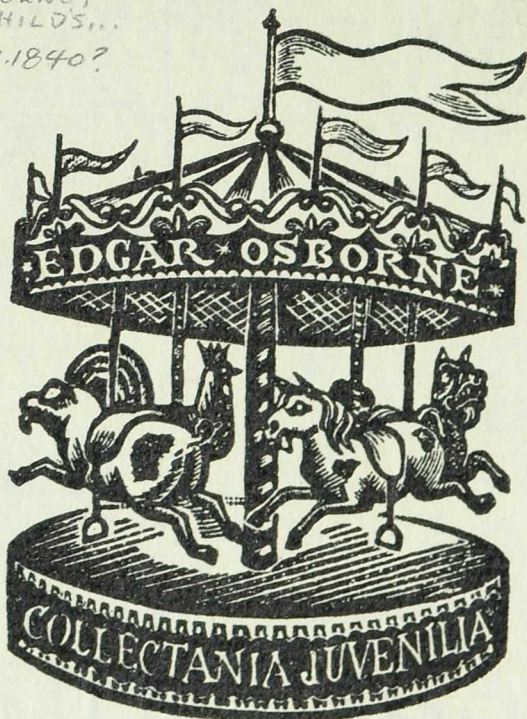
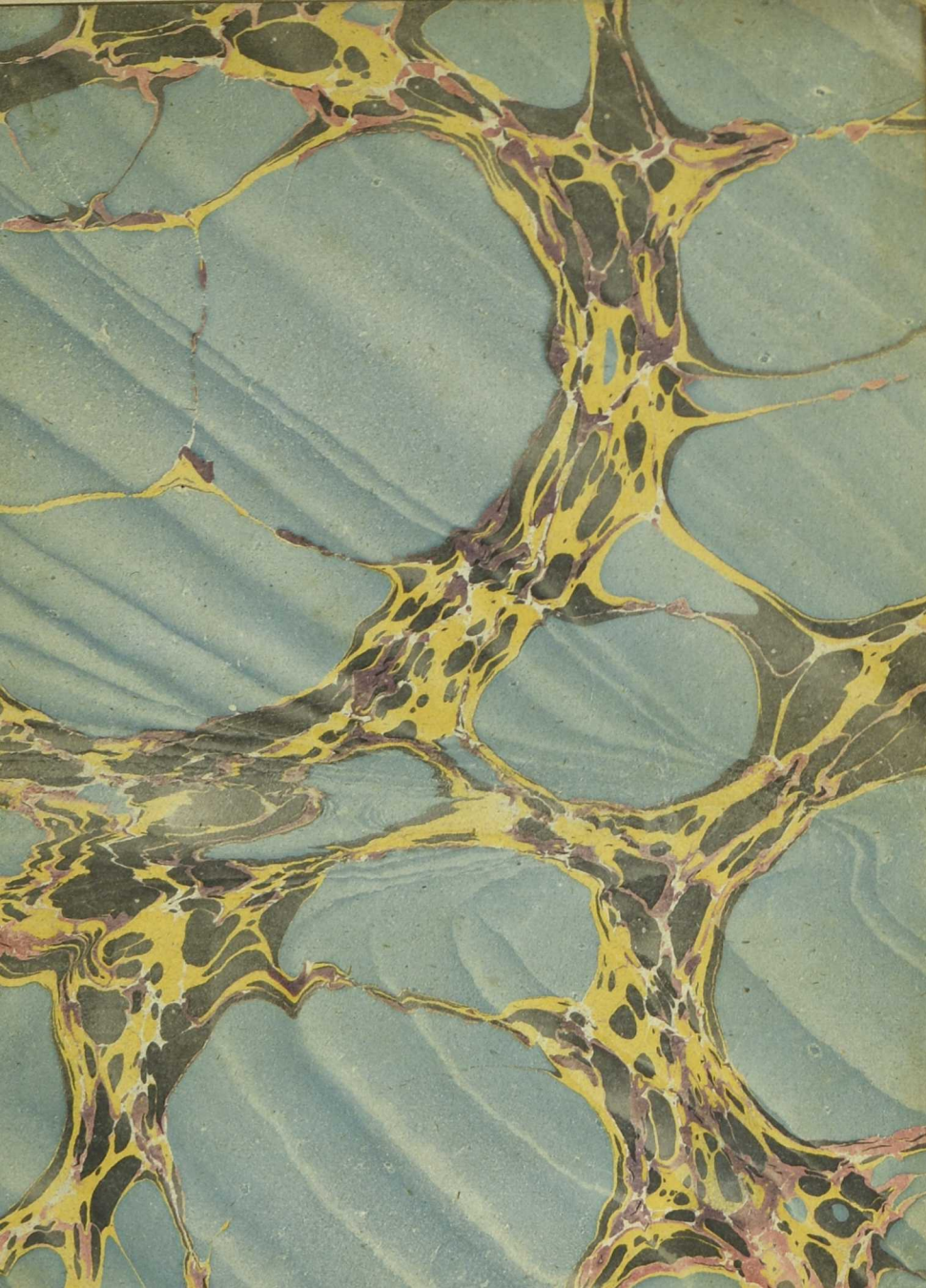


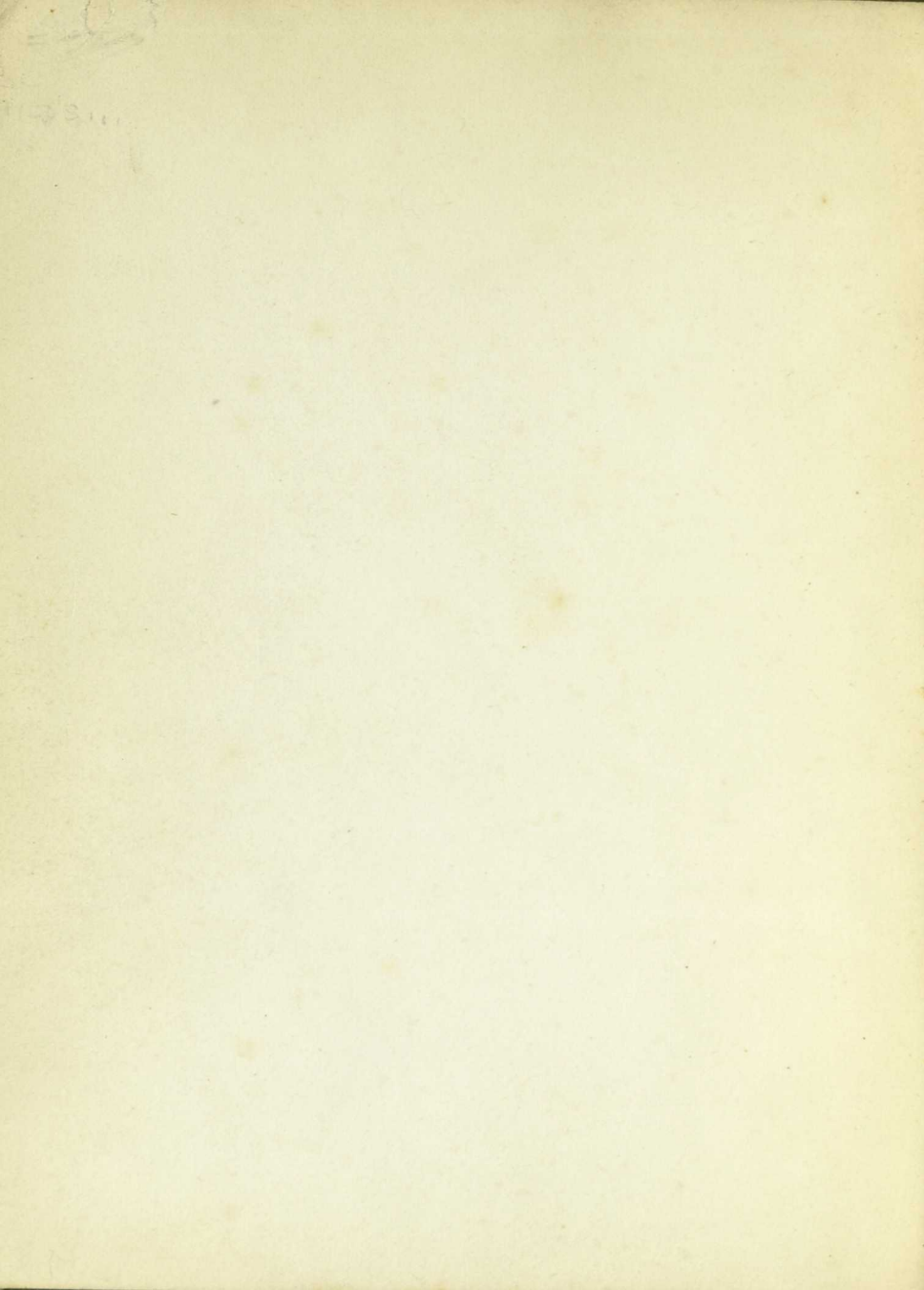


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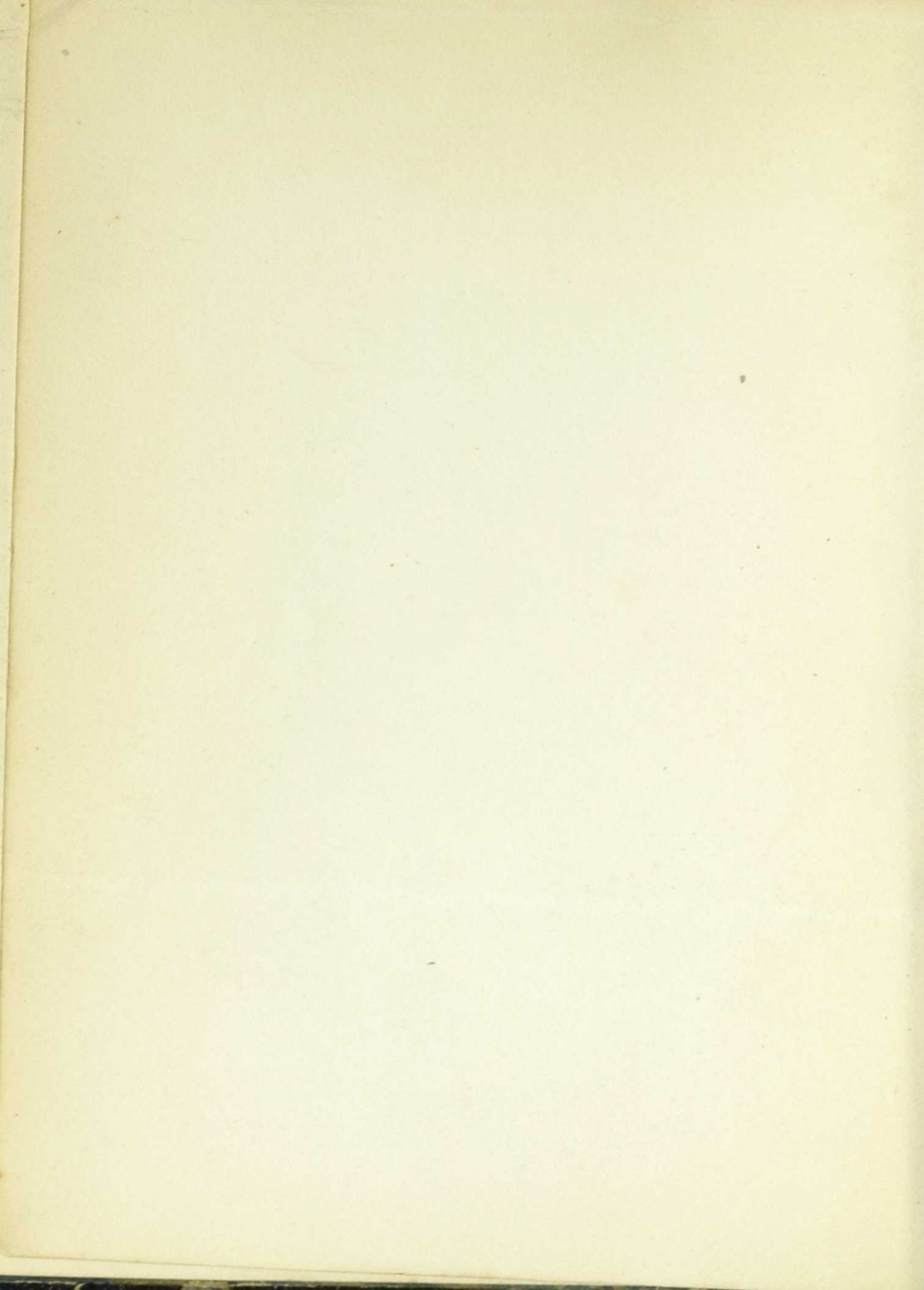


