and drank the

most costly wines, feeding his dogs on the remnants from his table, instead of giving them to the poor and hungry.

Well, the very first day of his arrival at the castle, he sent for old Fritz, and handed to him a list of the exactions he purposed to charge the country with—a list so very exorbitant, that the steward fell on his knees, and implored him not to lean in so heavy a manner upon the poor country people. But the general only replied, that as nothing was so vexatious to him as to hear people murmur, that he would double his demands on hearing the first complaint. Now the general was the strongest party, he had the conqueror's right, and as there was no help for it, the people were forced to obey.

It will be easy to guess, from the character of Domi-

nick, what sort of reception he gave to Fritz when he came to speak of the festival established by the Good Lady.

Bertha. The general burst into a contemptuous fit of laughter, and answered, that it was the duty of the vassals

to feed their lords, and not the duty of the lords to feed their vassals; that therefore he requested the customary guests of Lady Bertha to go and dine on the 1st of June wherever they thought proper, telling them for certain it should not be with him.

This solemn day consequently passed off for the first time since twenty-five years, without beholding round the hospitable board the jovial vassals of the house of Rosemberg; but so great was the terror in which Dominick was held, that nobody dared complain. Besides, Fritz had obeyed his instructions, and so the peasants already knew that their cruel master did not intend to abide by the old custom.

As for Dominick, he supped and got drunk as usual, and then retiring to his bed-room, after having posted his sentinels in the passages and at the gates of the castle, he went to bed and fell asleep.

Contrary to custom, the general awoke in the dead of the night; and as it was his practice to make but one slumber till morning, he at first believed the next day had arrived, but he was mistaken, it was not yet light, and through a chink in the shutter, lo, the stars were seen shining in the sky!

Moreover, something unusual was passing in his mind; an indistinct kind of fear, a presentiment of something strange which was about to happen. He thought the air floated around him as if beaten by the wings of the spirits of night; his favourite dog, which was tied up in the yard beneath his windows, yelled piteously; and when he heard that

mournful cry, the new lord of the castle felt a cold sweat trickle from his forehead in huge bead drops.

The clock began to strike twelve slowly and heavily, and at every stroke the terror of this man, who was however reputed brave, increased to such a degree, that at the tenth stroke he could rest no longer; he sat up on his elbow, and prepared to open his door and call the sentinel. But at the last stroke, and just as his feet reached the floor, he heard the door, which he remembered to have fastened, open of itself, and turn upon its hinges as if it had neither lock nor bolt. Then a pale light gleamed over the chamber, whilst a soft step, which made his very blood run cold, appeared to draw

towards him. Finally, at the foot of his bed there stood a lady all in white, holding in one hand a brass lamp, and in the other a roll of parchment, inscribed, signed, and sealed. She came slowly on, with fixed eyes and immovable features, her hair hanging down over her back; and when she had come close up to the bedside of the general, turning the lamp to the parchment, so that the light fell full upon it, she said, "Do what is here inscribed!"

And thereupon she held the lamp over the deed, near enough for Dominick, with his haggard eyes, to read the bond, which so strongly established the custom he had refused to submit to.

Then, when this frightful reading was over, the phantom, so gloomy, so silent, and so cold, retired as it had come; the door shut behind it, the light vanished, and the rebellious successor of Count Osmond fell back upon the

bed; where he lay till the next morning in an agony of terror which, although he was ashamed of, he vainly strove to overcome.

THE BARRACK BREAD AND WATER.

But at the first dawn of day the charm was broken. Dominick leapt out of bed, the more enraged that he could not inwardly deny the alarm he had felt; he ordered the sentinels to be summoned, who at midnight had to mount guard in the passages and at the gates. The poor fellows shook and trembled as they drew near him, for just as the clock was striking twelve, a sleep they could not shake off had stolen over them, and they had awoke some time after without being able to tell how long they had slept. But luckily they met at the door, and agreed to say they had kept a good watch; and as they were fully awake when they were relieved, they hoped no one had detected their breach of discipline. In short, to every question their general put to them, they replied they did not know what woman he meant, and that they had not seen any thing at all; but then the steward, who was present, declared to Dominick that it was not a woman but a spirit that had visited him, and

that this spirit was that of the Good Lady Bertha. Dominick knit his brows; but struck, however, with what Fritz told him, he spoke with him apart, and having learned from

him that this festival had become an obligation on the part of Lady Bertha, upon her successors and future lords of the castle, whoever they might be, by means of a deed attested by a notary, and that this deed was among the records, he ordered Fritz to bring it to him, and the moment he cast his eyes upon it, he recognised the parchment which the spirit had held before him. Until then, Dominick had never heard of the bond; for although he was very exact in looking after the deeds which bound other people to him, he was not quite so strict as to those deeds which bound him to other people. Nevertheless, in spite of the deed so perfect and precise, though he had read it attentively, and in spite of old Fritz's entreaties and cautions not to disregard the warning he had received, Dominick took no heed of what had occurred, and that same day invited his whole staff to a grand dinner. This entertainment was to have been one of the most splendid he had ever given.

Indeed, the terror of Dominick's name was so great, that at the appointed hour, though his instructions had

been given only since the morning, the board was crowded with a bountiful repast. The most delicate dishes, the finest and most expensive wines—Rhenish, French and Hungarian — had been collected for the company, who sat down to table loudly praising the magnificent bounty of their general. But on taking his seat, the latter grew suddenly pale with wrath, and roared out with a dreadful oath: "What ass is it has laid before me this barrack bread?"

And, truly, there beside the general lay a loaf of bread like those which are given out to soldiers, and such as often and often this very man had been used to eat in his youth.

The company stared at each other in amazement, unwilling to believe that there could be any body alive who would dare to put such a joke upon a man so haughty, passionate, and revengeful as their commander.

"Rascal, come hither," said the general to the servant who stood behind him, "and remove this loaf."

The valet obeyed with the alacrity that fear always inspires; but it was in vain that he attempted to remove the loaf.

"My lord," said he, after several repeated but useless exertions, "this loaf must be fastened to the table, for I cannot lift it."

Then the general, whose bodily strength was known to be equal to that of four common men, set both his hands to the loaf and tried himself to remove it; but in vain, he only lifted up the table with the loaf, and, after a

struggle of five minutes' continuance, he fell back in his chair, exhausted with fatigue and covered with perspiration.

"Wine, rascal! wine, and the very best! Mind," said he, in a gruff voice, holding out his glass, "I shall find out,

depend upon it, who has played me this strange trick; and rely upon me he shall be rewarded as he deserves. So

eat, gentlemen; eat, I say. I drink health and good appetite to all." He then raised his glass to his mouth, but the next moment he spit out what he had taken, exclaiming:—

"What villain poured me out this wretched beverage?"

"It was I, sir," said one of the servants trembling, and who held a bottle in his hand.

"And what does that bottle contain, you vile fellow?"

"Tokay, sir."

"You speak falsely, you rascal; it was water you gave me."

"The wine must have turned into water as it passed into your lordship's glass," said the valet: "for I poured out two glasses from the same bottle to the gentlemen on your right and left, and those gentlemen can bear me out that it was real Tokay."

The general turned to the two officers, who confirmed what the servant had protested.

Then Dominick knit his brow, for he began to understand that the joke was possibly more serious than it had at first appeared; for he thought that the jest had come from the living, whereas, in all likelihood, it really came from the dead. Then, resolving to arrive at the truth by his own observation, he took the bottle out of the servant's hand, and poured out some of the Tokay wine to his neighbour. The wine showed its usual colour, appearing like liquid topaz; immediately he poured from the same bottle into his own glass; but, as fast as it fell into his glass, the wine assumed the clear transparent colour and the taste of water.

Dominick smiled most bitterly at this tacit allusion to the lowness of his origin, and unwilling to sit near that black loaf, which seemed to be riveted there to humble him, he signed to his aide-de-camp, a young man belonging

to one of the noblest families in Germany, to change places with him. The young officer obeyed, and the general then took his seat on the opposite side of the board.

But he was not a whit more fortunate in his new post; for, whilst the aide-de-camp easily loosened the black bread from the table and it became white and delicate, every morsel of bread that Dominick lifted to his mouth was instantly converted into barrack bread, and all the wine he poured out kept changing into water.

