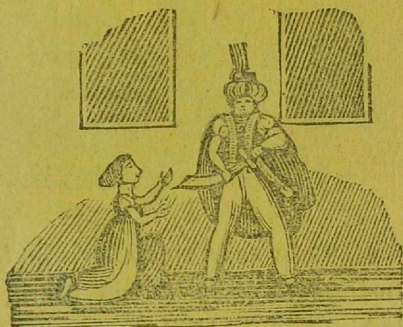
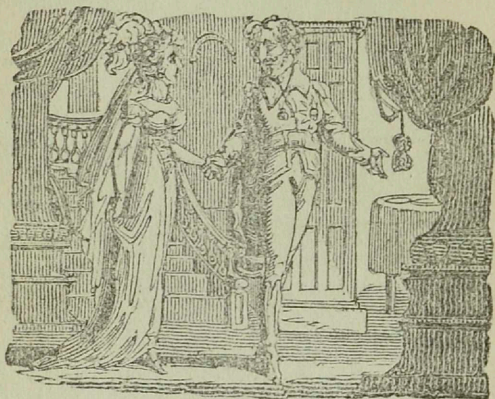


BLUE BEARD,
OR
FATAL CURIOSITY.



JOHN AND CHARLES MOZLEY,
DERBY ;
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Price One Halfpenny.

BLUE BEARD.



THERE was a very rich man who had the misfortune to have a blue beard, which made him so frightfully ugly, that all the women ran away from him.

One of his neighbours had two daughters, who were perfect beauties. He desired of her one of them in marriage, leaving to her the choice which of the two she would bestow on him. They would

neither of them have him, and sent him backwards and forwards from one to another, not being able to bear the thoughts of marrying a man who had a blue beard. And what besides gave them disgust and aversion, was his having already been married to several wives, and nobody ever knew what became of them.

Blue Beard, to engage their affections, took them, with their mother, and some other ladies, to one of his seats, where they stayed a whole week. There was nothing to be seen but dancing and feasting. At length the youngest daughter began to think that his beard was not so *very* blue, and that he was a mighty civil gentleman.

So soon as they returned home, the marriage was concluded. About a month afterwards, Blue Beard told his wife that he was obliged to take a journey for six weeks at least, desiring her to divert herself in his absence. "Here," said he, "are the keys of the two great wardrobes,



wherein I have my best furniture; these are of my silver and my gold plate; these open my strong boxes which hold my money; these my casket of jewels, and this is the master-key of all my apartments: but for this little one here, it is the key of the closet at the end of the great gallery. Open them all, go into every one, except that little closet, which I forbid you in such a manner, that if you open it, there is nothing but what you may expect from

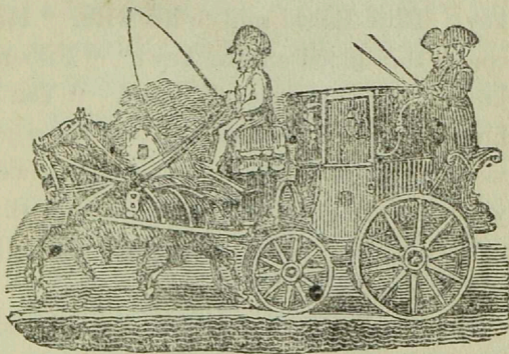
my just anger and resentment." She promised to observe very exactly what he had ordered; when he got into his coach, and proceeded on his journey.

Her neighbours and good friends did not stay to be sent for by the new married lady, so great was their impatience to see all the rich furniture of her house. They ran through all the rooms, which were so rich and fine that they seemed to surpass one another. They could not sufficiently admire the beauty of the tapestry, cabinets, and looking-glasses, in which you might see yourself from head to foot; they envied the happiness of their friend, who no way diverted herself in looking upon these things, because of the impatience she had to open the closet in the great gallery. She was so much pressed by her curiosity, that she went down a little back stair-case to get to the closet. She made a stop for some time, thinking upon her husband's orders; but the temptation was so strong



she could not overcome it ; she then took the little key, and opened the door trembling, but could not at first see any thing plainly, because the windows were shut. In some moments she perceived that the floor was covered with blood, on which lay the bodies of several dead women. (These were all the wives whom Blue Beard had married and murdered.) She thought she should have died of fear ; and the key, which she pulled out of the lock, fell out of her hand.

