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1828

HOULSTONS' EDITION.

PRINCE DARLING.

Price Sixpence.

37131 009 567 090

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Abercarne Iron Works.

A.D. 1828.

FRONTISPIECE.

Prince Darling.

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PRINCE DARLING.

A

TALE.

EMBELLISHED WITH ENGRAVINGS.

Fourth Edition.

WELLINGTON:

PRINTED AND SOLD BY HOULSTON AND SON.

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PRINCE DARLING.

THERE was once a King so beloved by his subjects, that they called him the Good King. One day as he was hunting, a little white rabbit, being closely pursued by the hounds, ran to him for shelter: the King made much of the little rabbit; and said, 'Since it has put itself under my protection, I will not have it hurt:' so he carried the little white rabbit home to his palace, and gave it a very pretty little house to live in, and nice greens to eat. At night, when

he was alone in his chamber, he saw a beautiful lady appear. She was not drest in gold or silver, but her gown was white as snow; and, instead of head-dress, she wore a crown of white roses. The good King was very much surprised at seeing a young lady in his bed-chamber, for the door was locked, and he could not imagine how she got in. 'I am,' said she, 'the Fairy Candida: I was in the wood while you were hunting, and had a mind to try whether you were as good as is reported; for that purpose, I assumed the shape of a little rabbit, and ran to you for safety; for I know that those who are good to beasts, must certainly be much more so to human-creatures; and if you had refused me your protection, I should have

The King surprised at the Appearance of Candida.

thought you very cruel. I come now to thank you for your kindness, and assure you that I will, on all occasions, be your friend. Ask whatever you will, and I promise to grant your request.' 'Madam,' said the good King, 'since you are a fairy, you undoubtedly know all I desire. I have an only son, whom I love tenderly, and who, on that account, is called Prince Darling: if you have any kindness for me, pray be his friend.' 'With all my heart,' said the fairy: 'I can make your son the handsomest Prince in the world, or the richest, or the most powerful; choose which you please.' 'I ask none of these for my son,' answered the good King; 'but if you will make him the best of Princes, I shall be greatly obliged to you; for what

would beauty, riches, or all the kingdoms in the universe signify, if he were wicked? You know very well he would be miserable, for virtue alone can make him happy.' 'Very true, you are in the right,' said Candida; 'but it is not in my power to make Prince Darling good against his will; he must endeavour to be virtuous himself. All that I can promise you is to give him good advice, to reprove him when he does wrong, and punish him if he will not amend.'

The good King was very well satisfied with this promise, and in a little time after died. Prince Darling was greatly afflicted at the loss of his father, for he loved him sincerely, and would have given his whole kingdom to save his life, but that was impossible.

Two days after the good King's death, Candida appeared to Darling as he lay a-bed, and said to him, 'I promised your father to be your friend; and, to keep my promise, am come to make you this present, (putting at the same time a small gold ring on Darling's finger): keep this ring,' added she, 'with the greatest care; it is of more value than diamonds: every time you commit an evil action, it will prick your finger; but if, notwithstanding this notice, you persist, you will lose my friendship, and I shall become your enemy.' No sooner had Candida finished these words, than she disappeared, leaving Darling greatly astonished.

For a long while he was so good, that the ring never so

much as once pricked him; and his behaviour gave such satisfaction, that to his former name of Darling, the people added that of happy. But one day he went a hunting, and having caught nothing, it put him into an ill-temper, and he thought he felt the ring press his finger a little; but as it did not prick him, he gave scarce any heed to it. As he was going into his room, his little dog Biby came jumping and fawning upon him; but Darling bid him be gone, and told him he was not in a humour to play with him. The poor little dog, who could not understand what he said, pulled him by the clothes, to make Darling take notice of him; but that put the King into such a passion, that he gave him a terrible kick with his foot, and