At length Dominick grew so impatient, that he stretched his hand towards a dish of roasted larks, but as soon as he touched the dish, the larks opened their wings, and away they all flew, until they began to drop again into the large open mouths of the peasants, who had been watching this sumptuous repast at a distance.

You may guess how astonished they were when they saw their good luck. Such a miracle was a rare event; and therefore it made so great a noise in the world, that people still say, when speaking of a man whose expectations are too big—"*He expects the larks to fall into his mouth ready cooked.*"

As for Dominick, who had the honour to give rise to this proverb, he was raging mad; but as he felt it would be vain for him to attempt to resist a supernatural power, he declared he was neither hungry nor thirsty, and would do the honours of the feast, which, in spite of its splendour, had become very dull and irksome, for the guests were quite at a loss what faces to put on.

The same evening, Dominick gave out that he had just received a letter from the Emperor, ordering him to remove his head quarters to some other place. Now, as the letter, according to his statement was very urgent, he started off directly.

I need hardly tell you, my dear children, that the Emperor's letter was a pretext; and if this illustrious champion was so eager to set out, it was not from respect to his majesty's commands, but through fear, not only to receive the following night a second visit from Lady Bertha, but lest all the time he should remain in this haunted castle, he might be reduced to spring water and barrack bread.

Scarcely was he gone, when the steward found in one of the cupboards, which the previous day had been quite

empty, a heavy bag of money on which was pasted a label with these words written upon it—

"To pay for the Honey Broth."

Old Fritz was very much frightened, and stared at the bag with all his eyes; but as he remembered the writing of the Good Lady Bertha, he lost no time in laying out the money for the annual dinner, which, though it had been delayed this year for a day or two, was more sumptuous than ever.

The same thing was repeated every 1st of June; the money was constantly provided by Lady Bertha, until the imperial soldiers having left the country, Waldemar de Rosemberg, the son of Ulric, returned to occupy the castle of his forefathers, twenty-five years after the time his father had left it.

WALDEMAR DE ROSEMBERG.

Count Waldemar had not inherited the benevolent disposition of his ancestors; possibly his long exile from his native home had soured his character: but fortunately he had a wife whose gentleness and goodness atoned for the bitter and morbid spirit of her husband; so that, all things considered, the poor country people, wasted and wearied by twenty years' war, rejoiced at the return of Count Osmond's grand-son.

That was not all: as, in spite of the exile, the pledge of Good Lady Bertha had been kept alive by tradition

from heir to heir, when the first of June had arrived—that day which the vassals, at every new change, awaited impa-

tiently to judge their new lords and masters—the Lady Wilhelmina obtained her husband's leave to superintend the festival; and as she was a charming creature all passed off very well, and the peasantry thought the golden age of Count Osmond and Lady Bertha, so often quoted by their fathers, had returned again.

The following year the feast was celebrated as usual; but this time Count Waldemar was not present, as he considered it was not proper for a nobleman to sit at the same table with his vassals. Consequently, Wilhelmina alone had to do the honours of the Honey Broth; and we are bound to admit that, although deprived of the presence of the lordly owner of the castle, the entertainment was as lively as ever. The peasants had already noted that the pleasure they enjoyed was due to the lady's own kind heart, as well as to the influence she possessed over her husband.

Two or three years elapsed, during which the vassals became more and more sensible that the pious goodness of Lady Wilhelmina was absolutely needed to atone to them for her husband's fits of passion. Her fervent goodness and gentleness were for ever extended, like shields, between his vassals and himself; but, unhappily for them, heaven

soon deprived them of their protectress, who died in giving birth to a lovely little boy, named Hermann.

It would have required a heart of stone not to regret that angel of paradise, whom the people of this world had christened Wilhelmina; and therefore Count Waldemar really wept for several days, and mourned the loss of his excellent mate. But his heart was not accustomed to such tender sentiments, and when, by chance, he did experience them, he could not retain them long. Oblivion grows over the grave faster than the grass does; and six months after Count Waldemar had forgotten Wilhelmina, and taken a second wife.

Now, who was the sufferer by this second marriage? Alas! who should it be but poor little Hermann: he had made his entrance into life through mourning; and before he knew what it was to have a mother, he felt what it was to be an orphan. His step-mother, shrinking from the cares which were to be lavished on a strange child, who, as the first-born, would inherit the family estates, committed him to a careless nurse, who would leave little Hermann by himself for hours and hours to cry in his cradle, whilst

she went gadding about to fairs, and card parties, and village dances.

THE CRADLE ROCKER.

One evening, thinking perhaps it was not really so late, the nurse had continued in the garden, leaning on the gardener's arm, when she suddenly heard the clock strike twelve; and recollecting that ever since seven o'clock she had left little Hermann by himself, she hurried home, and stealing along unnoticed, went up stairs, in the dark, she crossed the yard looking around her with uneasiness, stepping onwards without making the least noise, and holding in her breath; for although the count's indifference and his lady's hatred saved her from reproach, her very conscience upbraided her with her cruel neglect. However, she grew more composed, when, on reaching his chamber door, she could hear no cries; doubtless, by dint of crying, the poor child had gone to sleep; so she felt relieved as she took the key out of her pocket, inserted it

softly in the lock, and after turning it very gently, she pushed the door gradually open.

But as fast as she opened the door and looked into the room, the wicked nurse turned paler and paler, and her body shook, for she saw there a something she could not comprehend. Although, as we have explained, she had her key in her pocket, and was quite positive there was no other key, a woman had entered her room during her absence; and that woman, who was ghastly pale and sullen, was standing by the cradle of little Hermann, softly and slowly rocking it, whilst her white marble lips were repeating a song which seemed not to be human speech.

Nevertheless, in spite of the alarm she felt, believing she had to do with a creature belonging like herself to the living, the nurse stept forward a little towards the strange rocker, who seemed not to perceive her, and who, without moving, continued her monotonous and awful tune.

"Who are you?" inquired the nurse; "whence did you come? and how did you manage to make your way into this chamber, the key of which was in my pocket?"

Thereupon the stranger extended her arm with a grave and solemn look, and answered:—

I 'm of those, whose free passage no door can oppose:
From fifty years sleep in my coffin I rose,
I heard this poor babe make its pitiful moan,
As in darkness I lay, on my pillow of stone,
And I felt, in my body, long crumbling and cold,
My heart once more quiver, and beat, as of old.

Poor infant! thy lot in this world I deplore,
Thy father accurst, and thy mother no more;
Consign'd to rude hands, whose touch makes thee smart
Thou canst not oppose them, so feeble thou art!
Thou sleepest to-night in the grief of thy wrong,
By thy sorrowing lull'd as a bird in its song.

This night, here below, sleep shall still close thy eyes;
But when with to-morrow the sun shall arise,
Called down by my voice from the heavenly sphere,
To bear thee for ever from fate so severe,
An angel of goodness, all radiant and bright,
Shall carry thee to me on pinions of light.

And thus having sung, the grandmother's shade, for it was Good Lady Bertha, stooped over the cradle and kissed her grandson with an angel's tenderness. The child had fallen asleep with a smile on his rosy lips and cheeks, but the earliest peep of day as it pierced through the windows, beheld him as pale and cold as a corpse.

The next day he was let down into the family vault, and buried near his grandmother.

Be not alarmed, my dear children, poor little Hermann was not dead. The following night the grand-mother arose again, and taking him in her arms, she carried him to the King of the Cobolds, who was a little geni full of courage and learning, and lived in a large cavern beneath the waters of the Rhine, and who, at the request of Good Lady Bertha, undertook to educate her little grandson.

WILBOLD OF EISENFELD.

Great, indeed, was the step-mother's joy, when she saw the sole heir to the house of Rosemberg removed by death; but God soon frustrated her hopes, she had neither son nor daughter, and she herself died three years afterwards. Waldemar survived her for two or three years more, and was then killed while hunting; some said it was by a wild boar that he had wounded,

others said it was by a peasant whom he had cruelly flogged.