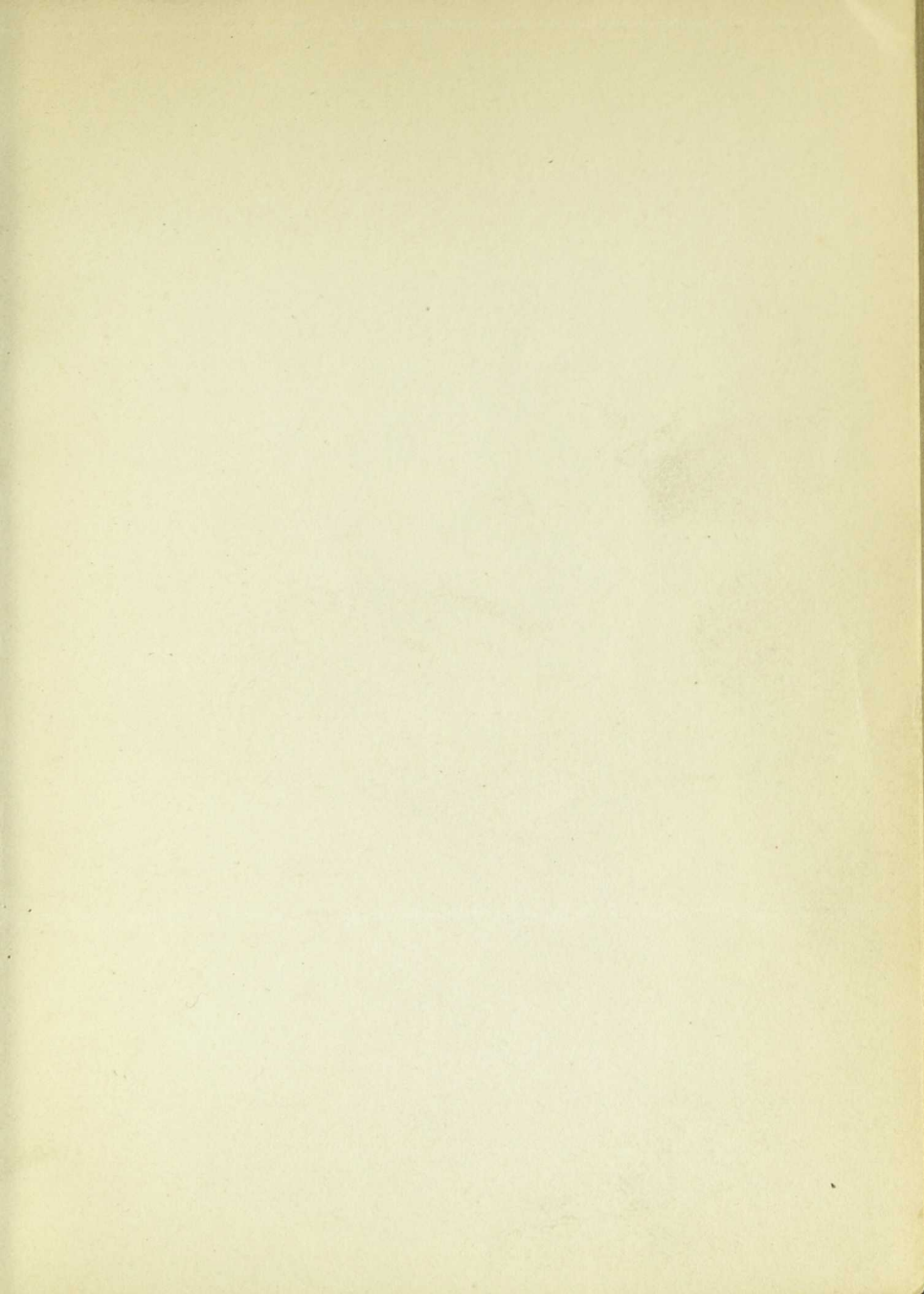
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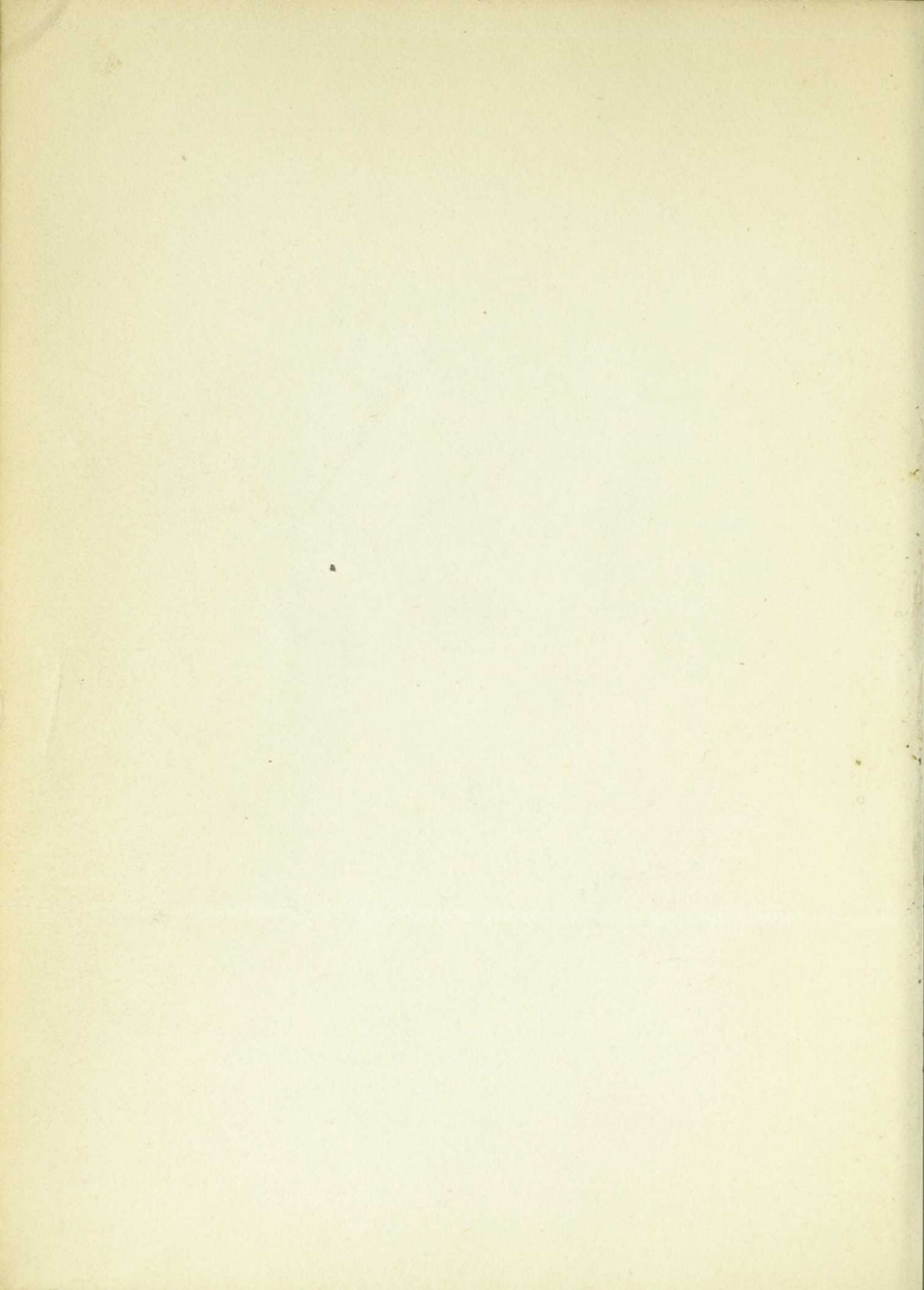