immediately the ring pricked him just like the point of a pin. He was surprised at this, and went and sat down in a corner of the room quite ashamed. 'I believe,' says he, to himself, 'the fairy banters me; what great harm have I done in kicking a troublesome animal? What advantage is there in being master of a great empire, if I may not have the liberty of beating my own dog?' 'I do not banter you,' replied a voice to Darling, 'you have committed three faults instead of one: First you put yourself into an ill humour, because you cannot bear to be contradicted, but think both man and beast were made only to obey you. Then you fell into a passion, which is another great fault. And lastly, you have been

cruel to a poor little beast only for fawning upon you. I know you are greatly above a dog, but if it were just and reasonable to use those ill who are our inferiors and in our power, I could beat and kill you, since a fairy is greater than a man. The advantage of being master of a great empire does not consist in being able to do all the mischief you have a mind to, but in having it in your power to do all the good you desire.'

Darling acknowledged his fault, and promised amendment, but did not keep his word. He had been brought up by a silly nurse, who spoiled him when he was little; if he wanted any thing, he had nothing to do but cry, fret, or stamp with his foot, and she gave it him immediately, and

that made him obstinate and headstrong. Besides, from morning to night, she was continually telling him, that he was to be a King, and that Kings were very happy, because every body was obliged to obey and respect them, and that no one could hinder them from doing what they pleased. When Darling grew up, and began to think, he knew very well that nothing was more odious than pride, haughtiness, and obstinacy, and strove to get the better of himself; but he had contracted a habit of these faults, and bad habits are not easily conquered. He was not, however, naturally of a bad disposition; but when he committed a fault, would grieve, and say, 'I am very unhappy in having pride and anger to strive against every mo-

ment; if I had been corrected while a child, I should not now have all this difficulty.' His ring frequently pricked him; sometimes he would stop short, at others he went on; but what was very remarkable, for a slight fault his ring pricked him only a little, but when he was very bad, it fetched blood from his finger: at last it made him so angry, that, resolving to be easy, he pulled off his ring, and would wear it no longer. He thought himself the happiest man in the world, when he had got rid of this troublesome monitor. He gave himself up to all manner of folly that came into his head, and by that means grew so wicked, that nobody could bear him.

It happened one day, while Darling was out a walking, that

Prince Darling's first Interview with Zelia.

he saw a young maid so exceeding beautiful that he resolved to marry her. Her name was Zelia, and she was as virtuous as she was beautiful. Darling imagined Zelia would be very glad to be a great Queen; but she told him, with a great deal of freedom, that though she was but a poor shepherdess and had no fortune, she would not consent to be his wife. 'What!' said Darling, somewhat moved, 'do you dislike me then?' 'Pardon me, great King,' answered Zelia; 'you appear to me as you really are, that is, extremely handsome; but what satisfaction would your beauty and riches be to me, or the fine clothes and grand equipages you would give me, if the ill actions I see you commit every day

obliged me to hate and despise you?' At this Darling fell into a great rage with Zelia, and ordered his attendants to carry her by force to his palace. He was so taken up the whole day with the thoughts of the affront she had put upon him, that he could not think of any thing else; but, as he loved her, he could not think of using her ill.

Among Darling's favourites was his foster-brother, in whom he placed an entire confidence. This man, whose inclinations were as mean and base as his extraction, flattered his master's passions, and gave him very ill advice. Seeing Darling very melancholy, he asked him the reason of his uneasiness. The Prince told him that he could not endure Zelia's dis-

dain; and since he found he could not please her without being virtuous, he was resolved to be so, and amend his conduct.

'You are very silly, indeed,' said this wicked wretch, 'to lay yourself under any restraint for a poor girl. If I was in your place I would make her obey. Remember you are a King, and that it would be a shame for you to submit to the humours of a shepherdess, who might think herself greatly honoured in being admitted among your slaves. Send her to prison, and let her live on bread and water, and if she still persists in her obstinacy, put her to a cruel death for an example to others. What a disgrace would it be for you to have it known, that a silly girl dared to resist your will! It would make