The castle of Wistgaw, and the adjacent lands, then fell to the possession of a distant relation, named Wilbold, of Eisenfeld. He was not a bad man, but he was something much worse; he was one of those men careless of their destiny, who are neither good nor bad, who do both good and evil without any motive of love or hatred, merely listening to what is told them, and who always give credit to the last speaker. For the rest, he was brave, and esteemed bravery in others; but he was easily duped by pretenders to courage, as he was by pretenders to wit and virtue.

So Baron Wilbold came and fixed his abode in the castle of Count Osmond and Lady Bertha, bringing with him a lovely little girl, an infant as yet, named Hilda. The first care of the steward was to explain to his new lord the state of in- come and outlay connected with the property; and among

the expenses, the Honey Broth was put down, the custom of giving which had endured, for better or worse, until that time.

Now, as the steward told the baron that his predecessors had laid great stress on this custom, and that for his own part, he firmly believed the blessing of God went with it, Wilbold not only abstained from finding fault with it, but even gave orders that, on every 1st of June, the ceremony should be observed with all its ancient pomp.

Several years passed away, and the baron every year continued to give a Honey Broth, so good and abundant that the peasantry, grateful for this compliance with Lady Bertha's commands, forgave him all his other faults,—and his other faults were many in number. Nor is that all; some other nobles, either through good-nature or policy, adopted the custom of the castle of Wistgaw, and likewise established, on their saint days or birthdays, Honey Broths, more or less flavoured. But among these nobles, there was one, who not only disdained this example, but likewise strove to prevent other lords from following it. This man, who was one of the most intimate friends of the baron, one of his most assiduous guests, and one of his most influential advisers, was called the Chevalier Hans of Warburg.

THE CHEVALIER HANS OF WARBURG.

The Chevalier Hans of Warburg, was personally a sort of giant, six feet three inches in height, prodigiously strong, always armed on one side with a long sword, which, at each word of defiance that he used, he kept beating against his leg,—and with a dagger, which he would continually draw to give effect to his words whilst speaking.

Morally, he was the greatest coward in the world; and when the geese on his own lands ran cackling behind him, he would run away as if a lion was at his heels.

Now, we have already said, that this Chevalier Hans not only refused to adopt the custom of the Honey Broth, but that he had used his influence to prevent several of his neighbours from doing so; and, delighted with his former successes of this kind, he even undertook to induce Wilbold to abjure this time-honoured custom.

"Zounds!" said he, "my dear Wilbold, it must be confessed, you are very good-natured to spend your money in feasting a number of idlers, who laugh at you as soon as they have eaten and digested your feast."

"My dear Hans," returned Wilbold, "believe me, I have more than once ruminated on this matter; for, although this dinner is given but once a-year, it costs, for all that, as much as fifty ordinary meals. But what can I do? It is a confirmed custom, on which they say the prosperity of the house depends."

"And pray, who is it deludes you with these foolish stories? Your old steward, I suppose? I know what that means; as he contrives to scrape ten gold crowns out of the treat, it is a point of interest with him to keep it up for ever."

"Besides," observed the baron, "there is another reason."

"What reason?"

"Why, the threats of the Lady Bertha."

"Can you put any faith in such nursery tales, eh?"

"Indeed, they are genuine; and among the records, there are certain documents."

"So you are afraid of an old woman?"

"My dear chevalier," said the baron, "I am not afraid of any living creature—neither you nor any one else—but still, I confess I am very fearful of these creatures, who have neither flesh nor blood, and who take the trouble of coming from the world below expressly to visit us."

Hans burst into a laugh.

"If you were me, then," said the baron, "you would not be afraid?"

"I fear neither good nor bad spirits!" replied Hans, raising himself up to his utmost height.

"Well, be it so," said the baron. "The next anniversary is not far off, for it only wants a fortnight to the 1st of June; I will put it to the test."

But as between that day and the 1st of June the baron saw his steward again, he broke his first resolution, which was to give no Honey Broth; and gave orders that a very sorry repast should be prepared, instead of the customary feast.

The tenantry, when they witnessed this unusual parsimony, were surprised, but they did not grumble; for they supposed, that their lord, in general so liberal on these occasions, must have some reason for this economy.

But it was otherwise with those who knew all, and who, we are bound to believe, presided over the destiny of each owner of the castle of Wistgaw; during the night which succeeded this frugal feast they made such a clatter that nobody could sleep in the castle, and every one kept opening the doors and windows to see who it was that was

knocking at them; but nobody could see any thing, not even the baron. It is, however, true that the baron pulled the sheet up over his head, as perhaps you do when you

are frightened, my dear children, and lay still, and cuddled up in bed.

HILDA.

Wilbold, like all weak-minded people, was naturally obstinate on certain points; besides, it must be admitted, he had been encouraged by his easy escape; for the punishment of losing one night's rest was not a great one. And if he had saved thereby a matter of a thousand crowns, he had also made a good bargain.

Thus, then, it happened that, encouraged by the representations of Hans, and unwilling to appear to swerve too suddenly from a custom so honoured, on the next 1st of June he invited his tenants as usual; but this time, abiding by the very letter of the bond which ordained a Honey Broth, but did not mention the preliminary dinner, he laid before them a Honey Broth, alone, without any other dish, and without even wine; moreover,

those who had a practised palate fancied they could taste that it was not so nicely flavoured as the preceding year. So, on this occasion, Baron Wilbold had not only withdrawn all the appendages to the feast, but had stingily doled out the honey.

Consequently this time the spirits of the night were angry in good earnest; there was a dreadful tumult heard during the night all through the house, and the next morning they found the windows broken, and likewise the lustres and china. The steward drew up an account of the damage, which was found to amount precisely to the sum which the lord of the manor usually expended at the festival.

The steward guessed the meaning of this influence, and did not fail to set before the baron's eyes a correctly balanced account.

Now this time Wilbold was really and truly angry. Besides, although he had heard the dreadful caterwauling, which had turned the whole castle topsy-turvy all night long, he had as yet seen nothing. He therefore hoped that the lady, who had never again appeared since the night she came to rock little Hermann's cradle, had now been

too long in her grave to leave it; and since, after all, he must expend a certain sum every year, he had just as soon lay it out in refitting his house as in feasting his vassals. So next year he determined to give no treat at all, not even the Honey Broth; and, as he foresaw that so absolute a breach of the old custom would excite the anger of Good Lady Bertha, he resolved to quit the castle on the 28th of May, and not to return to it until the 5th of June.

But he met with a slight resistance to this fatal resolution. Fifteen years had elapsed since Baron Wilbold, of Eisenfeld, had taken up his abode in the castle, during which fifteen years the pretty little child, we then saw in the cradle, had grown up, and was now a charming girl; gentle, pious, and benevolent, to whom the continual seclusion of her chamber had imparted a soft habitual melancholy, which wonderfully became her countenance, as it likewise suited her sweet name, Hilda. So that merely to see her by day walking in the garden, as she seemed listening to the songs of the birds as if she understood them, or at night seated at the casement, looking through the fleeting clouds, which sometimes shaded it, at the moon which she appeared to commune with, the most flinty hearts felt that they could one day love her, whilst hearts which were sensitive felt they loved her already.

Now, when Hilda learned that her father had determined this time to omit giving the Honey Broth, she urged

upon him every injunction she could think of, strictly keeping, however, within the bounds of filial respect. But neither her sweet voice, nor her gentle looks, could reach the heart of the baron, hardened as it had become through the bad counsels of his friend Hans.

On the appointed day, therefore, he left the castle, telling the steward that this silly custom of the Honey Broth had lasted long enough, and that from and after the next 1st of June he was determined to abolish the feast, which was not only a heavy expense to him, but a bad example to others.

Then Hilda, having found that she could not influence her father's better feelings, collected together all her own little savings, which amounted to the very sum the baron was to have disbursed; and she wended her way among the tenantry of the barony, and gave it out, that her father, obliged to absent himself, had been unable this year to bestow the Honey Broth, but had sent her to distribute the money which the festival would cost among the sick and the aged.

The tenantry all believed, or pretended to believe her;

and as on the last occasion the entertainment had not left behind it any pleasant recollections, they were delighted to exchange a poor dinner for a large gift of money, and blessed the hand through which Baron Wilbold was pleased to deliver his bounty.