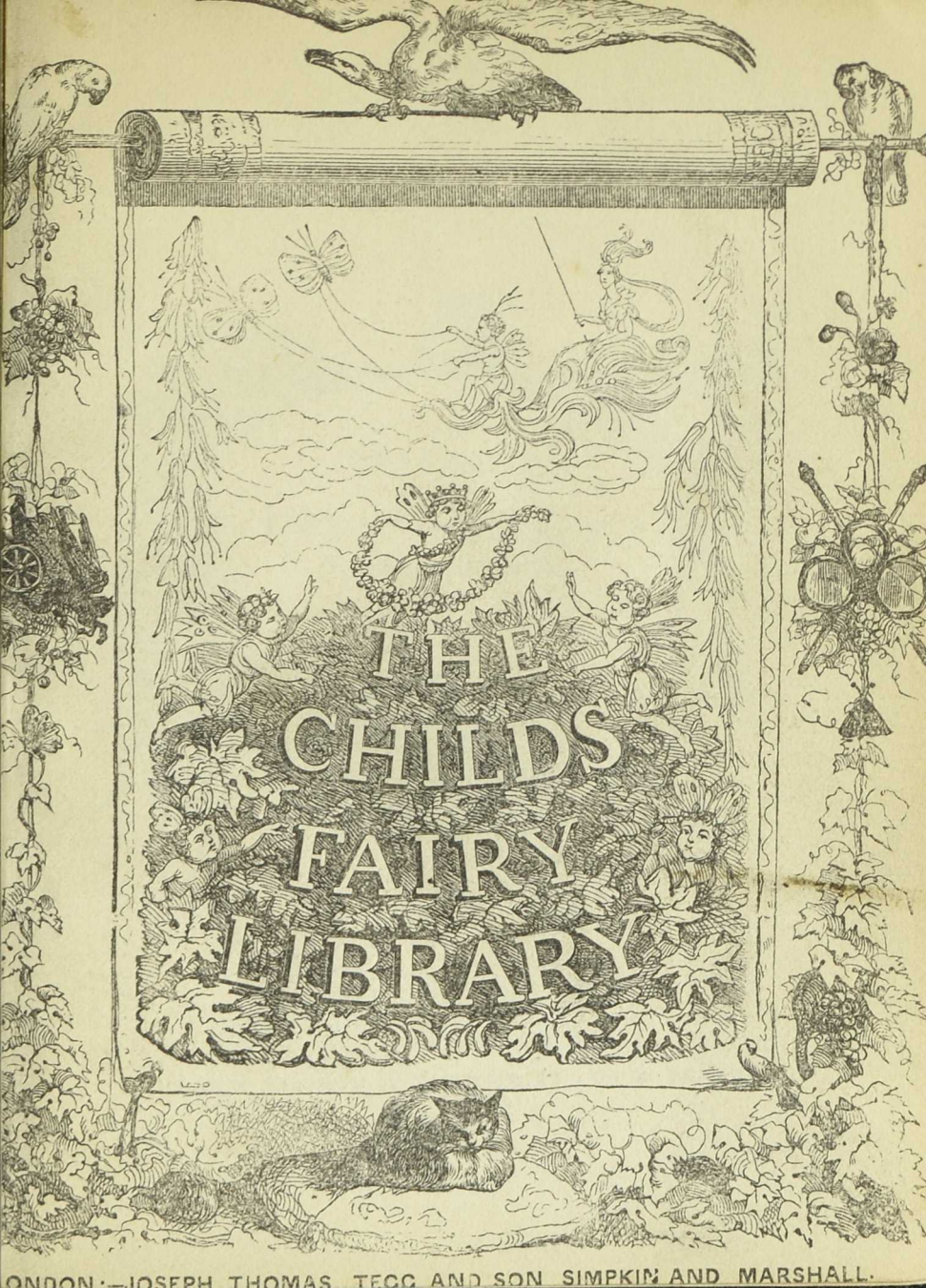












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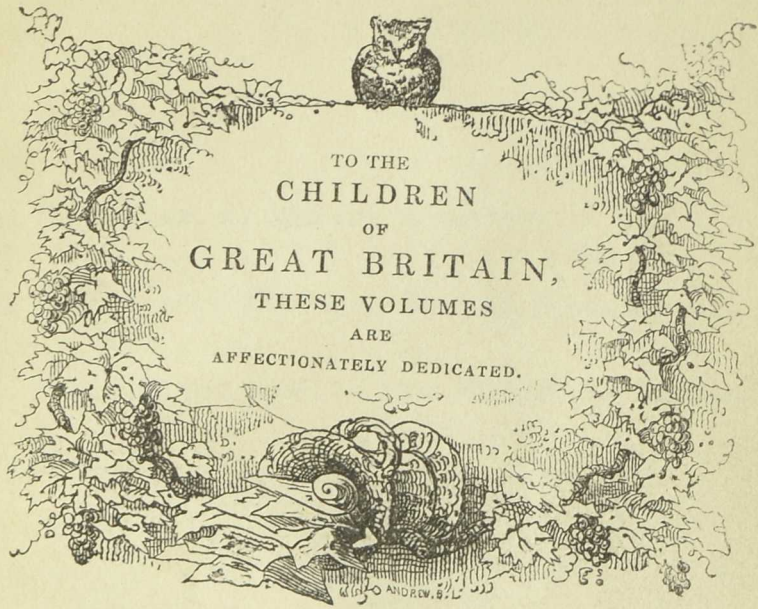
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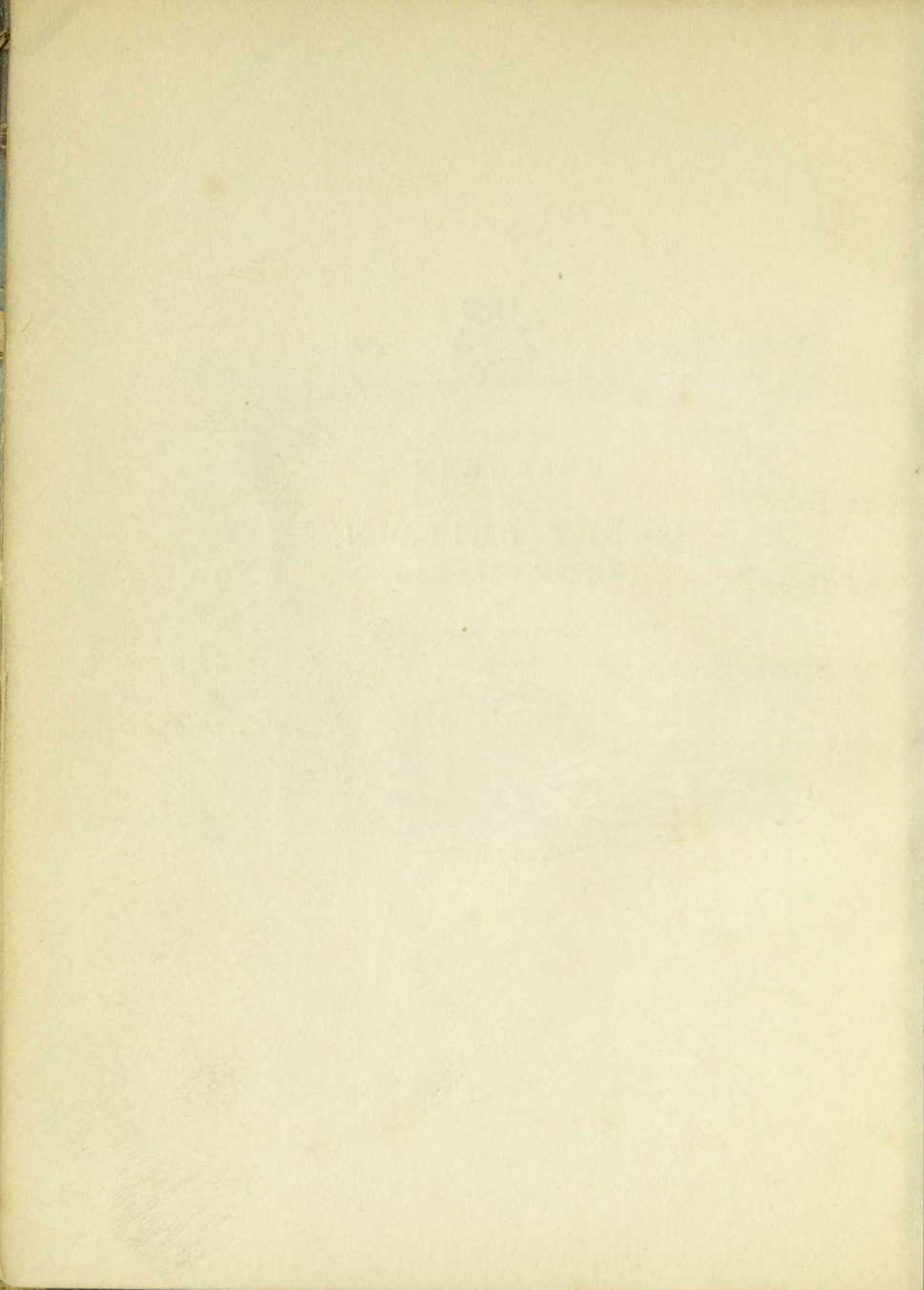
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*The Poet*



TO THE  
CHILDREN  
OF  
GREAT BRITAIN,  
THESE VOLUMES  
ARE  
AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.



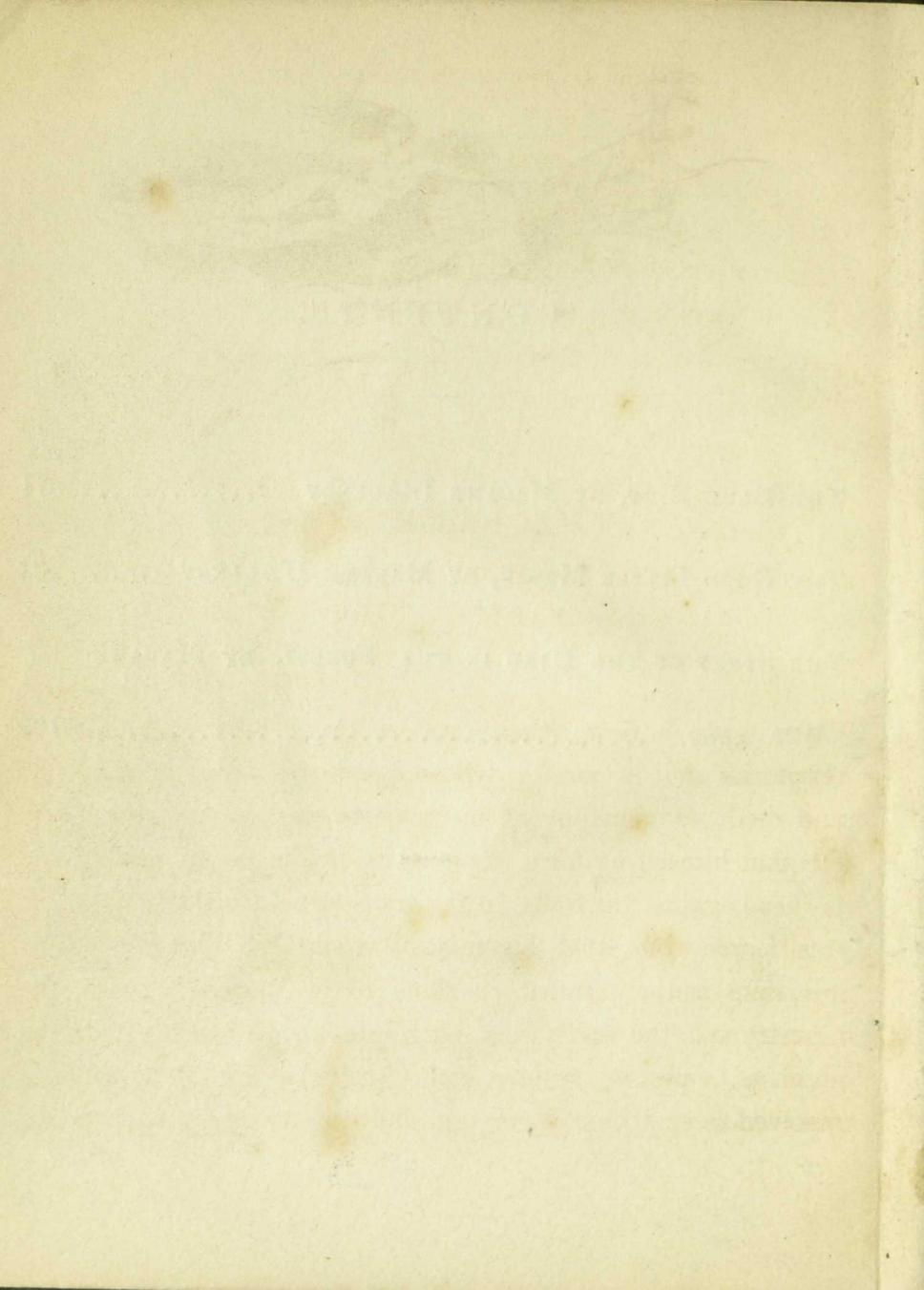


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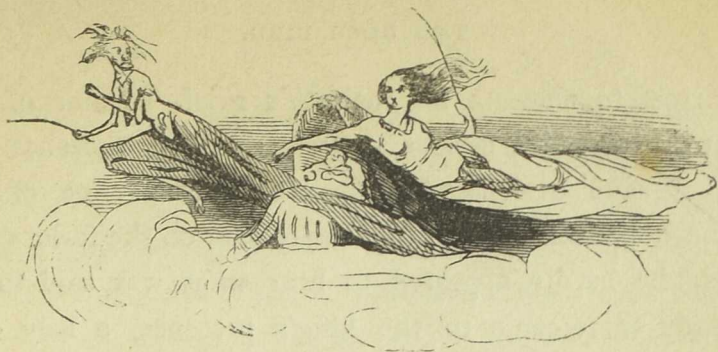
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## THE BLUE BIRD.

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ONCE upon a time, there was a king, very rich both in territories and in money, whose queen was taken suddenly ill, and died; at which event his majesty was quite inconsolable. He shut himself up for a whole week in his closet, and dashed his head against the walls, in the transports of his affliction. It was feared even, that his majesty would kill himself; so his ministers caused stuffed cushions to be placed between the tapestry and the walls, that he might knock himself about as much as he pleased, without endangering his life. His subjects resolved to visit their sovereign, and endeavour, by appropriate

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discourses, to alleviate his majesty's grief. Some of them prepared grave and serious orations; others, speeches of an agreeable and even jocose character; but none of them succeeded in making the least impression on the forlorn king; indeed, he hardly appeared to hear what was said to him. Presently there came to the king's presence, a lady deeply muffled in black crapes, veils, weepers, and long mourning habits, who sobbed and wept so bitterly and so audibly, that she attracted the king's attention. She said that she would not attempt, as others had, to diminish his grief; but that, on the contrary, she was come to augment it, as nothing could be more appropriate than to lament the decease of a good wife. "For my part," she added, "I have just lost the best of husbands, and I am determined not to cease weeping while I have eyes in my head." The stranger then redoubled her tears and lamentations; and the king, following her example, began to weep afresh.

His majesty having received the mourning lady more favourably than he had his subjects, spoke to her of the good qualities of his dear deceased wife, and she, in return, enlarged on those of her dear late husband: they conversed so long on the subjects of their grief, that at last they could think of nothing more to say. When the cunning widow saw that the topic was nearly exhausted, she slightly raised her veil, and

gave the afflicted king an opportunity of refreshing his sight by a peep at two large blue eyes, shaded by long black lashes, and a blooming complexion. The king gazed at her very earnestly, gradually spoke less and less of his wife, and soon ceased to mention her at all. The widow having again observed that she would always mourn the loss of her husband, the king entreated her not to perpetuate her grief. In the end, what was the astonishment of the king's subjects to see their monarch marry her, and change his mourning into wedding garments ! It is generally only necessary to know the weak side of people, in order to become the master of their secret thoughts, and to mould them to any object whatever.

The king's former wife had left him an only daughter, who passed for the eighth wonder of the world : she was called Flora, and in truth resembled the goddess, her namesake, in the delicate tint of her complexion, and the loveliness of her form. She was never seen in magnificent clothes ; but preferred a loose robe made of plain silk, which, with a jewelled clasp and a garland of fresh flowers placed among her beautiful tresses, had an admirable effect. She was only fifteen years of age, when the king her father re-married.

The new queen also had a daughter, who had been brought up by her god-mother, the fairy Soussio, but notwithstanding all the power of her governess, which had been employed in her

favour, she was neither accomplished nor beautiful. Soussio had done her best for her god-daughter, but had failed: however, she loved her not the less on that account. The young lady was called Troutina, for her face was covered with yellow freckles, like the spots on the back of a trout. The queen doated on her, and was continually speaking of her charming *Troutina*; and as *Flora* was so superior to her



daughter in every respect, she conceived a violent hatred towards her, and sought by every means in her power to possess the king against his own child. Not a day passed, but the queen and Troutina played Flora some trick, while that princess, who

was both amiable and witty, only endeavoured to place herself beyond the reach of her enemies' malice.

The king one day remarked to the queen, that Flora and Troutina were old enough to be married, adding that it would be advisable to try and marry one of them to the first prince who should come to the court. "I insist," answered the queen, "that my daughter be married first; she is older than yours, and as she is a thousand times more amiable, there can be no room for doubt on the subject." The king, who did not like discussions, said that he had no objection, and that it should be as she pleased.

Shortly afterwards, it became known that King Charming was on his road to the court. Never was there a more gallant or a more handsome prince; he had not a single quality of mind or person which did not answer to his name. When the queen heard of his intended visit, she set all her milliners and mantua-makers to work, to prepare costly attire for Troutina; while she told the king, that Flora required nothing new for the occasion; and, having bribed the attendants of her step-daughter, the malicious woman had all her clothes, head-dresses, and jewels stolen, on the very day of Charming's arrival; so that when she went to dress, there was not even a single riband to be found. Flora knew to whom she might attribute this good turn, and sent to the shops to purchase materials for a gown;

but her tradesmen sent word by her messengers, that they had been forbidden by the queen, to sell her any article of dress whatever. The princess was consequently obliged to appear in a common gown, somewhat soiled by wear, of which she was so ashamed, that she hid herself in a corner of the saloon when the prince arrived.

The queen received prince Charming with great pomp, and presented her daughter to him, glittering with jewels, but, notwithstanding the magnificence of her attire, looking more ugly than she usually did. *The prince turned from her with*



*disgust*, though the queen flattered herself that he was but too well pleased with her daughter, and was only fearful of declaring himself too soon. Under this impression, she would not allow

Troutina to quit the apartment an instant, when Charming presently asked, whether there were not another young lady, called Flora. "Yes," said Troutina, pointing to her step-sister with her finger; "there she is, ashamed to shew herself in her dirt and rags." This speech made Flora blush, when King Charming thought she looked so very beautiful, that he was struck dumb by admiration. Recovering himself, however, as quickly as he could, he bowed low to the princess, and said: "Madam, your incomparable beauty becomes you so well, that no dress could add to your charms."—"Sir," replied Flora, "I must confess that I am but little accustomed to appear in society as you see me; and I should have been better pleased had you taken no notice of me."—"It would be impossible" cried Charming, "to have eyes for any one else in the presence of so wondrous a beauty as yourself."—"Ah!" said the queen, displeased, "your majesty may cease your compliments; believe me, Sir, Flora is vain enough already, and will not thank you for your courtesy." The king immediately perceived the queen's motive for this malicious speech; but as he had no desire to constrain his inclinations, he made no secret of his admiration of Flora, and conversed with her for three whole hours.