all your subjects forget that they came into the world only to obey and serve you.' 'But,' said Darling, 'would it not be a greater if I put an innocent person to death? for, after all, Zelia is not guilty of any crime.' 'None can be innocent, who refuse to comply with your commands,' replied the confidant; 'but even supposing you were to commit a piece of injustice, you had better be accused of that, than let people know that they may sometimes want respect, and contradict you.' The courtier took Darling by his weak side; the fear of seeing his authority lessened, made so strong an impression on the King, that it stifled all his good resolutions of amendment, and he determined to go that very evening to the shepherdess's chamber,

and use her ill, if she persisted in refusing to marry him. Darling's foster-brother in the mean time, fearing some return of good-nature should make the King alter his mind, got together three other young noblemen as wicked as himself, to sit up and make the King drink hard: they supped together, and took care to ply the King with wine, that he drank till he scarce knew what he did. While they were at table, they spoke so much against Zelia, and made the King so ashamed of his weakness for her, that he got up like a madman, swearing he would make her obey him, or sell her the next day for a slave.

Darling went to Zelia's room, but was greatly surprised at not finding her there, for he had

locked her in, and kept the key in his pocket: he was in a terrible passion, and vowed revenge against all he suspected of having assisted her to escape. His confidants hearing him talk in this manner, resolved to make use of this occasion to ruin a nobleman who had been Darling's governor.

This gentleman had often taken the liberty to tell the King of his faults, for he loved him as his own son. At first Darling thanked him, afterward he grew angry at being contradicted, and at last he imagined it was only out of contradiction that his governor found fault, while every one else praised him. For which reason he commanded him to retire from court; but, notwithstanding this order, he would often say, he

was a man of worth, and that though he did not love him any longer, he could not help esteeming him. This put the confidants in continual apprehensions, lest the King should send for him to court again; and they were overjoyed at so good an occasion of getting rid of him for ever. They made the King believe that Suliman (that was this worthy nobleman's name) had boasted he would set Zelia at liberty. Three men, corrupted by bribes, said they had heard Suliman say this. The Prince, transported with rage, commanded his foster-brother to send some soldiers and bring Suliman before him in chains like a criminal. After Darling had given these orders, he withdrew to his chamber; but scarcely was he entered but the

earth trembled under him, he heard a violent clap of thunder, and Candida appeared: 'I promised your father,' said she in a severe tone, 'to give you good advice, and to punish you if you refused to follow it. But you have despised my counsel, you have preserved only the bare outside of a man; for your crimes have transformed you into a monster, odious both to heaven and earth. It is time for me to keep my word and to punish you. I condemn you to become like the beasts, whose inclinations you have followed; you have been furious as a Lion, greedy as a Wolf, brutish and savage as a Bull, and like a Serpent have stung him who was another father to you. Represent the nature of all these brutes in your

new form.' No sooner had the fairy pronounced these words, than Darling found the effect of them in his horrid metamorphosis.

He had the head of a Lion, the horns of a Bull, the feet of a Wolf, and the tail of a Viper, and was instantly transported into a large forest, near the brink of a clear fountain, where he saw his own terrible figure, and heard these words: 'View well the miserable condition into which thy crimes have brought thee, and know, that thy soul is still more hideous than thy body.' Darling knew the voice of Candida, and in his fury turned, and would have devoured her had it been possible; but he said nothing, and the same voice replied: 'I despise thy feeble malice, and will shortly confound thy

pride, by putting thee under the power of thy own subjects.'

Darling hoped, that if he went from the fountain, not having his ugliness and deformity continually before his eyes, would be some alleviation of his misery. He advanced therefore further into the wood, but had scarcely taken a few steps, before he fell into a pit that was made to catch bears. At the same time some huntsmen, who had hid themselves in the trees, came down, took him, and having chained him, carried him to the capital city of his kingdom. On the way thither, instead of acknowledging his fault, and the justness of his punishment, he cursed the fairy in his heart, bit his chains, and gave himself up to all the transports of rage. As

Prince Darling caught by the Hunters.