There remained none to deceive but the spirits of the castle, who, however, were by no means the dupes of the lovely Hilda's pious artifice

THE HAND OF FIRE.

On the 4th of June, Wilbold returned to the castle. His first anxiety was to know if any thing had happened during his absence; but on being informed that all had been quiet and peaceable, that his tenants had not grumbled, that the Cobolds had made no clatter, he became convinced that his obstinacy had wearied them out, and that he was now rid of them for ever. Consequently, after tenderly embracing his daughter, and having given his orders for the morrow, he went quietly to bed.

But he was hardly got to bed before there was heard, both in the castle and all about it, a loud din and so awful an uproar, that human ears had never heard the like before. Outside the castle, the dogs were howling, the rooks cawing, and the owls hooting; the cats mewed, the thunder groaned; inside the castle, chains were rattled and dragged along, furniture was falling down, stones were rolled about: it was a noise, a tumult, a general upset, to make one believe that all the witches in the country, summoned by the great evil spirit, had changed their usual place of meeting, and instead of assembling at the Brocken as formerly, had now congregated at the Castle of Wistgaw.

At midnight all was hushed, and the deepest silence prevailed, so that every body could hear the twelve strokes of the clock as they sounded in turn. At the last stroke Wilbold, partly encouraged, put his head up out of the bed clothes, and boldly looked about him. Instantly his hair stood an end, a cold perspiration streamed down his face, 'a hand of fire' issued from the wall, and with the point of its finger, as if it had been a pen, wrote the following words on the dark wainscot:—

"To obey the good Lady Bertha's vow,
Seven days are allotted thee, Baron Wilbold;
Be warn'd, then, in time, for should'st thou fail now,
The castle of Wistgaw will slip from thy hold."

Then 'the hand of fire' vanished, and one by one, as they had been drawn, every letter disappeared; and, finally, the chamber, which for a moment was lighted up by this verse of flame, sunk into utter darkness.

The following day, all the baron's servants, from the highest down to the lowest, gave him warning, declaring they would stay no longer in the castle.

The baron, who in his heart desired as eagerly to leave the castle as they did, assured them, that, unwilling to lose such good servants, he was determined to dwell in another mansion, and to abandon Wistgaw to the spirits, who seemed bent upon claiming the possession of it.

On the same day, in spite of Hilda's tears, they forsook the old towers to go and live at the Castle of Eisenfeld, which the baron had inherited from his father, and which stood at half a day's journey from Wistgaw.

THE CHEVALIER TORALD.

At this time there were two things which caused a great noise in the domain of Rosemberg: one was the departure of Baron Wilbold, of Eisenfeld; the other was the arrival of the Chevalier Torald.

The Chevalier Torald was a fine young man, between twenty-one and twenty-two years of age, who had already despite his youth visited the principal courts in Europe; in

all of which he had gained a great reputation for his valour and courtly breeding. In truth he was a most accomplished knight, and wonderful stories were told of his education; it was said that, when quite an infant, he had been carried to the King of the Dwarfs, who himself, being a prince very learned in all subjects, had sworn to make him an accomplished nobleman. Thus he had taught him to read

the oldest manuscripts, to speak all the living languages, nay, even the dead ones,—to paint also, to play upon the lute, to sing, to ride on horseback, to tilt and fence; after which, when he had reached the age of eighteen, and when his royal tutor saw he had attained that perfection in every point which he had desired to bring him to, he had given him the famous horse Bucephalus, which never was tired, the famous spear of Astolphus, which threw out of the saddle every knight who was touched with its diamond point, and, finally, the renowned sword of Durandal,

which smashed like glass the strongest steel armour. Besides all these precious gifts he had bestowed one which was yet more valuable,—this was a purse, wherein there was at all times twenty-five pieces of gold.

It is easy to imagine the impression which the arrival of so good and brave a knight would make in the country; but almost immediately after he had ridden through the village of Rosemberg mounted on his good steed, armed with his good lance, and girt with his trusty sword, he had disappeared again, and none knew what had become of him.

Of course this mystery had only served to increase the curiosity awakened by the knight in the neighbourhood.

It was asserted by some that he had been seen one night before the Castle of Wistgaw in a boat, which, in spite of the quick current of the Rhine, stood still as if at anchor. Others said, he was observed with a lute in his hand on the summit of a rock, which rose opposite to Hilda's casement; on which rock hitherto none had been seen to stand save the falcon, the hawk, and the eagle. But all these stories were but vague reports, and nobody could say for certain that he had met the Chevalier Torald since the day when, completely armed and mounted on his steed, he had passed through the village of Rosemberg.

THE SPIRIT CONJURERS.

'The hand of fire,' as you have seen, my dear friends, had allowed Baron Wilbold seven days for repentance; but he, still guided by the bad counsels of Chevalier Hans, of Warburg, was perfectly resolved not to retrace his steps; and, the better to keep his resolution, he had determined to spend the three last days in riot and feasting. What afforded him an excuse was the celebration of his daughter's birth-day, which occurred precisely on the 8th of June; Hilda having been born in the month of roses.

On the other hand, the Chevalier Hans had a motive in visiting his friend Baron Wilbold more frequently than he used to do; for he had fallen in love with the beautiful Hilda, and, although he was at least forty-five years old, that is to say, three times the age of the young lady, he did not scruple to open his mind to his friend on this projected alliance.

The baron had never rightly understood those delicate sentiments of the heart, on which young ladies for the most part base their hopes and fears, their dreams of joy or sorrow. He had chosen a wife without loving her, and yet he had been fortunate, for his lady was a holy woman. So he did not think that Hilda required to love her husband very much in order to live happy with him. To these reflections were joined the admiration he felt for the courage of Hans, his perfect knowledge of the extent of his fortune, which was at least equal to the baron's, and, finally, the habit which had grown upon him of having for a guest the merry talkative knight, who greatly diverted him with his constant tales of battle, tournaments, and duels, in which, of course, he had always come off victorious.

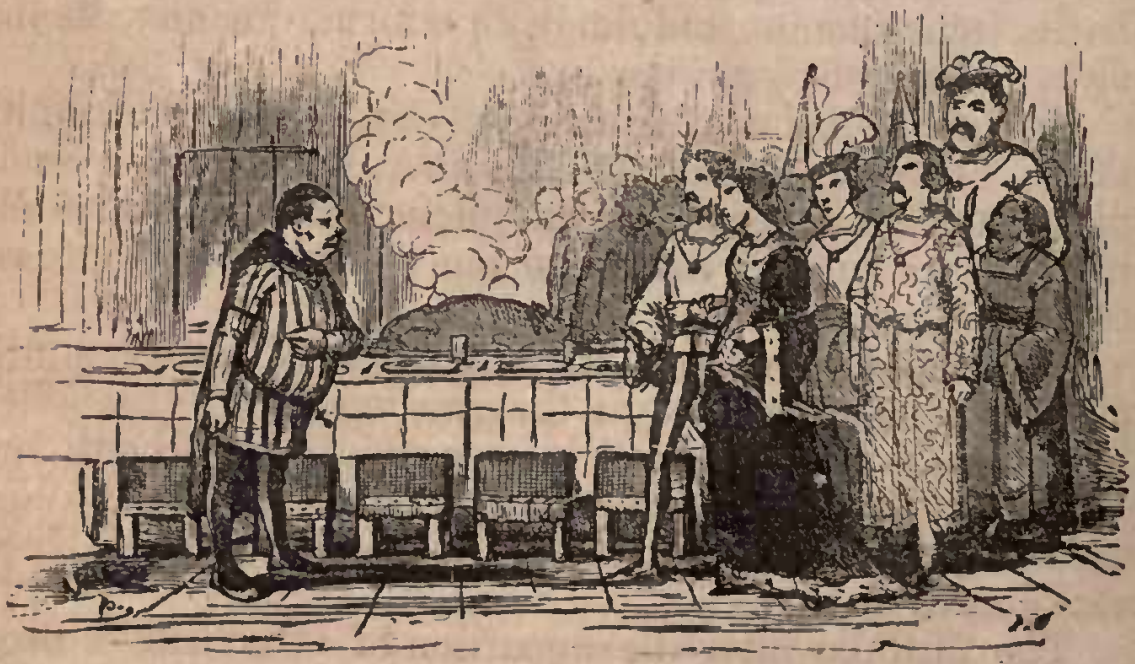
So then he had neither accepted nor refused the knight's offer; but still he had let him perceive that he would gladly see him endeavouring to please Hilda, which would probably be an easy matter to one so brave, gallant, and entertaining as he was.