The queen, half mad with vexation at the turn affairs had taken, and Troutina, inconsolable at Charming's open preference

for Flora, complained bitterly to the king, and obliged him to consent that his daughter, while Charming remained at court, should be confined in a tower, where she might neither see nor be seen by her admirer. Accordingly, when Flora had retired to her apartment, she was seized by four men wearing masks, who bore her to the highest room in the round tower, and then, having locked the door, *left her in the greatest distress*, for she



plainly saw, that she was only placed in confinement, in order to prevent her meeting the prince, for whom she already felt a great regard, and whom, if properly asked, she would have had no great objection to marry.

In the meanwhile, Charming, ignorant of the violence that had been used towards the princess, looked forward with the



utmost impatience to the time of his next interview. He could not help speaking of her to the lords in waiting, that the king had appointed to honour him; but they, by the queen's orders, said all the ill-natured things they could imagine against her; that she was a coquette, fickle, very ill-tempered, and fond of annoying her friends and servants; that she was slovenly to an extreme degree, and so avaricious, that she preferred wearing the meanest clothes, to purchasing dresses befitting her rank, although ample funds were allowed by her father for the purpose. Charming was pained to hear all this, and could hardly repress his rising anger. "No," he said to himself, "it is impossible that nature can have endowed with so unworthy a mind the most perfect of her works. I must confess that she was not very neatly dressed when I saw her, but the shame expressed by her lovely, ingenuous countenance, sufficiently indicated that this was not habitual to her. Is it possible that she can be ill-tempered, with that enchantingly mild and modest demeanour? I cannot believe it: it is much more likely that the queen, who is only Flora's step-mother, should have circulated this vile calumny against her; and, considering the ugliness of her own daughter, the princess Troutina, it is not at all surprising that she should endeavour to depreciate this most perfect of created beings."

While King Charming thus reasoned with himself, the

courtiers who stood around, perceived by his looks that he was not pleased by their slanders concerning Flora; so one of them, more skilful than the rest, changing his tone and language in order to discover the prince's sentiments, began to speak in the princess's praise. On hearing this, Charming recovered from his abstraction, like one awakening from a deep sleep, and, with joy plainly expressed on his countenance, he immediately entered into conversation with the courtier.

The queen, impatient to know the real state of the prince's affections, summoned the lords in waiting to her presence, on their leaving him after this conversation, and spent the rest of the night in questioning them. All they told her, only served to confirm her in the opinion that Charming was in love with Flora. But how shall I describe the wretchedness of that unfortunate princess? *Throwing herself on the floor, she leaned upon the miserable bed* which stood in a corner of the apartment into which the masked ruffians had thrown her: "I should have had less reason to complain" said she, "had I been confined here before I had seen the amiable Charming. My remembrance of that prince only serves to augment my grief; while I cannot doubt but that it is to prevent my seeing him again, that I am thus cruelly treated by the queen. Alas! how dearly am I destined to pay for the little beauty that Heaven has been pleased to bestow on me!" Flora wept so bitterly,



that could her most cruel enemy have witnessed her affliction, the sight would have melted his heart.

On the following morning, the queen, who studied every means of making herself agreeable to prince Charming, sent him a present. consisting of most superb clothes, made in the costume of the country, and the badge of THE KNIGHTS OF CUPID, an order which she had prevailed upon the king to institute on the day that their nuptials were celebrated. This badge was properly a heart of burnished gold, surrounded by many darts and pierced with one; and on the heart was engraved the motto: "One only wounds me." But the queen had caused the heart she presented to Charming, to be carved

from a single ruby, as large as an ostrich's egg, while each of the arrows, as long as one's finger, was composed of a single diamond, and the chain to which the heart was attached, was made of pearls, the smallest of which weighed an ounce at least ; in a word, the decoration was worthy the genius of a Cellini or a Heriot.

The prince was so surprised at its magnificence, that for several minutes he could not speak. At the same time was presented to him a book, the leaves of which were made of vellum, containing the statutes of the order of CUPID written in a gallant and tender style. Every page was surrounded by a border painted in admirable taste, and the book was bound in gold, richly set with precious stones. Charming was informed that the princess he had seen, and who sent him that present, entreated him to become her knight. The prince, on hearing this, flattered himself, that the princess in question was the one he loved. "What," cried he, "does the fair Flora then honour me so highly?"—"Your, majesty," said one of his attendants, "is mistaken ; we come from the amiable Troutina."—"What ! Troutina wish me to become her knight !" said the prince, with a cold and formal air, "I feel sorry to be obliged to decline the honour : but a sovereign is not at liberty to make every engagement he may wish. I know the obligations of knighthood, and should wish to fulfil them all ; I would

rather, therefore, decline the proffered honour, than prove myself unworthy of the kindness which prompts its bestowal." Thereupon Charming replaced the heart, chain and book in their cases, and sent them back to the queen, who, with her daughter, was ready to choke with rage, on hearing of the contemptuous way in which the prince, a stranger, had rejected so signal a favour.

Whenever an occasion occurred for prince Charming to pay his respects to the king and queen, he went to the palace; hoping to meet with Flora, but hoping in vain. When any one entered the apartment, he would turn hastily towards the door, nor could he conceal his uneasiness at the non-appearance of her he loved. The malicious queen was at no loss to divine the cause of Charming's agitation, which, however, she affected not to observe. She spoke to him only of parties of pleasure, and he returned answers quite foreign to the subject; at last he asked her plainly where was the princess Flora. "May it please your highness," answered the queen, in a haughty tone, "the king her father has forbidden her to quit her chamber until my daughter shall be married."—"And what may be his majesty's motive," enquired King Charming, "for putting that amiable creature in confinement?"—"I do not know," said the queen; "and if I did, I should not be bound to communicate it to you." The prince was much

enraged, and, regarded with indignation the repulsive Troutina, for whose gratification he was deprived of the pleasure of seeing the amiable Flora ; at last unable longer to endure the queen's presence, he hastily quitted the apartment.

Having returned to his room, he requested a young prince who had accompanied him on his visit, and to whom he was much attached, to use his utmost exertions in order to obtain from one of the princess's women the means of speaking with her mistress for a few moments. The prince readily obeyed ; and, being young and handsome, easily found ladies in the palace willing to listen to all he had to say. From one of these he learned that the princess Flora would, that very evening, be at a little low window which looked into the palace-garden, whence she might speak with Charming, but that it would be necessary to take great care that no one overheard them : " For," she added, " the king and queen are so severe, that they would have me put to death, should they discover that I favoured Charming's passion." The prince, in ecstasies at being so far successful, promised the confidante that every precaution should be used, and hastened to inform the king of his good fortune. But the deceitful lady in waiting also went straightway to the queen, told her of all that had passed, and advised her as to what steps should be taken. The queen, after much consultation, determined to send

her own daughter to the little window, and Troutina, nothing loth, entered into the scheme ; for, although her head was badly shaped, she did not want for brains.

The night proved to be so dark, that it would have been impossible for the king to discover the deception practised on him, even had he not been so confident in the success of his scheme ; accordingly, he approached the window with transports of inexpressible joy, and said to Troutina all that he would have said to Flora, to convince her of his passion. Troutina, taking advantage of his mistake, told him that she was the most unfortunate person in the world, at having so cruel a mother-in-law, and that her sufferings would only cease on her marriage. King Charming assured her that if she were willing to accept him for her husband, he should be but too happy to share with her his heart and crown ; and with that drew from his finger a ring, which placing on the hand of Troutina, he declared, that it should be to her a pledge of his eternal fidelity, and that she had only to name the hour when she would be willing to set out. Troutina answered as appropriately as she could to his entreaties. He perceived that she made no serious objection to the completion of his wishes ; but he observed also that she spoke but little. This would have annoyed him, had he not thought that her silence arose from a fear of awakening the queen ; but he would only quit her on her promising to meet

him the next evening at the same hour and place, a promise which she made with all her heart.

When the queen was informed of the success of this interview, she flattered herself that all would go as she wished; and in truth King Charming, having appointed a day, came to take



the princess away in a *flying chariot, drawn by an immense white animal, having some resemblance to a snail*. An enchanter, who was a friend of King Charming, had made him a present of this equipage. The night was dark and favoured Troutina's scheme; she left the palace mysteriously by a little postern door, and the king, who was awaiting her, received her in his arms, and vowed eternal fidelity. He immediately asked her where she would wish to have their nuptials solemnized; to which Troutina replied, that her god-mother, whose name was



Soussio, was a very celebrated fairy ; and that she should prefer to be taken to her castle. Although King Charming was unacquainted with the road to this castle, he had only to tell the white animal that drew his chariot that he wished to go there, and the intelligent creature, who was skilled in the geography of every part of the globe, safely transported King Charming and Princess Troutina thither, in an incredibly short space of time.

The castle was so brilliantly lighted when the king reached it, that he would immediately have perceived his error, had not the princess kept herself closely muffled in her veil. Troutina having asked to see her god-mother, was conducted to her presence, when she informed the fairy how she had entrapped Charming, and entreated her to pacify him. “ Ah daughter !”



*answered Soussio,* “ it will be no easy task ; he is too fond of Flora, and I am certain that he will give us a great deal of trouble.” Meanwhile, the king awaited them in a saloon

the walls of which were diamonds, so bright and transparent that he saw Soussio through them conversing with Troutina! He thought he was in a dream. "What," said he, "have I been betrayed? Has some evil spirit conjured up this enemy of our repose? Is she come to disturb my marriage? But where is my dear Flora! perhaps her father has followed us and torn her from me." A thousand agitating thoughts distracted his mind. But his misery was unspeakable when Troutina entered the saloon with her godmother, and the latter said to him in an authoritative tone of voice: "King Charming, here is Princess Troutina, to whom you have plighted your troth; she is my god-daughter, and I command you to marry her immediately."—"I," cried the king, "I marry the little monster! you must think me a simpleton even to make me such a proposition: I have made her no promise whatever; and if she say otherwise, she ——:"—"Enough," interrupted Soussio, "remember to whom your are speaking."—"I consent," answered Charming, "to respect you as a fairy should be respected, provided you restore to me my princess."—"And am I not your princess, perjurer?" said Troutina, showing him the ring he had given her. "To whom did you give this ring as a pledge of your faith? To whom did you address your vows at the little window, if not to me?"—"What then," said Charming, "have I been deceived and imposed on?"

No, no, I will not be your dupe. Come," said he, addressing the animal which drew his chariot, "carry me hence immediately."

"Not so fast," said Soussio, "you cannot go hence without my consent." Thereupon she struck Charming with her wand, and his feet grew as fast to the floor of the saloon, as though they had been nailed there. "Though you were to flay me alive I would still be faithful to my Flora," said the king: "my mind is made up, and you may, after this avowal, exert your power to the utmost." Soussio made use of entreaties, threats, promises, and prayers. Troutina wept, screamed, groaned, fell into a passion and became quiet again. The king said not a word, but regarding them both very indignantly, made no reply to their noisy speeches.

Twenty days and twenty nights passed without their ceasing to talk, even to eat, to sleep, or to sit down. At last Soussio, wearied out of all patience, said to the king: "Very well, since your majesty is so obstinate as to shut your ears against all reason, choose between these two alternatives; either marry my god-daughter, or resign yourself to a seven years' penance for not keeping your plighted troth." The king, who had hitherto kept a profound silence, cried out all at once: "Do with me what you will, provided I am freed from this disagreeable wretch."—"You are a disagreeable wretch yourself," said

Troutina, in anger ; in truth you are a pretty fellow for a king, to come to my country to abuse me and break your word : had you a spark of honour in you, you could not act in this manner ?” —“ Really you cut me to the heart,” said Charming in an ironical tone. “ It is unquestionably madness in me to reject so lovely a lady for my wife !” —“ No, no, she will never be your wife,” cried Soussio in a passion, “ you may fly through that open window if you choose, but you shall be a Blue Bird for seven years.”

As the fairy pronounced these words, the king’s figure entirely changed ; his arms became wings, covered with feathers ; his legs, decreasing in size, became black, and his toe-nails were replaced by crooked talons ; his body grew small, but was ornamented with long, delicate feathers of a sky-blue colour, while his eyes became round and brilliant as stars ; his nose changed into an ivory beak ; from his head sprung a tuft of white feathers in the shape of a crown, and he began to sing, and even to speak to admiration. His first impulse was to utter a plaintive note to bewail his metamorphosis ; he then spread his wings and flew away from the fatal palace of the fairy Soussio.

In the melancholy that overwhelmed him, the unfortunate Charming fluttered from branch to branch, but of those trees only consecrated to love and sadness, as the myrtle and the

cypress ; he sang the most mournful airs, in which he deplored his hard fate and that of the fair Flora. "Where have her enemies concealed her?" cried he. "What is become of that amiable victim? Has the queen's barbarity not yet taken her life? Where shall I seek her? Am I really condemned to pass seven years without her? Perhaps, during that time, she may be married, and thus be lost to me for ever." The sorrowful thoughts that these reflections engendered, afflicted him to such a degree, that he no longer wished to live.