they came near the city, he perceived great rejoicings, and the huntsmen having asked the occasion of them, were answered that Prince Darling, the scourge and torment of his people, had been struck dead in his room by a clap of thunder, (for so it was believed). 'The gods,' added they, 'were weary of his excessive wickedness, and therefore suffered him to live no longer. Four noblemen, the partners of his crimes, endeavoured to lay hold of this opportunity, of sharing the empire among themselves; but the people, knowing that the King had been ruined through their bad counsels, tore them in pieces, and have offered the throne to Suliman, whom wicked Darling would have put to death. That worthy lord is just

now crowned, and we celebrate this day as that of the nation's deliverance, for he is virtuous, and we shall once more enjoy peace and plenty.' Darling, at this discourse, foamed with madness, but it was much worse when he came to the great square before his palace: he there saw Suliman seated on a magnificent throne, receiving the acclamations of the people, who wished him a long life, that he might repair the evils done by his predecessor. Suliman made a sign with his hand for silence, and addressing himself to the people: 'I have,' said he, 'accepted the crown you offered me, but it is only with a design to keep it for Prince Darling. He is not dead, as you imagine: a fairy has revealed it to me, and perhaps you

may one day see him again, virtuous as he was in the first years of his reign. Alas,' continued he, shedding tears, 'he has been seduced by flattery. I know the natural goodness of his heart; it was formed for virtue, and had it not been for the poisonous discourse of those about him he would have been a parent to you all. Detest his vices, but pity him, and let us all together beseech the gods to return him to us. For my part, I should esteem myself but too happy could I even at the expence of my blood restore him to his throne with every disposition necessary to fill it worthily.' The words of Suliman pierced to the very soul of Darling: he was now convinced how sincere and faithful this man's attachment had been to

him, and now for the first time repented of his failings. He had no sooner listened to this good motion, than he felt the rage within him grow calm and subside, and reflecting on his past conduct, found he was punished much less than he deserved. He ceased then to beat himself against his iron cage, and became as gentle as a lamb. He then was carried into a large house where monsters and wild beasts were kept, and was chained up with the others.

Darling from this moment took a resolution to begin his amendment by being obedient to his keeper. He was a brutish surly fellow, and when in an ill humour, though the monster was very tame and good-natured, would beat him without any reason for it.

One day, while this man was asleep, a tiger, that had broken his chain, rushed on him, and was just ready to devour him. Darling at first felt a kind of joy at the prospect of being delivered from his persecutor, but he condemned it directly, and wished to be at liberty; 'I would,' said he, 'return good for evil, and save the life of this unhappy person.' Immediately the door of his iron cage flew open, and he hasted to the man's assistance, who was then awake and defended himself against the tiger; seeing Darling so near him he gave himself up for lost; but his fear was soon turned to joy, for the generous monster seized on the tiger, strangled him, and afterwards lay down at the feet of his keeper: who, penetrated with gra-

titude, would have stooped down to make much of him, but he heard a voice that said, 'A good action never loses its reward,' and, at the same time, instead of a monster, he saw only a pretty little dog at his feet. Darling, delighted with his sudden transformation, wagged his tail, and jumped about his keeper, who took him up in his arms, and carried him to the King, to whom he related the wonderful adventure.

The Queen desired to have the dog, and Darling in this new situation would have thought himself very happy, could he have forgot he had once been a man and a King.

The Queen was extremely fond of him; but fearing lest he would grow bigger, she consulted her

The second Transformation of Prince Darling.

physicians, and they told her to let him eat nothing but bread, and of that but a small quantity; so poor Darling was half starved, but he was resolved to bear it with patience.