From that time forth the Chevalier Hans had multiplied his attentions towards the gracious lady of his affections, who had received all his proofs of regard with her wonted reserve and modesty, as if she were quite at a loss to divine through what motive Hans directed all these compliments to her.

The fifth day after the apparition of 'the hand of fire,'

was Hilda's birthday; and, according to his project of spending the three following days in festivity, Baron Wilbold had invited all his friends to a grand dinner; and, as will be supposed, he had not left out his inseparable companion, the Chevalier Hans, of Warburg.

The guests were all come, the company had all passed into the dining-hall, and each was preparing to take his



seat, when the blast of a horn was heard, and the major-domo announced, that a knight had just presented himself at the castle gate, demanding hospitality.

"By Saint Hildebrand!" said the baron, "the gallant must have a good nose; tell him he is welcome, and that we bide his coming to sit down to our repast."

Five minutes later, in came the knight. He was a fine young man, with dark hair and blue eyes, and his easy manners evidently proved that in the course of his travels he had been used to receive the hospitality of the greatest princes. His noble bearing instantly struck the whole company, and Baron Wilbold, discerning his merit, offered as his host to give up his own place to him. But the stranger declined the honour, and, after replying

to the baron's invitation with a most courteous compliment, he took one of the lower seats at the table.

Nobody knew this knight, and every one looked at him with curiosity. Hilda alone cast her eyes down, and had any person looked at her when the knight appeared at the door, he might have observed that she blushed.

The dinner was magnificent and uproarious; the wine flowed without limit; Baron Wilbold and Hans were remarked for the cordiality with which they drank each other's healths. The dinner could hardly begin and end without some reference being made to the apparitions at the Castle of Wistgaw. The Chevalier Hans began to rally the baron on the alarm he had felt at these visitations, an alarm which he avowed with all the openness of a man of genuine spirit.

"Zounds! my dear chevalier," said he, "I should like to have seen you in my place, when that terrible 'hand of fire' drew upon the wall that famous verse, of which I have not forgotten a single syllable."

"Mere fancies," replied Hans; "the dreams of a disordered mind; for my part I do not believe in phantoms."

"You do not believe in them because you have never yet seen any; but if you were to see one what would you say?"

"I would conjure it," said Hans, striking his huge sword, and making it ring on the floor, "so as to prevent its ever again appearing before me, I promise you."

"Well," said the baron, "here, Hans, I make you an offer."

"What is it?"

"Conjure the spirit of Lady Bertha, so as to prevent its appearing again at the castle, and ask what you will of me it shall be granted."

"Whatever I choose?"

"Yes," returned the baron.

"Take care," said the chevalier, laughing.

"Conjure the spirit of Lady Bertha, and ask freely."

"And whatever I may ask for, you will grant me?"

"On my knightly word, I will."

"Even the hand of the lovely Hilda?"

"Even my daughter's hand."

"Father!" cried the young lady, in a slightly reproving tone.

"Upon my word, my dear Hilda," resumed the baron, heated by sundry glasses of Tokay and Braunberger, "I have said the word now. Chevalier Hans, my word is my bond; appease the spirit of Lady Bertha, and my daughter is yours."

"And will you grant the like reward, Sir Baron," inquired the young stranger, "to the man who shall accomplish the undertaking when Chevalier Hans shall have failed?"

"When I shall have failed!" cried Hans. "How now! suppose you then I shall fail?"

"I do not suppose it, chevalier," answered the stranger in a tone of voice so perfectly gentle that the words seemed to come from a woman's mouth.

"You mean to say you are sure of it. Zounds! sir stranger," said the chevalier, raising his voice, "do you know that what you say is very impertinent?"

"At all events the question I have put to Baron Wilbold of Eisenfeld can in no way interfere with your projects of marriage, sir knight, since it is only to be after your failure that a new candidate is to offer himself."

"And who is he will venture to attempt an enterprise in which Chevalier Hans shall have failed?"

"I am he!" said the stranger.

"But sir," said the baron, "before I can accept your offer, gracious as it is, I must first know, my dear guest, who you are."

"I am the Chevalier Torald," said the young man.

This name had spread so favourably through the country, that on hearing it pronounced, the company rose up at once to greet the knight who had just made himself known to them; Baron Wilbold felt it his duty to pay a handsome compliment to the young chevalier.

"Chevalier," said he, "in spite of your youth, your name is already so favourably spoken of, that an alliance with you would do honour to the very noblest of houses: but I have known the Chevalier Hans these twenty years, whilst I now see you for the first time; I can therefore only so far accept your offer as to submit it to my daughter's approbation."

Hilda was suffused with blushes.

"I have always resolved in my own mind," said Torald, "never to take to wife any woman without being assured of her love."

Since the young knight had mentioned his name, Hans had preserved the strictest silence.

"Well, sir knight," said the baron, "since you submit the matter to my daughter, and since you leave the first trial to my friend Hans, I see no reason why, saving a more deliberate inquiry as to your family, I should not give you the same pledge as to him."

"My family vies with the first houses in Germany, Baron Wilbold; more than that," added Chevalier Torald, smiling, "I am going to tell you a piece of news you do not suspect, and that is, that we are in some degree related."

"Related!" cried the baron, astonished.

"Yes, sir," returned Torald; "and we will clear up that mystery by and by. At present, there is only one matter in hand, and that is, to appease the spirit of Lady Bertha."

"Yes," resumed Wilbold, "I own it is the thing I chiefly wish to have settled."

"Well," said Torald, "let Chevalier Hans try the business to-night, and I will make my attempt to-morrow."

"Egad," said Wilbold, "that is what we may call speaking to the point, and I love to see business done as promptly as you set about it. Chevalier Torald, you are a brave young man; here's my hand." So saying, Wilbold gave his hand to the knight, who bowed as he pressed it in his own.

Hans preserved the most rigid silence. Wilbold turned round to him, and was surprised to see that he looked very pale.

"Well, comrade Hans," said he, "there is an offer calculated to please you; and since you just now felt such a longing to meet the spirits face to face, you may thank Chevalier Torald, who has given you an opportunity of seeing them this very night."

"Yes, certainly," said Hans; "but it will be useless, and my time will be lost; your spirits will not come."

"You are mistaken, Chevalier Hans," answered Torald, in the tone of one who is convinced of what he says; "they will come, depend upon it."

Hans became ghastly pale.

"After all," said Torald, "if you will give up your turn to me, Chevalier Hans, I will accept it with gratitude, and will stand the first brunt of these phantoms; perhaps they may be less terrible at the second trial than at the first."

"Faith! sir knight," said Hans, "to go first or second is all one to me, and if you desire to go first——"

"Not so; not so," said Wilbold; "I will keep the terms as they were agreed upon. Keep your turns, gentlemen; friend Hans to-night; the Chevalier Torald to-morrow; and, therefore,—" he filled his glass, and held it up, "To the health of the spirit-conjurers!"

The whole company followed the baron's example; but the latter, to his great surprise, perceived that the hand of Chevalier Hans shook as he raised his glass to his lips.

"Very good," said Wilbold; "after dinner we shall set out for the Castle of Wistgaw."