Meanwhile, the fairy Soussio sent Troutina to the queen, who was very anxious to learn how her daughter's wedding had passed. But when Troutina returned alone, and informed her of what had transpired, she went into a terrible passion, the ill-effects of which alighted on the unfortunate Flora. "That girl," said the cruel queen, "shall dearly repent having pleased King Charming." She then ascended to her step-daughter's chamber, accompanied by Troutina, who, dressed in her richest clothes, and wearing a crown of diamonds, was attended by three young ladies, daughters of the richest and most powerful peers of the realm. On her thumb she purposely wore the ring she had received from King Charming, and which Flora remembered to have seen on his majesty's finger, the day she had first conversed with him. When they reached the room in which Flora was confined,

that princess was strangely surprised to see Troutina so magnificently dressed. "My daughter brings you a wedding-present," said the queen; "her marriage with King Charming has just been solemnized; never did man more passionately love; never was there a happier couple." Then an attendant spread before the princess, rich pieces of gold and silver brocade, caskets of jewellery, pieces of lace, and ribands of the most elegant patterns. As Troutina displayed these different articles to Flora, she did not fail to make the latter observe King Charming's ring, so that the princess could no



longer doubt her misfortune. "Remove all these fatal presents from my sight," she cried, with a look of anguish; "I will

wear mourning until the day of my death, which I feel is not far distant." Then the unfortunate Flora fainted away, and the cruel queen, in ecstasies at the apparent success of her diabolical stratagem, would not allow any one to assist her. Leaving Flora in that helpless condition, the queen sought the king, and maliciously informed him that his daughter was so transported with tenderness, that nothing could equal her extravagances; and that, in her opinion, great care ought to be taken, not to allow her to leave the tower. The king told the queen to act as she thought proper, and that he should be perfectly satisfied.

When the princess recovered from her swoon, and came to reflect on the conduct that had been pursued towards her, the ill-treatment she had received at the hands of her unworthy step-mother, and the hope that she had for ever lost of the love of King Charming, her grief became so great, that she wept all night long; and in this state, her eyes streaming with tears, she seated herself at the window, where her sighs and lamentations redoubled. As day approached, she shut the casement, and still continued to weep.

The next night, the unfortunate Flora re-seated herself at the window, with grief unabated, uttering the most profound sighs and sobs, and shedding a torrent of tears: when it was nearly day she withdrew into her room as before. In the mean time,

King Charming, or rather the handsome Blue Bird, continued to flutter around the palace, in which he imagined his dear princess to be confined; and if her complaints were sorrowful, so were those of the Blue Bird. He flew as close to the windows as he could, to look into the apartments: but the fear of being perceived and recognized by Troutina, withheld him. "My life is at stake," said he to himself; "if this wicked princess and her mother should discover me, they will seek to avenge themselves: alas! I must either keep at a distance from the palace, or expose my life to the utmost danger." These reflections determined him to adopt the greatest precautions, and he generally sang only in the night.

Immediately opposite the window of Flora's chamber, there was a very tall cypress, and one evening the Blue Bird perched among its branches. Scarcely had he settled, when he heard some one complaining, as if in sorrow. "How much longer am I destined to suffer?" said the voice. "Alas! why comes not death to terminate my grief? Those who fear death, see him but too soon: I call upon him, and he shuns me. Ah! barbarous queen, of what have I been guilty, that you keep me in such cruel confinement? Is there no other way for you to torment me? Alas! you have only to make me a witness of the happiness your unworthy daughter enjoys with King Charming, to increase my misery a hundred fold!" The Blue



Bird, who overheard every word of his mistress's complaint, was not a little surprised at its concluding words, and awaited the dawn of day with the utmost impatience, that he might see the afflicted lady. But just before sun-rise, she closed the window and retired into her chamber.

The curious Bird failed not to return on the next evening; and by the light of the moon, which shone brightly, he observed a young lady at the window of the tower, who commenced her lamentations. "O cruel Fortune!" she said, "you who flattered me with the prospect of reigning, and blessed me with my father's love, how have I deserved to be thus plunged all at once into the bitterest grief! Is it at years so tender as mine, that your inconstancy begins to show itself? Return, barbarian, return, if it be possible; the only favour I ask of you is to put an end to my unhappy fate." The Blue Bird listened; and the more he heard, the more he became convinced that it was his amiable princess who complained; so he said: "Lovely Flora, miracle of beauty, why do you wish so soon to die? Your misfortunes are not irremediable."—"Who speaks to me in the voice of consolation?" cried Flora. "An unfortunate king," replied the Bird, "who loves you to distraction, and who will never love any other than you."—"A king who loves me!" added she; "is this another snare laid for me by my enemy? But what will she gain in the end? If she seek to discover my



sentiments, I am ready to make open avowal of them.”—“No, my princess,” answered the Blue Bird, “your lover, who speaks to you, is incapable of betraying you.” As he pronounced these words, *he flew to the window*. Flora was frightened at first, to see so extraordinary a bird, which spoke as readily and intelligently as a human being, though its voice was not louder than the song of the nightingale; but the beauty of its plumage, and its words re-assured her. “And am I then permitted to see you again, my princess?” cried he. “Can I taste so supreme a happiness, and not die? But alas! my joy is troubled by the thoughts of your captivity, and the

state to which the wicked Soussio has condemned me for seven years!"—"And who then are you, *charming* bird?" said the princess caressing it. "You have called me by name, and you feign not to know me," returned the king. "What, the greatest king in the world! Charming!" said the princess; "can he be the little bird I hold in my hand?"—"Alas! fair Flora, it is but too true," replied the Blue Bird; "and if any thing can console me under my misfortune, it is the reflection that I preferred this transformation to the horror of renouncing the passion that I must ever feel for you."—"For me!" said Flora; "ah! do not attempt to deceive me! I know, I know but too well that you are married to Troutina; I have seen her wearing your ring, I have seen her resplendent with jewels she received from you; she came to my prison to insult me, wearing a rich crown and a royal mantle that you had presented to her, while I was loaded with grief."

"You have seen Troutina so dressed?" interrupted the king; "has she or her wicked mother dared to tell you, that her finery came from me? Oh Heaven! is it possible that I can hear such frightful lies, and be unable to avenge myself! Know, charming Flora, that, by deceiving me with your name, they engaged me to elope with the detestable Troutina; but I discovered my error, abandoned her, and, rather than fail in the fidelity I had vowed to you, I chose to become a Blue Bird for the space of seven years."

Flora felt so lively a pleasure at these words of her amiable lover, that she no longer remembered her misfortunes, or her prison. What tender things did she not say to console him for his sorrowful adventure, and to assure him that she would have done no less for him had she been in his place! Day appeared, and most of the officers of the palace had already risen, while the Blue Bird and the princess were still conversing: so, after arranging to meet thus every evening, they separated, with the most tender protestations of eternal fidelity.

Words are inadequate to express the extreme joy experienced by the lovers at thus meeting again; they severally returned thanks to love and to fortune. However, Flora was uneasy on account of the Blue Bird: "Who will guard him from the fowlers?" said she; "or from the sharp talons of some eagle or ravenous vulture, who would devour him with as much appetite as though he were any thing but a great king? Oh Heaven! what would become of me were his light and delicate feathers, borne hither by the winds, to enter my prison window, and announce to me the disaster that I so much dread." This idea haunted the poor princess so incessantly, that it prevented her from closing her eyes. It is ever thus with those who love; forebodings appear to be realities, and that which at another time would be thought impossible, then seems to be certainty itself; and so Flora spent the day in tears, until the hour came for her lover to repair to her window.

In the meanwhile, the charming bird, concealed in a hollow tree, could think of nothing but his beautiful princess. "How happy have I been to find her again!" he said. "How sensibly do I feel the kindness she manifests towards me!" The tender lover then began impatiently to count the years, months, weeks, days, hours, and even minutes which must elapse ere, his penance being terminated, he could hope to marry her: never was the nuptial day looked forward to more anxiously, than by our feathered inamorato. As he wished to show every attention to Flora, he directed his flight to the capital of his kingdom. Arrived there, he flew into his private closet in the palace, through a broken pane of glass, and selecting a pair of diamond ear-rings, of such surpassing beauty, that nothing in the world could approach them in point of splendour, he seized them with his beak, and having borne them to his tree, presented them that evening to Flora, entreating her to wear them for his sake. "I would consent to do so," she replied, "if you saw me in the day; but as I speak with you in the night only, I shall have no use for them." The bird told her that he would watch his opportunity, and contrive to enter the tower at any time she chose; when Flora put the ear-rings in her ears, and the night passed as had the preceding.

The next day the Blue Bird returned to his kingdom, went to his palace, re-entered his closet by the broken window, and

brought away the most splendid pair of bracelets that were ever seen; each was composed of a single emerald, hollowed in the middle, to allow the wearer to pass it over her hand. When



*the Bird presented them to his mistress: "Do you imagine," she said, "that my affection for you requires presents to keep it alive? Ah! how little are you acquainted with my heart!"—*  
*"No, dear madam," answered the metamorphosed king, "I do*

not think that the trifles I offer you are necessary to preserve your tenderness for me, but mine would be wounded were I to neglect any opportunity of manifesting it to you; and when you see me no longer, these baubles may serve to recall me to your mind." Flora then said a thousand tender and elegant things to her lover, to all of which he answered with equal gallantry and affection.

The following night, the amorous Bird carried his mistress a superb gold watch, of so moderate a size, as to be contained in a single pearl: the beauty of the material was only to be surpassed by that of the workmanship. "It is to no purpose that you present me with this watch," said the princess; "in your absence, the hours appear without end; when you are with me, they fly away like a dream."—"Alas! my princess," exclaimed the Blue Bird, "it is even so with me; and rest assured, you do not feel the lingering pain of absence more keenly than myself."—"After what you have undergone to preserve your heart for me," replied the lady, "I may well believe you."

When day approached, the Bird as usual flew to his hollow tree, where he lived on fruit. Sometimes he would sing the most charming airs, when his voice enchanted the passengers: they would stay to listen to his music, and, seeing no one, concluded that the place was haunted by a spirit. This opinion

became so general, that no one dared to enter the wood; a thousand fabulous accounts of what had been heard, got into circulation, and thus the general panic conduced to the safety of the Blue Bird.

Not a day passed without his making a present to Flora; at one time, a pearl necklace, or jewelled rings of the most exquisite workmanship; at others, circlets of diamonds, gold bodkins, nosegays of jewellery, made to resemble real flowers, agreeable books, rare coins, medals, etc. In a short time, she possessed an immense heap of rich articles, of which she would only make use, however, in the night, in order to please the king; while in the day, for want of a cabinet, she concealed them carefully in her mattrass.

Two years passed away in this manner, without Flora making a single complaint as to her captivity. But of what could she complain? She had the satisfaction of conversing every night, all night long, with him she loved; and never did two persons say so many fond things to each other. Although she saw no one but her lover, and although the Bird spent the day in his hollow tree, they had always a thousand new things to talk about; their affection, upon which they drew, was inexhaustible, and their hearts and minds furnished them abundantly with interesting subjects for conversation.

Meanwhile, the malicious queen, who kept her step-daughter



so cruelly in confinement, vainly exerted the most strenuous efforts to procure a husband for Troutina; she despatched ambassadors to propose her daughter in marriage to all the princes with whose names she was acquainted. Wherever the ambassadors made their appearance, they were abruptly dismissed. "If you had come to propose a marriage for the princess Flora, you would be received with joy; but as for Troutina, she may remain for ever a virgin, without any one troubling themselves on the matter:" such was the universal exclamation. When these answers were carried to the queen and her daughter, they were ready to die with anger against the innocent princess, the object of their persecution. "What! does this arrogant creature still thwart our schemes in spite of her captivity!" said they. "How can we punish her sufficiently for the injuries she has done us? She must have secret correspondence with foreign princes, and is at least, therefore, a criminal against the state; let us treat her as such, and seek out every possible means of convicting her."

The queen and her daughter consulted so long together, that it was past midnight when they ascended to her tower to interrogate Flora.

She was, at that moment, conferring at the window with the Blue Bird, ornamented with some of her most valuable jewels, while her beautiful hair was dressed with more care than is

usual with persons in distress; her apartment and bed were strewn with flowers, and certain Spanish pastilles, that she had recently been burning, diffused a delicious perfume through the room. The queen stopped at the door to listen, for she fancied she heard an air sung by two voices: Flora had indeed an almost heavenly voice, and, accompanied by the Blue Bird, was singing the following words, which the queen overheard:

“ Though the tyrant may part us, in spirit we’ll flee

O’er the wide world together, with hearts uncontrolled;

With the first rays of morning my thoughts are with thee,

And together we pray when the flock seeks its fold:

Then how vain the endeavour,

Two fond hearts to sever,

Those who once truly love, love on truly for ever.”

Their little concert was ended by deep sighs.