After having somewhat recovered, she took up the key, locked the door, and went up stairs to recover herself; having observed that the key was stained with blood, she tried to wipe it off; but it would not come off; in vain did she wash it with soap and sand, the blood still remained, for this key was a Fairy; when the blood was gone off from one side, it came again on the other.



Blue Beard returned the same evening,

and said, he had received letters, informing him that the affair he went about was settled to his advantage. Next morning he asked her for the keys, which she gave with such a trembling hand, that he easily guessed what had happened. "What," said he, "is not the key of the closet among the rest?" "I must certainly," answered she, "have left it on the table." "Fail not," said Blue Beard, "to bring it me presently."

At last she was forced to bring him the key. Blue Beard said to his wife, "How comes this blood on the key?" "I do not know!" cried the poor woman. "You do know," replied Blue Beard, "I know you were resolved to go into the closet, were you not? Mighty well, madam, you shall go in, and take your place among the ladies you saw there."

Upon this she threw herself at his feet, and begged pardon, but Blue Beard said, "You must die, madam, and that pre-

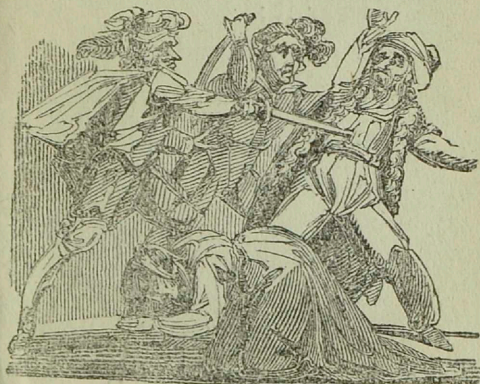
sently." "Since I must die," answered she, "give me a little time to say my prayers." "I give you," replied Blue Beard, "half a quarter of an hour, not one moment more."

When she was alone, she called out to her sister, "Sister Anne, go upon the tower, and look if my brothers are coming, and if you see them, give them a sign to make haste." Her sister went upon the tower, and the poor wife called, "Anne, sister Anne, do you see any one coming?" And sister Anne said, "I see nothing but the sun which shines bright, and the grass which looks green." In the meanwhile Blue Beard cried out, "Come down instantly, or I shall come up to you." "One moment longer, if you please," said his wife, and then she cried out very softly, "Anne, sister Anne, dost thou see any one coming?" "I see," replied sister Anne, "a great dust which comes from this side here." "Are they my brothers?" "Alas!

no, my dear sister, I see a flock of sheep.”
“Will you not come down?” cried Blue
Beard. “One moment longer,” said his
wife; and then she cried out, “Anne,
sister Anne, dost thou see any body com-
ing?” “I see two horsemen coming; but
they are yet a great way off.” “God be
praised!” replied the poor wife, “they
are my brothers.” Then Blue Beard
bawled out so loud, that he made the whole
house tremble.



The distressed wife came down and threw herself at his feet, all in tears. "This signifies nothing," said Blue Beard, "you must die;" then taking hold of her hair, and lifting up his scymitar, he was going to take off her head. At this very instant there was a knocking at the gate. Blue Beard made a sudden stop, and presently entered two horsemen, who, drawing their swords, ran directly to Blue Beard, and thrust their swords through his body.





So, Fanny, my love,
Here's a pretty new frock,
I wish you your health to
wear it;
'Tis so good and so neat,
It will fit you so well,
You'll be careful, I hope, not
to tear it.

John and Charles Mozley, Printers, Derby.