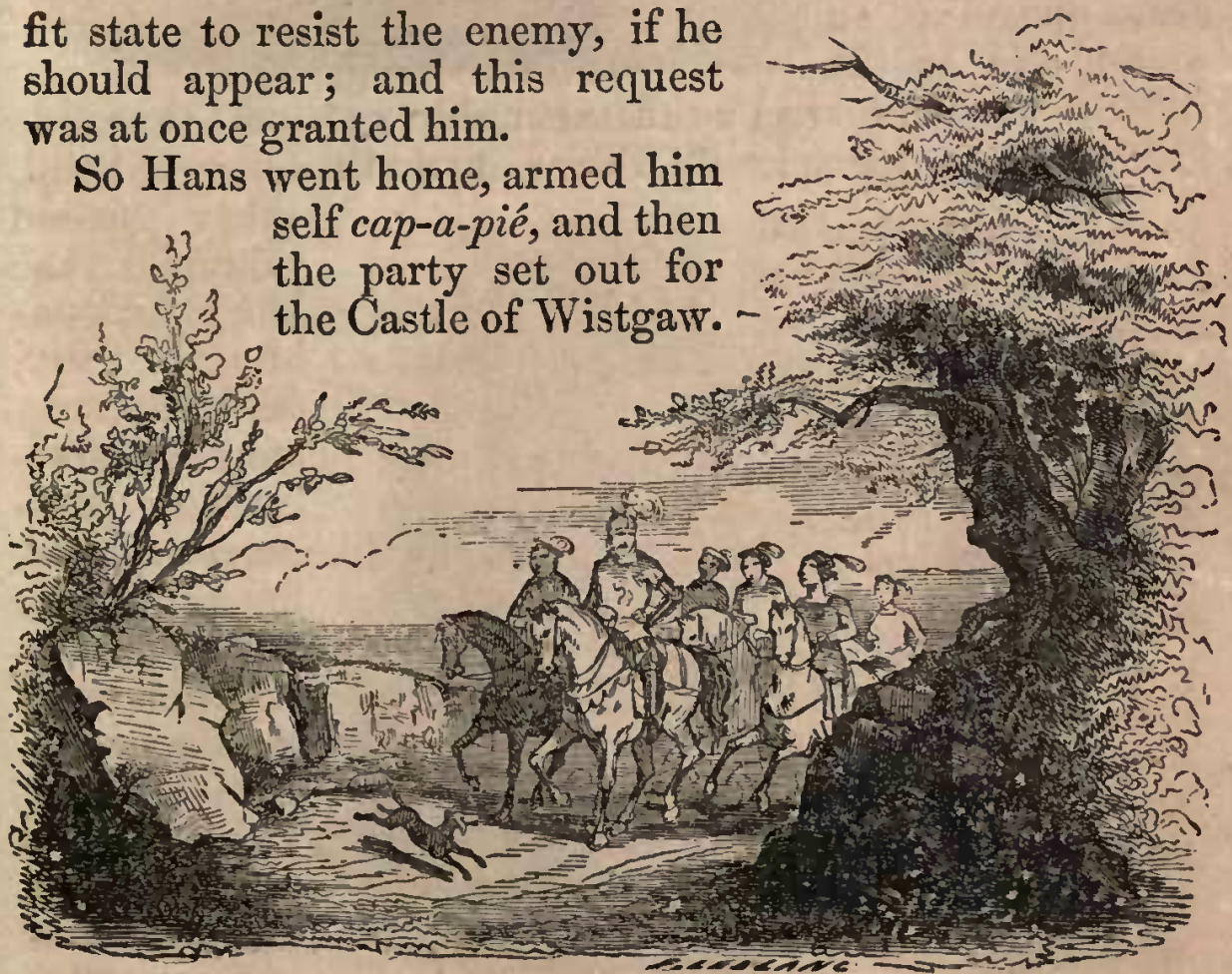
Poor Chevalier Hans was caught like a mouse in a trap.

At first, when he engaged to undertake the thing, he had hoped to slip out by one of his customary tricks: he meant to make believe that he had gone into the castle, and to spend the night in the neighbourhood, and the next day to relate at his ease the dreadful battle he had fought with the spirits. But that was no longer possible; the matter, thanks to Chevalier Torald's challenge, had now assumed a serious aspect, which made him sensible, that,

either by his friend or his rival, he would be closely watched. And indeed, after dinner, Baron Wilbold stood up, declaring his intention to accompany Chevalier Hans in person, and that, in order to afford no room for any complaint, either on his own part, or on that of Chevalier Torald, he would lock him up in the bed-room, and put his seal upon the door.

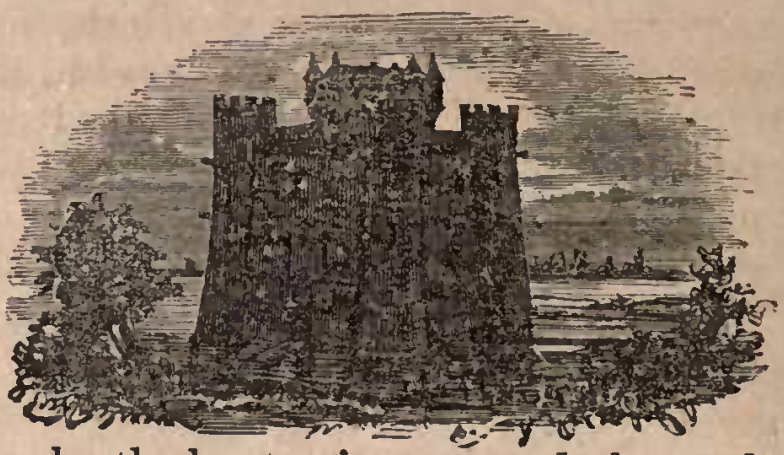
There was no escaping; Hans only asked leave to fetch his helmet and cuirass, in order to be in a fit state to resist the enemy, if he should appear; and this request was at once granted him.

So Hans went home, armed himself *cap-a-pié*, and then the party set out for the Castle of Wistgaw.

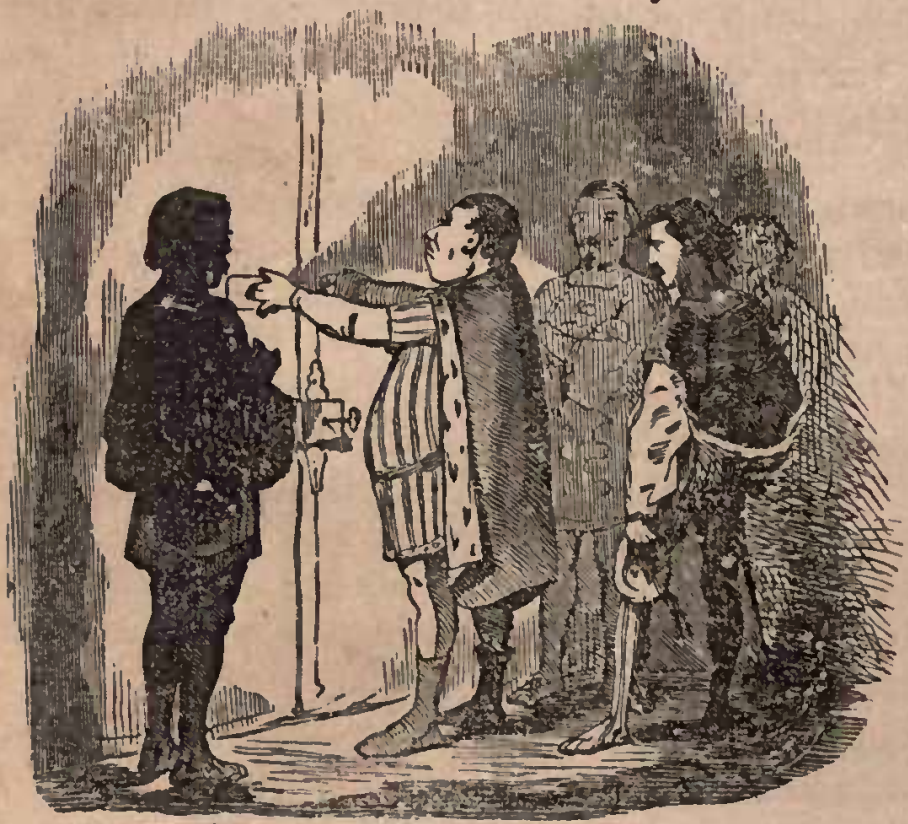


The cavalcade consisted of Baron Wilbold, of Eisenfeld, the Chevalier Hans, the Chevalier Torald, and three or four other guests, who took an interest in this event, whatever might be the end of it, and who were to await the result at a farm belonging to the baron, half a league distant from the castle.

They reached Wistgaw about nine in the evening: it was the most favourable time to undertake the business.