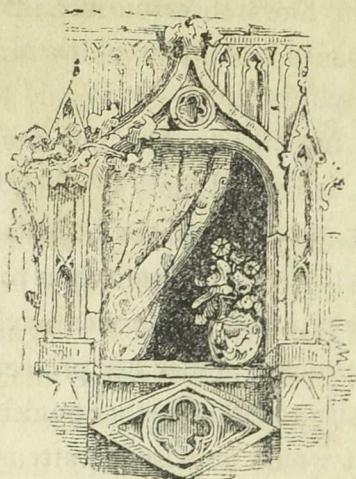
“ Ah! my Troutina, we are betrayed,” cried the queen, suddenly throwing open the door, and rushing into the apartment. Flora hastily opened her little window, to give the royal Bird time to escape, much more anxious for his safety than for her own. The object of her solicitude, however, had not the heart to fly away; his piercing eyes discovered the danger to which his princess was exposed, so soon as he had recognized the queen and Troutina; and what was his affliction to feel so conscious of his inability to defend his

mistress ! They approached like two furies about to devour her. “Your plots against the state are known,” cried the queen ; “and do not flatter yourself that your rank will screen you from the punishment your crimes deserve.”—“And with whom have I plotted, madam ?” said Flora. “Have you not been my jailor for the last two years ? Have I seen any one besides those whom you have sent to me ?” While she spoke, the queen and her daughter regarded her with the utmost astonishment : her unparalleled beauty and magnificent attire completely dazzled them. “And whence, madam,” said the queen, “come these jewels, more brilliant than the sun ? Would you have us believe that there are diamond mines within this tower ?”—“I obtained them here, nevertheless,” said Flora. The queen looked as piercingly at the princess as though she would have discovered what was passing in her inmost soul ; at length she said : “We are not your dupes, though you would fain impose upon us ; know, that we are acquainted with every action of your life. All these jewels have been given you, as the price of your father’s kingdom.”—“I am certainly in a very convenient position for delivering it to a purchaser,” answered Flora, with a disdainful smile ;—“an unfortunate princess, who has languished so long in confinement, is doubtless very likely to be concerned in a plot against the state.”—“And for whom then” said the queen, “do you pretend

to be thus decked out, like a doll, as you are ; for whom is your apartment perfumed, and why do you wear that magnificent dress, which surpasses the most sumptuous even that you ever wore at one of my own drawing-rooms ?"—“I have so much leisure,” said the princess, “that it need not appear extraordinary if I devote some portion of it to my attire. You have left me so much time to lament my misfortunes, that I do not deserve to be reproached on that account, at least.”—“Come,” said the queen ; “let us see if this mighty innocent person be not leagued in some way with our enemies.” She then made a strict search in every corner of the room, when coming to the mattrass, which she emptied, she found such an immense quantity of diamonds, emeralds, pearls, rubies, and topazes, that she could scarcely believe her eyes. She had previously determined to conceal in Flora’s apartment papers, which, when discovered, would criminate the princess, and had managed, unperceived by her, to place them in the chimney ; but, by good luck, the Blue Bird who was perched above, and whose eyes were sharper than a hawk’s, observed all that passed, and cried out : “Take care, Flora, your enemy is seeking to do you a mischief.” On hearing this voice, so little expected, the queen was terrified to such a degree, that she dared not do what she had intended. “You see, madam,” said the princess, “that the spirits of the air are favourable to me.”—“I believe,”

said the queen, beside herself with rage, "that demons are leagued to assist you; but in spite of them, your father will take care to do himself justice."—"Would to Heaven," cried Flora, "that I had nothing to fear but my father's justice! Your anger, madam, is tenfold more terrible."

The queen left her, vexed at all she had just seen and heard, and immediately called a council to consult as to what steps should be taken against the princess. She was advised, that if some fairy had taken the princess under her protection, it would be only irritating the fairy to inflict further punishment on her step-daughter, and that it would be wiser to attempt to discover her intrigue. The queen adopted this opinion, and sent a young lady, desiring her to sleep in Flora's apartment and pretend that she was not in the queen's confidence, but that she was merely placed near the princess, in order to attend on her person. There was but little chance of Flora's being taken by so palpable a snare; but although she regarded her attendant as a spy, her grief was extreme. "What then! shall I converse no more with the Bird who has now become so dear to me?" said she. "He enabled me to support my misfortunes, while I did my best to console him under his; and surely our tenderness was mutually requisite. What will he do? What shall I do myself?" As these thoughts passed through Flora's mind, her tears fell in torrents.



She dared no more go to *the little window*, though she heard him fluttering around it. She was almost dying with the desire to open the casement; but abstained, from the fear of exposing her dear lover's life. She passed a whole month thus, without once appearing to the Blue Bird, who was almost frantic at her absence. What bitter complaints escaped him! How could he live without his Flora! He had never felt so acutely the miseries of his situation as in this absence from his princess, and although he racked his brain for weeks, he could think of no means of diminishing his sorrow.

The princess's spy, who had watched day and night for a whole month, felt herself so over-wearied, that at last she fell

into a profound sleep. Flora observed it, and taking advantage of the opportunity, opened her little window and said :

“ My beautiful Bird, with feathers sky blue,  
Fly in haste to your Flora, who’s waiting for you !”

The above are the exact words she made use of, and we have been careful to preserve them. The Bird, who heard them distinctly, flew hastily to the window. What pleasure they experienced at their meeting ! What a multitude of tender things had they to say to each other ! Their protestations of eternal love and fidelity were repeated a thousand times ; the princess shed torrents of joyful tears, and her lover, though himself much affected, consoled her as well as he could. At last the hour of separation having arrived, the spy still sleeping, they bade each other adieu in the most affectionate terms. The next evening, her attendant sleeping as before, the princess hastened to the window, and said, as on the previous night :

“ My beautiful Bird, with feathers sky blue,  
Fly in haste to your Flora, who’s waiting for you !”

The Bird immediately came at her call, and the night passed as had the preceding. This put our lovers in excellent spirits ; they hoped that the queen’s spy would take so much pleasure in slumber, that she would sleep soundly every night, and a

third meeting passed off very happily ; but on the fourth, the sleeper, having fancied that she heard a noise the previous evening, lay awake, but with her eyes closed, as though she slept. Looking through the corners of her eyelids as well as she could, she presently saw, by the light of the moon, the most beautiful Bird she had ever beheld, conversing with the princess, caressing her with his claw, and pecking her fondly with his bill. Lying thus, the pretended sleeper overheard part of their conversation, which caused her no small astonishment, for the Bird spoke like a tender lover, and the fair Flora replied to him in similar terms of affection.

When it was nearly day-break, they bade each other adieu ; and, as though they felt a presentiment of coming misfortune, parted with extreme sorrow. The princess threw herself on her bed in a transport of grief, and King Charming returned to his hollow tree. The spy then posted to the queen, and communicated all that she had seen and overheard. Thereupon her majesty sent for her daughter Troutina and her advisers ; they had a long debate, and came at last to the conclusion that the Blue Bird was King Charming. “What insolence, my Troutina!” cried the queen. “What an affront ! That impudent princess, whom I thought to be overwhelmed with affliction, has been peaceably enjoying agreeable conversations with the ungrateful prince ! Ah ; but I will take such signal



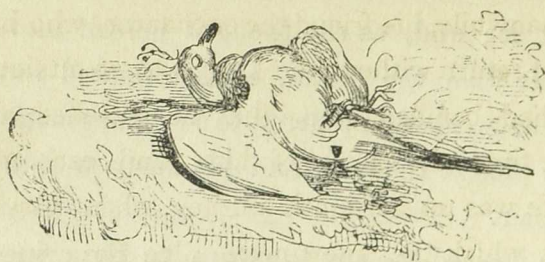
vengeance on them, that it shall be spoken of far and near!" Troutina entreated her mother not to lose a moment before setting about it; and, as she thought herself more interested in the business than the queen, almost fainted away with joy when a scheme suddenly occurred to her imagination, whereby she hoped to plunge the lover and his mistress into the lowest abyss of despair.

The queen desired the spy to return to the princess's tower, and not to show the slightest suspicion or curiosity; but, on the contrary, to feign to be more soundly asleep than usual. Accordingly she went to bed early, and snored away as loudly as she could, and the poor deceived princess, opening the window, called aloud:

" My beautiful Bird, with feathers sky blue,

    Fly in haste to your Flora, who's waiting for you!"

In vain, however, she continued to call her lover all night long; he did not make his appearance: the wicked queen had caused swords, razors, knives and poniards to be fastened to the cypress tree, so that when the Blue Bird attempted to fly through it, the murderous weapons injured his wings so much, that at last, *nearly covered with wounds, he, with infinite difficulty, reached his hollow tree*, leaving a long trace of blood behind him.



Alas! why were you not there, beautiful princess, to tend the royal Bird! But her heart would have broken, had she seen her lover in so deplorable a condition! The unfortunate Charming cared not for life, persuaded that Flora had betrayed him. "Ah! barbarian," he said in a plaintive tone, "is it thus you return the purest and most tender passion, that ever lover bore for his mistress? If you wished for my death, why did you not inflict the blow yourself? it would have been welcome from your hand! I sought you with so much love and confidence! I was undergoing penance for your sake, and that without a murmur! What! have you then sacrificed me to the most cruel of her sex? She was our common enemy, and you have made your peace with her at the expense of my life. You, Flora, you alone are the cause of my death! you have borrowed Troutina's hand, and plunged a dagger into my

bosom!" These dismal reflections so overwhelmed the wretched Charming, that he resolved to die.

In the meanwhile, his friend the enchanter, who had seen the flying chariot return without the king, was so anxious lest some misfortune had befallen him, that he travelled all over the world eight times in search of him, and each time without success. He was on his ninth journey, when, passing through the wood in which the unfortunate Blue Bird was lying thus



wounded, according to his usual custom, *he blew a moderately long blast on a French horn*, and then called out five times at the top of his voice: "King Charming, King Charming, where are you?" The king recognized the voice of his best friend: "Here," he cried, in a feeble voice, "approach this tree, and behold your unfortunate friend weltering in his blood."

The enchanter, in the utmost astonishment, looked all around; but could not perceive him. "I am a Blue Bird," said the king, in a still feebler and more exhausted voice. At these



words, the enchanter *discovered him perched on a branch*. Any other person than an enchanter would have been more astonished than he was; but he was skilled in every branch of necromantic art. By merely pronouncing a few words, he staunched the king's blood, which was still running; and with certain herbs which he culled in the wood, having pronounced over them two magic words, he cured the king so effectually, that not a mark of one of his numerous wounds was visible.

The enchanter then requested his friend to inform him by what accident he had been transformed into a Bird, and who had inflicted such cruel wounds upon him. King Charming complied, and concluded his account by saying, that Flora had doubtless revealed the secret of his visits; and that to make

her peace with the queen, she had consented to have the cypress-tree hung with poniards and razors, by means of which he had been nearly cut to pieces. The king was very bitter in his invectives against the infidelity of his mistress, and said, that he should have been happy to have died ere he had discovered the falsity of her heart. The enchanter inveighed against Flora and against all her sex, and advised the king to forget her. "How unfortunate you would be," he said to Charming, "if you were incapable of banishing this false one from your heart! After her recent conduct, you have everything to dread from her." The Blue Bird could not bring himself to his friend's opinion, he was still too deeply in



love with Flora; so *the enchanter*, who knew his sentiments despite the pains he took to conceal them, *said to him gaily*:

“ My mistress false, my love betrayed,  
You bid me to forget the maid :  
The very thought is e'en a crime,  
That love, true love, can yield to time.  
No, friends forget, if long apart ;  
But he who loves, with broken heart,  
Still lingers o'er each fond regret,  
And never, never can forget.”

The royal Bird expressed his concurrence in these sentiments, and begged his friend to carry him to his residence, and put him in a cage, where he might be safe from the talons of cats and other murderous weapons. “ But,” said the enchanter, “ will you remain for five years in so inglorious a condition, one, too, so little in accordance with your birth and dignity ? Besides, I must tell you that you have enemies, who assert that you are dead, and would usurp your throne, which, indeed, I fear you will have lost, before you recover your proper form.” “ But what,” replied Charming, “ is to prevent me from returning to my palace, and carrying on the government of my kingdom as usual ?”

“ Oh !” cried his friend, “ that would be more difficult than you imagine ! Those who obeyed a young man, would not obey a parrot ; those who feared you as a king, surrounded with pomp and luxury, would strip you of your feathers as a

little bird.”—“Alas! for human weakness,” cried the king, “a brilliant exterior bespeaks neither virtue nor merit, yet has it more weight with the multitude than either of them. Well!” continued he, “let us be philosophers, and despise what we cannot obtain; our lot will be none the worse.”—“I do not intend to yield quite so soon,” said the magician; “some means may yet be found for your restoration.”

Meanwhile Flora, the sorrowful Flora, broken-hearted at no longer seeing the king, spent whole days and nights at her window, repeating continually:

“My beautiful Bird, with feathers sky blue,  
Fly in haste to your Flora, who’s waiting for you!”

The presence of the spy did not restrain her; her affliction was such that she was no longer careful of her secret. “What has become of you, King Charming?” she cried. “Have then our common enemies destroyed you? Have you fallen a sacrifice to their vindictive fury? or, tired of my misfortunes, have you abandoned me to my fate? Alas! alas! shall I never see you more?”

What tears, what bitter sighs followed these tender lamentations! How long, how wearisome, became the hours of absence to so amiable and so affectionate a lover! The poor princess, dejected, ill, thin, and altered, could hardly keep

herself alive; she was persuaded that some dreadful misfortune had befallen the king.

The triumph of the queen and Troutina was complete; their vengeance gave pleasure to their wicked hearts. About this time, however, Flora's father, who was very old, was taken ill and died, when the fortunes of the wicked queen and her ugly daughter suddenly changed. They were now regarded as favorites who had abused their power; and the enraged people thronged to the palace, called for the princess Flora, and proclaimed her as their sovereign. The angry queen would



have carried the affair with a high hand, and making *her appearance at a balcony, she threatened the insurgents.* The indignant multitude treated her with contempt, and in a



moment forced the gates of the palace, burst into her apartment, and seizing the wretched queen by the hair of her head, dragged her into the court-yard, and stoned her to death. Troutina, in the confusion, escaped and took refuge with her god-mother, the fairy Soussio ; this was fortunate for her, as she was not a whit more liked than her mother, and would certainly have shared her fate.