One day, when they had given him his little roll for breakfast, it came into his head to go and eat it in the palace garden, and taking it in his mouth, he ran towards a canal which he knew was at a small distance; but when he came to the place, instead of the canal he saw a large house, the outside of which sparkled with gold and precious stones. He perceived great numbers, both of men and women, go in richly dressed: and in the house there was singing, dancing, feasting, and all manner of diversions; but all that came out were pale, thin,

and covered with ulcers, and almost naked; for their clothes hung in rags and tatters; some fell down as they came out, without having strength to go any further; others lay on the ground ready to die with hunger, begging a morsel of bread of those that were going in; but they did not so much as vouchsafe them a look. Darling came near a young woman who endeavoured to pull up a few herbs to eat. The Prince, moved with compassion, said to himself: 'I am hungry, it is true, but if I wait till dinner-time I shall not be starved, and, perhaps, were I to give my breakfast to this poor creature I might save her life:' and resolving therefore to follow this good inclination, he dropt his bread into the young woman's hand, who car-

ried it to her mouth with surprising eagerness, and soon appeared perfectly recovered. Darling, overjoyed at having so seasonably relieved her, was going back to the palace, when he heard several loud cries, and turning round saw Zelia in the hands of four men, who dragged her along, and forced her into this fine house. Darling now wished for his monster's shape again, that he might succour Zelia; but, poor little dog, he could only bark at, and endeavour to follow, the ravishers. They kicked him, and would have driven him away; but he was determined not to leave the house till he knew what became of his shepherdess. And reproaching himself with his former behaviour, 'Alas!' said he, 'I am incensed at these men for carrying her off

in this manner; but have I not committed the same crime; and, had not the justice of heaven prevented the attempt, should I not have treated her with the like indignity?'

The reflections of Darling were interrupted by a noise over his head: he looked up, when a window opened, and to his great joy he saw Zelia, who threw out a dish of victuals, so nicely drest that the very sight of them created an appetite, and immediately shut the window. Darling, who had not yet broke his fast, thought he would take this opportunity, and was just going to eat, when the young woman, to whom he had given his bread, gave a loud shriek, and snatching him up in her arms, 'Poor little animal,' said she, 'do not taste of their vic-

tuals, that house is the palace of voluptuousness, and every thing that comes out from thence is poisoned.' At the same instant Darling heard a voice, which said, 'Thou seest a good action is not without its reward:' and immediately he was turned into a pretty little white pigeon. He remembered this colour was that of Candida, and began to hope he might be restored to her favour.

The first thing he did was to seek after Zelia, and spreading his wings, he flew quite round the house, and seeing a window open, went through every room in it, but could not find her. He was greatly afflicted, but resolved not to stop till he found her. He flew several days together, till at last he got into a desert, and with great joy beheld Zelia in a cave,

by the side of a venerable hermit, taking her share of a frugal meal with him. Darling, transported, flew on her shoulder, and billed and cooed, to express the pleasure he felt in seeing her. Zelia, charmed with his fondness, stroked the little creature gently with her hand, and, not thinking he understood her, told him she accepted the present he had made to her of himself, and that she would love him always. 'What have you done, Zelia?' said the hermit, 'you have just plighted your faith.' 'Yes, lovely shepherdess,' cried Darling, who that moment resumed his natural shape, 'on your consenting to be mine depended the end of my metamorphosis: you have promised to love me always, confirm my happiness, or I must beseech the

Prince Darling discovering Zelia with the Hermit.

Fairy Candida to let me return to the form in which I had the pleasure of being agreeable to you.' 'You have nothing to fear,' replied Candida, quitting the likeness of the hermit she had been concealed under, and appearing to them such as she really was. 'Zelia loved you from the first moment she saw you, but your vices obliged her to dissemble the inclination she had conceived for your person. This happy reformation gives her liberty to indulge a generous passion.'

Darling and Zelia threw themselves at the feet of Candida. The Prince thought he could never thank her enough for her goodness: and Zelia, delighted to find he detested his errors, confessed her affection, and gave him her hand with the utmost tenderness.

'Rise, my dear children,' said the fairy, 'I am going to transport you to your palace, and restore Darling to a crown of which he was before unworthy.' She had scarcely done speaking, when they found themselves in Suliman's chamber, who, overjoyed at his dear master's return to virtue, yielded up the throne to him, and remained the most faithful of his subjects.

Darling reigned many years very happily with Zelia, and applied himself so assiduously to his duty, that his ring, which he constantly wore, never once pricked him so as to fetch blood from his finger.

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