Hans was very uneasy within himself, but he assumed a bold countenance, and appeared tolerably firm. The most profound darkness prevailed all round, and as the silence was not broken by the least noise or sound, the castle looked a very spectre itself. They entered the deserted hall, they passed through the long saloons hung with dark tapestry, and the never-ending passages; and, finally, the door of the bed-chamber was reached, and opened. This room was cold and silent like the rest of the castle.



They lighted the lustre and candelabra, made a brisk fire

on the hearth, and then wished Chevalier Hans good night; and the Baron, having locked the door, applied his seals to a paper band at both ends. After which they all wished the prisoner good night, and then retired to sleep at the farm.

When Hans found himself alone, his first thought was, to get out by the window; but that was impossible, for the window looked over a precipice, which seemed all the steeper in the darkness of the night.

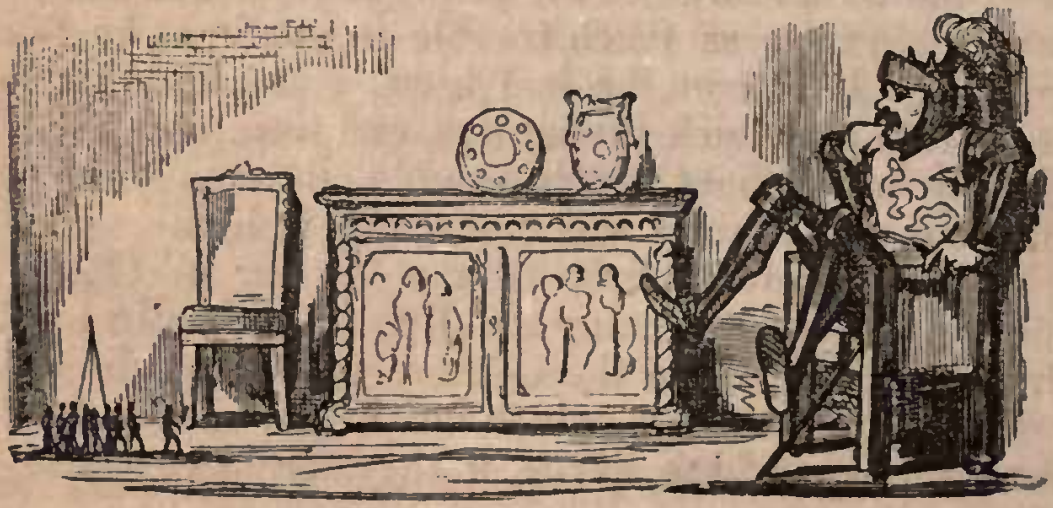
He tapped against the walls: they returned a dull heavy sound, proving that no secret passages lay concealed within them.

Whether for good or ill, he found he must stay. Chevalier Hans tried all the points of his armour to see that they were perfectly fast; he felt that his sword was at his side, that his poniard was in its sheath, that the visor of his helmet was sufficiently loose; after which, seeing all was in good order, he sat down in the large elbow-chair opposite the fireplace.

Meanwhile the hours glided by without any thing having appeared, and Hans began to recover his spirits; besides, he had reflected that, since there was no private door in the wall, and since the principal door was shut, the ghosts would have as much trouble to get in as he found to get out. It is true, he had heard that ghosts did not care much about such hindrances, and were apt to make their way in, without much trouble, through locks and doors; but still it was a sort of security to him.

We must even admit to the honour of Chevalier Hans, that he was beginning to fall asleep, when he fancied he heard a loud noise in the chimney; he threw directly a log of wood into the fire, which had begun to sink, hoping to roast the legs of the spirits, if they meant to appear by

that way. So the fire once more rose into a flame, and climbed up against the back of the chimney, singing and sparkling, when all at once Chevalier Hans saw issue from the chimney the end of a board, about a foot wide, which moved forward and grew longer every moment, without any one being seen to move it. The board descended slowly in a sloping position, and, on touching the floor, stood like a bridge above the flames. At the same instant a host of tiny dwarfs came sliding down this bridge, led by their king, who, armed from head to foot like Chevalier Hàns, appeared to be guiding them to battle. As fast as they came on Hans wheeled his chair backwards; so that when the king and his army were drawn up in battle array before



the hearth, Hans had withdrawn to the other side of the apartment, prevented by the wall from going any further, and leaving a wide space between him and the enemy.

Then the King of the Dwarfs, after having conferred in a low voice with his general officers, came forward by himself.

"Chevalier Hans," said he, in a tone of irony, "I have heard your courage boasted of repeatedly. True, it was by yourself; but as a true knight cannot speak falsely I credit your assertions. Consequently, I have long had a mind to challenge you to single combat, and having heard that you had bravely offered Baron Wilbold to conjure the spirit who haunts this castle, I have prevailed upon the spirit, who is my intimate friend, to allow me to take its place to-night. If you conquer me, the spirit, by my voice, engages to forsake the castle and never to appear again; if you are conquered, you must confess your defeat candidly, and give up your place to the Chevalier Torald, whom I shall probably overcome without any trouble, for I never heard him boast of having cut any body in two. Therefore, and nothing doubting your will, accept this challenge—behold my glove!"

So saying the King of the Dwarfs threw his glove proudly at the chevalier's feet.

Whilst the King of the Dwarfs was delivering his speech, in a small, clear voice, Chevalier Hans had considered him attentively, and finding, indeed, that he was scarcely more than six inches and a half high, his courage began to return, for such an adversary did not appear to him very formidable; so he picked up the glove with a certain degree of assurance, and set it on the tip of his little finger to examine it.

It was a neat little glove, formed of rat skin, and

scented with musk, upon which had been sewn, very skilfully, a number of small steel scales.

The King of the Dwarfs suffered Hans to examine the glove at his leisure; then, after a short silence, "Well, chevalier," said he, "I await your answer. Do you accept or refuse my challenge?"

Chevalier Hans again cast his eyes on the champion who offered to oppose him, and who did not reach half way up the calf of his leg. Encouraged by his small dimensions, the chevalier said, "But what are we to fight with, my little mannikin?"

"We will both fight with our usual weapons, you with your sword, and I with my whip."

"How! with your whip?"

"Yes, it is my ordinary weapon; for as I am a small man I require a long reach." Hans burst out a laughing.

"And do you mean to fight against me," said he, "with a whip?"

"To be sure I do. Have I not told you it is my weapon?"

"And you will take no other?"

"No."

"You promise me?"

"On the word of a knight and king."

"In that case," said Hans, "I accept the combat." Thereupon he threw down his glove also at the king's foot.

At the same time, twelve trumpeters, who were elevated upon a small stool, sounded a warlike flourish; and then they brought the King of the Dwarfs the weapon he was to use in the combat. It was a small whip, the handle of which was cut out of a single emerald. To the extremity of this handle were bound five chains of steel, three feet long, at the ends of which glittered five diamonds as large as peas. Chevalier Hans, on his part, confident of his strength, drew his sword.

"Whenever you please," said the king to the chevalier.

"At your service, sire," said Hans.

Then the trumpet sounded a still more warlike flourish than the first, and the combat began.

Now, at the first strokes he received, the chevalier found he was wrong to despise his adversary's weapon. Although covered with armour, he felt the stripes as if he had been naked; for wherever the five diamonds struck him, they went through the iron as if it had been soft paste. Hans, far from standing on his defence, began to cry and howl, and run about the room, leaping on the bed and movables, pursued on every side by the whip of the implacable King of the Dwarfs, whilst the martial air played by the trumpeters, changing with the incidents of the battle, rose up to a loud and lively measure.

This was the very same gallopade, my dear little children, which the great musician Aubert discovered and employed in his opera of Gustavus.

When this exercise had lasted five minutes, Chevalier Hans fell on his knees and supplicated for pardon.

Then the King of the Dwarfs delivered his whip to his equerry, and, taking his sceptre into his hand, "Che-

valier Hans," said he, "you are no better than a woman; a sword and a poniard do not suit you, it is a distaff and spindle that you should use."

Having spoken thus, he touched him with his sceptre. Hans felt that a great change was coming over him; the dwarfs burst into a loud fit of laughter, and then the whole vanished like a vision.

THE KNIGHT OF THE DISTAFF.