The grandees of the realm immediately assembled in council, and proceeded to the tower in which the princess lay so dangerously ill. Ignorant of her father's death, and of the punishment of her enemy, she had heard the noise of the insurrection, but had imagined that it proceeded from the queen's creatures, about to conduct her to execution. This idea caused her no emotion ; life had become odious since the loss of the Blue Bird. When, therefore, the nobles opened the door of her prison, threw themselves at her feet, and informed her of the change that had taken place in her destiny, she manifested no joy. However, they carried her to the palace, and crowned her queen. The infinite care that her physicians took of her health, and her hope of still finding the Blue Bird, for whom alone she wished to live, contributed much to her recovery ; and soon enabled her to nominate a council, to govern the kingdom during her absence in search of the king, on which she had determined. This done, she provided herself with money and jewels, and set

out one night, without informing any one of her intended expedition or its object.

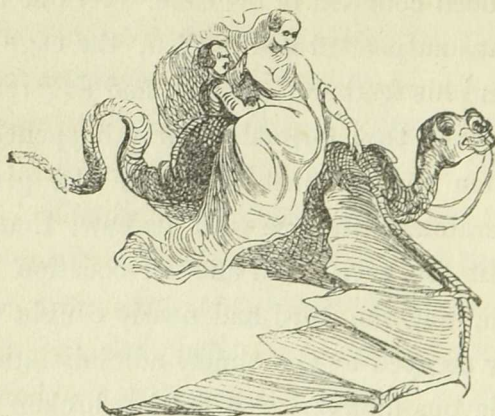
The enchanter, who was so good a friend of King Charming, not being powerful enough to undo the mischief that Soussio had done, determined to obtain an interview with that fairy, and to make proposals for the restoration of his friend to his proper shape ; so, seating himself in the flying chariot, he took the direction of Soussio's palace, and found her conversing with Troutina. Now enchanters and fairies are about equal in power, and our fairy and enchanter had been acquainted with each other for more than five hundred years, during which they had fallen out and made it up again a thousand times. Soussio received her visitor with a smiling countenance, and said : " What brings my good gossip here ? Is there any thing in my power by which I may serve him ? (this is their usual salutation)"—" Yes, gossip," said the magician, " you have it in your power to do me a great favour ; I would speak to you of one of my best friends, of a king whom you have rendered miserable."—" Ah ! ah ! I understand, gossip," cried Soussio ; " I am sorry to say so, but he must expect no mercy from me, unless he will marry my god-daughter ; behold her here, amiable and beautiful as you must confess. Your friend had better consider of it."

The enchanter was exceedingly perplexed at hearing this, he

knew that Charming would never consent to marry Troutina ; on the other hand, he was unwilling to leave Soussio without coming to some arrangement, for the king had run a thousand risks since he had been confined in his cage. At one time the hook by which it was suspended had broken, the cage had fallen to the ground, and his feathered majesty had suffered much from the shock, besides that Grimalkin, who happened to be in the apartment when the accident occurred, had given the Blue Bird such a scratch on the eye with his paw, that he was near losing its sight for ever. On another occasion his drink had been forgotten, and the Bird had nearly caught the pip, from which he only escaped by the timely administration of saffron. A little mischievous monkey, also, having broken its chain, had put its paws through the wires of the Blue Bird's cage, and spared his majesty's feathers as little as he would have done those of a blackbird or tom-tit. But the worst of all was, that the king was on the point of losing his throne, his heirs daily inventing fresh schemes to prove that he was dead. All, however, that the enchanter could obtain of his gossip was, that Soussio would conduct Troutina to king Charming's palace, there to remain for some months, during which, the fairy would restore his majesty to his proper form, while he should consider her proposal of marrying her god-daughter ; but that he should then resume the figure of a bird until the

expiration of the seven years, if he would not comply with her wishes.

The fairy then gave Troutina handsome dresses of gold and



silver brocade, and seating her on a pillion behind her on the back of a dragon, they were thus conveyed to Charming's kingdom, where he had just arrived with his faithful friend the enchanter. Three strokes of the fairy's wand sufficed to restore his majesty to his original form, handsome, amiable, witty, and majestic as ever; but he dearly paid for the diminution of his penance, the bare thought of marrying Troutina causing him to shudder. The enchanter made use of every argument he could think of, to induce him to forget his Flora, but made little or no impression on his majesty's mind; and the king thought much less of the government of his kingdom, than on the means of

prolonging the term that Soussio had granted him to consider her proposal of marriage with Troutina.

In the meantime queen Flora, disguised as a young peasant girl, her hair flowing unconfined and concealing her face, wearing a straw hat, and carrying a sack over her shoulders, had commenced her journey, sometimes travelling on foot, sometimes on horseback, over land and over sea. She was incessant in her search after her lover, but was ever fearful that she was travelling from, instead of towards her amiable king. Having stopped one day on the bank of a small stream whose crystal waters leaped over the clean pebbles that formed its bed, the princess resolved to bathe her feet. Seating herself on the turf bank, she tied up her fair hair with a ribbon, and put her feet into the water. While thus occupied, and looking like Diana bathing after the toils of the chase, there chanced to pass



by a *little old woman*, nearly double with age, leaning on a thick stick. On seeing Flora, she stopped: "What are you doing

here all alone, my good girl?" said she. "My good mother," said the queen, "I have plenty of companions in my numerous misfortunes:" at these words her eyes filled with tears. "What! so sorrowful and so young!" said the good woman. "Ah! my daughter, dry your tears and tell me truly the cause of your grief, and I will endeavour to lighten its burthen." The queen, in compliance with the old woman's request, related all her sorrows, not omitting the conduct of Soussio in the affair, and concluded by informing her that she was then in search of the Blue Bird.

The little old woman became suddenly erect, and her whole appearance changed; she was young, beautiful, and superbly dressed, and regarding the queen with a benignant smile: "Incomparable Flora," she said, in a gracious voice, "the king whom you seek is no longer a Bird; my sister Soussio has restored him to his proper shape, and he is now in his kingdom: cease to afflict yourself, you will presently come to his court, and will succeed in your design. Here are four eggs: break one of them whenever you stand most in need of assistance, and you will find within it whatever you require." Saying these words, the fairy (for she was a fairy) disappeared.

Flora, much consoled by what she had just heard, very carefully placed the eggs in her sack, and then directed her steps towards Charming's kingdom.

After travelling onwards for eight successive days and nights without stopping, she came to a prodigiously high mountain, composed entirely of ivory, and so steep that it was impossible to place a foot thereon without falling. The queen made a thousand ineffectual attempts to climb its side, but always slipped and fell. At last, tired and worn out with so many useless efforts, and in despair at this apparently insurmountable obstacle to her further progress, she laid herself down at the foot of the mountain with the resolution to remain there and die; when remembering the eggs that the fairy had given her, she took one of them from her sack. "Let me see," she said, "whether the fairy deceived me when she promised me that I should receive assistance from this in my hour of need." She then broke the egg and found therein a set of little golden cramp irons, which she immediately put on her feet and hands. With these she ascended the side of the ivory mountain without the least difficulty, as they prevented her from slipping. Having reached the summit, a new difficulty presented itself in the descent on the other side, which consisted of one single sheet of plate glass. Around its base stood upwards of sixty thousand women who were regarding themselves with great satisfaction in this enormous mirror, which was six miles long and eighteen in height. The most remarkable quality in this immense looking-glass was, that all who

looked therein, saw themselves precisely as they wished to appear ; the dark became fair, the pale gained complexion, red hair gave place to locks of gold or a brilliant brown, the old saw the figure of her youth, and the young beheld in its reflection all the charms which imagination painted for its prime ; in a word, all defects were so completely transformed into beauties by this marvellous mirror, that it was resorted to from all parts of the world. It was enough to make one die of laughter to see the airs and graces that the coquettish ladies assumed. But I must not omit to tell you, that the wonderful glass was as great a source of attraction to the gentlemen as to the ladies. In it, the man with short, straight hair, was graced with flowing locks ; the short became tall and well-made, and acquired a majestic deportment. The ladies were derided and ridiculed by the gentlemen, on whom, of course, they failed not to retaliate, so that the mountain was called by a thousand different names. No one had ever yet reached its summit ; when therefore the ladies beheld Flora thereon, they uttered loud cries of vexation. “What is the silly creature about ?” said some of them ; “it is to be hoped she knows how to walk on glass, otherwise she will smash it to atoms at her first step.” They made a frightful hubbub.

The queen, as we have said, was at a loss how to proceed, for she saw that an attempt to descend would be attended with



great peril. She therefore broke another egg, whence there issued two pigeons drawing a chariot, which immediately became large enough to hold her conveniently. She seated herself therein without hesitation, when the two pigeons lightly descended, drawing the queen in perfect safety. Flora then said to them: "My little friends, if you will conduct me to King Charming's court, you will confer a favour on a grateful heart." The pigeons, mild and tractable, tarried not day or night until they came to the gates of his capital, where Flora alighted and dismissed her two conductors, giving each of them a tender kiss, more valuable than a crown of jewels.

Oh! how did her heart beat when she entered the town! Muffling her face that she might not be recognized, Flora asked the first person she met where she might find the king? "Find the king," said he, repeating her words, and bursting with laughter; "what would you with the king, my tulip? Go and clean yourself, and perhaps you may make a conquest of his majesty." The queen made no reply, but passed onwards until she met with a civil-looking man, whom she again asked where she might see the king. "It is expected that his majesty will go to the temple to-morrow, with the princess Troutina: for he has at last consented to marry her," was the answer.

What news for the unfortunate queen! Troutina, the

worthless Troutina on the point of being united to King Charming! Flora felt herself fainting, and had no strength to speak or walk; she sank on the pavement near a door, her countenance effectually concealed by her hair and her straw hat. "Unfortunate that I am!" she said, "I have only come here to augment my rival's triumph, and to witness her happiness! So then, it was for her sake that the Blue Bird ceased to visit me. It was for that little monster that he became the most perjured of lovers! While I, overwhelmed with sorrow, made myself miserable on his account, the traitor was changed; and, regardless of his vows, and indifferent to my sufferings, left me to console myself as I best might for his absence."

When the mind is much depressed by sorrow the body cares little for food; so the queen sought out a lodging for the night, and went to bed without any supper. She arose next morning, at day-break, and hastened to the temple, which she only succeeded in entering after suffering a thousand indignities from the guards and attendants. She beheld the throne which had been prepared for the king, and for Troutina, who was already looked upon as his queen. What an affliction for a person with such tender feelings as Flora! Approaching her rival's throne, she stationed herself near it, leaning for support against a marble column. The king entered first, looking more handsome and more amiable than ever. Troutina followed, richly

dressed, but so dreadfully ugly, that her very looks inspired



terror. *She looked towards the queen and frowned.* “Who are you,” she said, “that have the temerity to approach so near my handsome person, and my golden throne?”—“I am called Sootina,” answered the queen, “and have come from a distand land to sell curiosities.” She then put her hand into her sack and drew forth the emerald bracelets that King Charming had given her. “Ho, ho,” said Troutina, “they are pretty enough for coloured glass; will a groat a-piece for them satisfy you?”—“I entreat you, madam,” said the queen, “to shew them to your jewellers, and when you have heard their opinion, we will conclude our bargain.” Troutina, who loved the king as much as such a creature was capable of loving, in ecstacies at having found an opportunity of speaking to him, walked up to his throne, and shewed him the bracelets, begging

him to favour her with his opinion of them. The sight of the bracelets recalled to Charming's remembrance those he had given to Flora: he turned pale, sighed, and was silent for some moments. At last, fearful that the agitation occasioned by his conflicting thoughts might be perceived, he made an effort and replied: "These bracelets, I believe, are worth as much as half my kingdom. I thought that there was but one such pair in the world, but find I am mistaken."

Troutina seated herself on her throne, where she looked about as noble as an oyster in its shell, and asked the queen how much, to speak within bounds, she wanted for her bracelets. "You would hardly afford to pay for them in money, madam," answered Flora, "I had therefore better make you an offer of another kind. If you will procure me permission to sleep for one night in the Whispering Closet which is in the king's palace, I will make you a present of them."—"With all my heart," said Troutina, grinning like an idiot, and shewing teeth longer than the tusks of a wild boar.

The king did not trouble himself to enquire whence the bracelets came, less through indifference to the person who presented them (though, disguised as she was, she was but little calculated to excite curiosity), than from an invincible repugnance that he felt to Troutina. Now the reader must be informed, that while he was a Blue Bird, he had told Flora that,

situated under his own apartment, there was a certain closet, so ingeniously constructed, that whatever was spoken therein, even in the lowest whisper, was distinctly audible to the king as he lay in his bed ; so that as Flora sought an opportunity of upbraiding him for his infidelity, she could not have hit upon a more excellent means of effecting her object.

In the evening, therefore, Flora was conducted by Troutina's orders to the Whispering Closet. Arrived there, and having closed the door, she began her complaints as follows : "The only misfortune which I feared not has come upon me : cruel Blue Bird ! You have forgotten me, you love my unworthy rival ! The bracelets I received from your disloyal hands could not even recall me to your remembrance, so utterly am I banished from your mind !" Sobs here choked her utterance ; but when she had recovered sufficiently to be again able to speak she resumed her sorrowful complaints, which she did not conclude until day-break. The valet-de-chambre who had heard sobbing and groaning all night in the closet, mentioned the circumstance in the morning to Troutina, who, when she saw Flora, asked what hullabaloo she had been making under his majesty's bed-chamber. The queen answered that her sleep was frequently disturbed by dreams, and that under their influence she often spoke aloud. As for the king, by a strange fatality he had not heard her complaints ; for, since his separation

from Flora, whom he still loved as tenderly as ever, having been unable to obtain any natural rest, a physician regularly administered to him nightly, a powerful dose of opium, which caused him to slumber profoundly.