Hans began by looking about him — he found himself alone. Then he looked at his person, and great was his astonishment.

He was dressed like an old woman: his armour had become a striped petticoat; his helmet was turned into a cap; his sword was replaced by a distaff; and his dagger by a spindle. You may judge, my dear readers, whether or not Chevalier Hans looked very odd and very ugly in this new costume, especially as he still retained his

beard and mustaches. When he saw himself thus strangely accoutred, Chevalier Hans made a face which rendered him still more singular and ugly; but he thought he would undress and go to bed, so that no trace would remain of all that had happened. So he put his distaff on the elbow-chair, and was preparing to undo his cap; but just then the distaff sprang from the chair, and dealt him such heavy raps on his knuckles, as forced him to turn round, and face his new enemy.

Hans first offered to resist; but the distaff proved so skilful a fencer, that he was obliged, a moment after, to stuff his hands into his pockets. Then the distaff returned quietly to its place by his side, and gave the chevalier a moment's respite. He took advantage of this truce to examine his enemy. The distaff was a plain honest distaff enough; just like any other, except that, more elegantly shaped than common distaffs, it terminated at the point with a small grinning head, which appeared to be making game of the chevalier.

Hans pretended to smile upon the distaff, and drew towards the hearth; then, choosing his

time, he seized the distaff by the middle and threw it into the fire. But the distaff was no sooner on the hearth, than it stood up erect all on fire, and began running after the chevalier, who, this time, was not only beaten, but was about to be burned as well, when he loudly begged for pardon. Immediately the flame went out, and the distaff resumed its place in his girdle.

The matter now grew serious, day began to dawn, and Baron Wilbold, the Chevalier Torald, and the rest, would shortly appear. Hans was reflecting in his mind how to rid himself of this cursed distaff, when he conceived the idea of throwing it out of the window. So he began to hum a tune to lull the distaff's suspicions, stole up to the casement, and having opened it to look at the landscape and breathe the fresh morning air, he suddenly caught up his whimsical antagonist, flung him into the moat, and shut the window again; but instantly he heard the smash of a pane of glass, and, turning towards

the other casement, saw the distaff he hurled from one window, had returned by the other.

But this time the distaff, which had been twice treacherously dealt with, was perfectly enraged; it fell upon Hans, and bruised him all over. Hans now howled in good earnest. Finally, Hans having sunk exhausted into the elbow-chair, the distaff took pity on him, and once more returned to his girdle.

Then Hans thought he might perhaps disarm the anger of his foe by doing something for it, so he began to spin.

Thereupon the distaff looked very much pleased; its little head brightened up, it winked gaily at him, and began to hum a little tune.

Just then Hans heard a noise in the gallery, and wanted to leave off spinning; but this did not suit the distaff, who gave him such hard raps on the knuckles, that he could not help working on.

And now the steps drew nearer, and ceased outside the door; Hans was vexed to be caught in such a dress and such an employment, but he could not avoid it.

In fact, the door was opened the next moment, and Baron Wilbold, Chevalier Torald, and the other gentlemen who were in their company, stood petrified with wonder at the singular sight they beheld. Hans, whom they had left invested in knightly armour was now dressed like an old woman, and held in his hands a distaff and spindle.

The company laughed outright. Hans did not know where to hide himself. "Egad!" said Baron Wilbold, "it seems that the spirits who have haunted you are merrily inclined, friend Hans, tell us then what has befallen you."

"This is the fact," answered Hans, hoping to get off by means of a falsehood; "this is the fact, I have laid a wager——"

But here the distaff, who saw he was going to tell a story, gave him so sharp a rap over his nails, that he screamed out. "Cursed distaff!" he muttered to himself; then he resumed: "It is a wager I have laid; for I thought as the ghost was a woman, a distaff and spindle were the fittest weapons with which to meet her."

But just then, in spite of the imploring look which Hans gave the distaff, it again rapped his nails so fiercely that Wilbold said to him:

"Hold, comrade Hans, I see you deceive us, and that is the reason the distaff keeps beating you. Tell us the truth, and the distaff will let you alone."

And, as if it had understood what the baron had said, the distaff bowed to him, and then nodded to signify that he spoke the truth. So, after all, Hans was obliged to relate all that had past. He did, indeed, strive from time to time to wander from the point, and introduce some episode to prove his courage; but then the distaff, who kept quiet so long as he desisted from falsehood, fell upon him so heartily, that he was instantly driven back to the path of truth from which he had just strayed.

The story having been related from end to end, the distaff made an ironical salutation to Hans, and a very polite obeisance to the rest of the company, and retired through the doorway, skipping on its tail, and carrying off the spindle, who followed as a child follows its parent. As for Chevalier Hans, as soon as he was sure the distaff was really gone, he fled by the same door, and went off, amidst the shouts and hisses of the little boys, who mistook him for a madman, and shut himself up in his castle.

THE TREASURE.

The following night, it was Chevalier Torald's turn to watch; but he prepared himself for this nocturnal enterprise with as much humility and reflection, as Hans had exhibited bombast and levity.

Like Chevalier Hans, he was conducted to the apartment, locked in and sealed up; but had declined taking any arms, observing, that all resistance to spirits was vain, as spirits came through God. Accordingly, when he was left alone, he devoutly prayed, and sat down in the elbow-chair, and waited till the spirit would deign to appear. He had been waiting several hours with his eyes riveted on the door, and without seeing any thing unusual, when all at once he heard a soft step, and felt, from behind, a light touch on his shoulder.

He turned round, and beheld the shade of Lady Bertha.

But the young man, far from betraying any fear, smiled upon her as upon an old friend.

"Torald," said she to him, "you have fulfilled all my hopes; a good, brave, and pious young man have you proved to be; and now take the reward due to your merit." So saying, and signing to him to follow her, she moved towards the wall, and having touched it with her finger, it opened and discovered a large treasure, which Count Osmond had formerly hidden there when he had been compelled to leave his castle in time of the war.

"This treasure is yours, my son," said the countess; "and to prevent any other disputing your title to it, none but you shall be able to open the wall; and the word by which it shall open is the name of your beloved—'HILDA!'"

Then the wall closed again so tightly that no eye could distinguish it. After which the shade, having smiled once more upon the knight, and graciously bowed to him, vanished like a thin mist.

The next day Wilbold and his companions entered the

chamber, and found Chevalier Torald sleeping peacefully in the elbow-chair.

The baron awoke the young man, who smiled as he opened his eyes.

"Friend Torald," said Wilbold, "I have had a dream this night."

"What dream?" inquired he.

"I dreamt that your name was not Torald, but Hermann; that you were grandson to Count Osmond; that you had passed for dead, although living; and that your grandmother Bertha had appeared to you last night to disclose to you a treasure."

Torald felt that this dream had been imparted to the Baron of Eisenfeld to remove every doubt from his mind. So he stood up without replying, and making also a sign to the baron to follow him, he stopped opposite the wall.

"Your dream did not deceive you, Sir Wilbold, I am truly that Hermann who was thought to be dead. My grandmother Bertha has appeared to me this night, and disclosed the treasure. Here is the proof."

So having said, Hermann—for indeed it was the poor child whom Lady Bertha had taken up out of his tomb, and committed to the care of the King of the Cobolds—Hermann uttered the name of 'HILDA!' and, as the spirit had promised, the wall did open.

Wilbold remained amazed and dazzled at the sight of this treasure, which consisted not only of gold coin, but likewise of rubies, emeralds, and diamonds.

"Come," said he, "cousin Hermann, I see you spoke the truth. The Castle of Wistgaw and my daughter Hilda are yours, but on one condition."

"Name it," said Hermann anxiously.

"That on every 1st of June you will undertake to give the tenantry of Rosemberg, and to all the country people round the castle, THE HONEY BROTH OF GOOD LADY BERTHA!"

Hermann, as you will readily believe, accepted this condition.

CONCLUSION.

On that day week, Hermann de Rosemberg espoused Hilda de Eisenfeld; and, as long as the Castle of Wistgaw continued standing, his descendants gave generously and without interruption, on the 1st of June in every year, to the inhabitants of Rosemberg and its vicinity,

The Honey Broth of
Good Lady
Bertha.