The queen passed some part of the next day in a dreadful state of uneasiness. "If he heard me," she soliloquized "how cruel is this manifest indifference. If he heard me not, how shall I make myself understood by him?" She had no more extraordinary rarities to give away; but as something was necessary that should take the fancy of Troutina, she once more had recourse to her eggs. Having broken one of them, there immediately appeared a little carriage built of polished steel inlaid with gold, drawn by six green mice, and driven by a rose-coloured young rat, while the postilion, also of the rattish tribe, was a dapple grey. Within this carriage were four little waxen dolls, more life-like than any even in the collection of Madame Tussaud. They performed the most surprising tricks, especially two little Spanish girls, who, for dancing the sarabande and cachucha, were not inferior to Duvernay herself.

The queen was enchanted with this master-piece of necromantic art, but said not a word about it until evening, when Troutina usually walked in the garden. She then stationed herself in one of the walks; and, when she saw Troutina approaching, gently urged the mice into a gallop, drawing the

carriage, the young rats, and the puppets after them. This novelty so astonished Troutina that she cried out: "Sootina, Sootina, will a groat satisfy you for your carriage and your funny chargers?"—"Ask all the literary and scientific men in the kingdom," said Flora, "what such a rarity is worth, and I will abide by their opinion." *Troutina, who was overbearing in*



*every thing*, replied: "Without offending me longer by your dirty presence, tell me its price."—"I only ask, then," said Flora, "to sleep once more in the whispering closet."—"Go, pitiful creature," replied Troutina, "you shall not be refused." Then turning to her ladies: "What a foolish thing it is," said she, "to sell her curiosities so cheaply."

Night having come, and Flora being duly installed, she repeated all the most tender things she could think of, but repeated them with as little effect as on the preceding night, as the king never failed to take opium. The valets-de-chambre said among themselves: "Without doubt, this peasant girl is mad: whatever can she be talking about all night?"—"Mad or sane," said another, "there is both reason and passion in what

she says." Flora waited impatiently for day-break, to see what effect her words would produce. "What! does the barbarian turn a deaf ear to my voice?" she said. "Will he no longer hearken to his dear Flora? Ah! what weakness of me to love him still! how well I deserve the contempt with which he treats my love!" But in vain did she repeat such arguments to herself, she could not banish him from her heart.

There only now remained one egg in her sack, on which therefore she placed all her hopes; she broke it, and found a pie containing six birds, which, although larded, cooked, and ready for table, nevertheless sang to admiration; they also told fortunes, and were better skilled in medicine than Esculapius or Dr. Morrison. The queen was delighted with this extraordinary pie, and immediately carried it to Troutina's anti-chamber.

While Flora was patiently awaiting Troutina's appearance, one of King Charming's valets-de-chambre walked up to her and said: "Madam Sootina, you made a fine noise last night in the whispering closet; it is well the king takes opium, or he would not have got a wink of sleep for your interminable chattering." On hearing this, Flora was no longer astonished at his majesty's taking no notice of her complaints; so putting her hand into her sack, and pulling out some jewels of great value, she said to the valet: "I have so little dread of interrupting the king's repose, that if you will not give him opium to-night,



and I should sleep again in the whispering closet, all these pearls and diamonds shall be yours." The valet-de-chambre consented, and pledged his word of honour to the bargain.

Shortly afterwards Troutina entered the anti-chamber, and perceiving the queen, who feigned to be about to eat her pie: "What are you doing there Sootina?" she said. "Madam," replied Flora, "I am making a meal of astrologers, musicians, and physicians." At the same moment 'the birds began to sing' more melodiously than syrens; and, their song ended, cried out: "Cross our palms with silver, and we will tell your fortune;" while a duck, whose voice predominated over those of his companions, said: "Quack, quack, quack; I am a doctor, and can cure all the diseases of mind and body, excepting love." Troutina, more surprised by so many marvels than she had ever been in her life before, ejaculated: "By my godmother but that is an excellent pie! I must have it. How now Sootina, what will you take for it?"—"The usual price," answered Flora, "a night's lodging in the whispering closet, nothing more."—"Granted, and here is something to boot," said Troutina, generously giving the queen a pistole (for the acquisition of such a pie put her in good humour). Flora, more contented than she had hitherto been, because she had now reason to hope that the king would hear her, thanked Troutina and retired.

When it was night, the queen repaired to the whispering

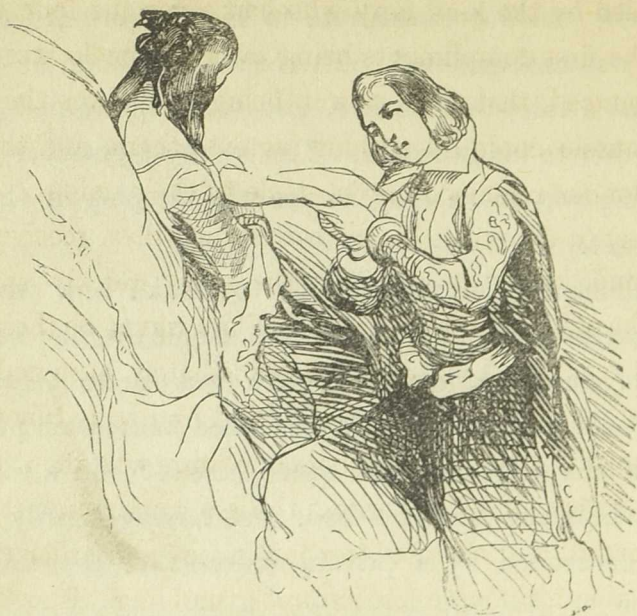
closet, ardently hoping that the valet-de-chambre would keep his word, and, instead of giving the king his usual dose of opium, give his majesty something that would keep him awake. When she thought that every body was asleep, she commenced her accustomed lamentations: "To how many perils have I exposed myself," she said, "to seek you, while you fled from me to wed with Troutina? What have I done, cruel Charming, that you thus forget your vows? Recall to your remembrance your metamorphosis, my kindness, and our tender conversations." The queen then repeated almost all the conversations that she had held with the Blue Bird, and with so perfect a memory, that it was quite evident nothing was dearer to her than their remembrance.

The king was not asleep, and heard distinctly all that Flora said; but he could not divine whence the voice proceeded. His heart, however, was penetrated with affection, and recalled to him so vividly the memory of his incomparable princess, that he felt his separation from her at that moment as keenly as the wounds inflicted on him by the blades in the cypress tree. He replied, therefore, to the queen: "Ah! princess, what cruel conduct was yours to a lover who adored you! Is it possible you could be base enough to sacrifice me to our mutual enemies!" Flora heard this answer, and failed not, in return, to tell the king, that if he would procure an interview with

Sootina, she would communicate to him important facts with which he was unacquainted. Thereupon the king, in impatience, called a valet-de-chambre, and told him to find Sootina and bring her to his presence. The valet-de-chambre replied that nothing was more easy, as she was sleeping in the whispering closet.

King Charming knew not what to think : how was he to believe that so great a queen as Flora should disguise herself to seek him ? on the other hand, how was he to believe that Sootina could have the queen's voice, and know such particular secrets, if she were not the queen herself ? In a torture of suspense, he arose from his bed, and having hastily dressed himself, descended by a private staircase to the whispering closet.

On opening the door he found Flora dressed in a white robe, which she had worn under her disguise ; her flowing ringlets were unconfined, and she was reclining on a sofa, a lamp at a little distance shedding a soft light through the closet. The king had entered suddenly, and his love mastering his resentment, directly he recognized his mistress, *he threw himself at her feet*, bathed her hands with his tears, and almost fainted with excess of joy and a thousand other conflicting sensations which passed through his mind with the rapidity of lightning.

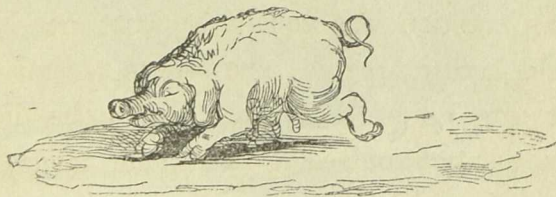


The queen's emotion was equally violent; her heart stood still, she could hardly breathe; she looked attentively at the king without uttering a word; her reproaches died on her lips; and the pleasure of seeing him again made her forget every subject of complaint. In a few moments they had mutually explained and justified themselves, and their affection became stronger than ever; their only source of uneasiness was the fairy Soussio.

But at that moment the king's friend, the enchanter, appeared,

accompanied by the kind fairy who had given the four eggs to Flora. The first compliments being over, the enchanter and the fairy announced, that their power being united in the lovers' favour, Soussio could do nothing against them, and that thus there no longer remained any obstacle to their union.

It is easy to conceive the joy with which they received these tidings; and, when it was day, the news quickly spreading through the palace, all were glad that Flora was to be their queen. The news reaching Troutina, she immediately hastened to the king; and what was her surprise to find him seated by the side of her beautiful rival! The envious creature was about to commence a volley of abuse, when the enchanter and the good fairy appeared, and changed her into a sow, in order that she might be able to indulge her natural grumbling disposition for



life. *She rushed out of the room, grunting horribly, and made the best of her way to the yard, where peals of laughter greeted her appearance, and drove her completely to despair.*

King Charming and Queen Flora, freed from so odious a

creature, turned all their attention to the celebration of their nuptials, which speedily took place, and at the feast given on the occasion, magnificence and good taste were equally conspicuous. It is easy to conceive what happiness they enjoyed, after such prolonged and unmerited misfortunes.





## THE GOOD LITTLE MOUSE.

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ONCE upon a time there lived a king and a queen whose mutual affection was so extreme that they formed each other's sole joy. Their sentiments and wishes were always in perfect unison : sometimes they went hunting the hare or the stag, sometimes fishing for sole or carp, but always together ; at balls, they were always partners ; at feasts they ate of the same dish, roast lamb with sugar plums ; they frequently went

to the theatre or the opera together ; they sang duets, and played a score of merry tricks for their mutual diversion at home ; in a word, they were the happiest king and queen, and theirs was the happiest court, on record. The subjects followed their sovereigns' example, and vied with each other in light-heartedness and good-humour. For all these reasons, the kingdom was called Happy Land.

At the same time there happened to be in a neighbouring state, a king of quite an opposite character. He was the declared enemy of pleasure, and thought the more grief the better sport ; his looks were sullen, his eyes were hollow, his beard was long and grisly, his body was thin, his complexion sallow, and his hair black, thick and as rough as a bear's. This ferocious monarch would amuse himself by shooting at



his subjects ; *he was himself the executioner of criminals, and*



delighted only in cruel and wicked deeds. When he heard of a kind mamma who was very fond of a good little boy or girl, he summoned them to his presence, and either strangled the child or broke its arms, before its mother's face. His kingdom was called Tearland.

This wicked king, having heard of the happiness of the good King Felix, became so jealous of his neighbour's joy, that he resolved to raise a large army and lay waste his dominions.

When every thing was ready, the *bad king, Constantine,*



advanced towards Happy Land. The news of his coming was not long in reaching the ears of King Felix; he therefore promptly put his kingdom in a state of defence. Queen Felicia was in an agony of fear, and said to her husband, with

tears in her eyes: "Sire, let us take as much money as we can carry, and fly to any place on earth from the threatened danger."—"For shame! madam," answered Felix, "my duty is to protect my people, and bids me prefer a glorious death to a life of shame." He then tenderly kissed his queen, and having assembled and inspected his army, mounted a noble charger and set out to meet the enemy.

Felicia, left alone, gave way to the most heart-rending tears and lamentations; and, wringing her hands: "Alas! Alas!" said she, "what will become of my poor infant, yet unborn, should Felix be slain in battle;—a widow and a captive, the wicked king will never spare me in his wrath:" these sorrowful thoughts prevented her eating and sleeping. The king wrote to her daily from the camp; and one morning, as she was anxiously watching the arrival of the courier, from the city walls, she saw him approaching the city at full gallop. She hastened to meet him, fearful of some great misfortune, crying out: "Ho! courier, ho! courier, what news do you bring?"—"The battle is lost," said the messenger, "the king is killed, and the wicked Constantine is on the road hither."

The poor queen fainted away, and was carried to bed insensible, where all her ladies in tears surrounded her, some mourning for the loss of a father, others for sons or brothers; there was weeping and wailing and tearing of hair.

Soon the bad king was heard approaching. Heading his unprincipled subjects, he entered the city sword in hand, and slew without mercy all whom he encountered. The inhabitants fled before him with loud cries, and all who escaped took refuge in the country. With his sword still reeking, the king entered the palace and ascended to the queen's apartment. When she beheld him in the room, she buried herself under the bed-clothes, terrified to the last degree. He strode up to the bed, pulled off the clothes, tore the queen's cap from her head, and scattered her long ringlets over her shoulders; then gathering them in his hand, he dragged her three times round the room, *and threw her over his shoulders as if she*



*had been a sack of corn, and in this manner carried her off.*

Felicia entreated him for mercy but in vain : he only laughed at her supplications.

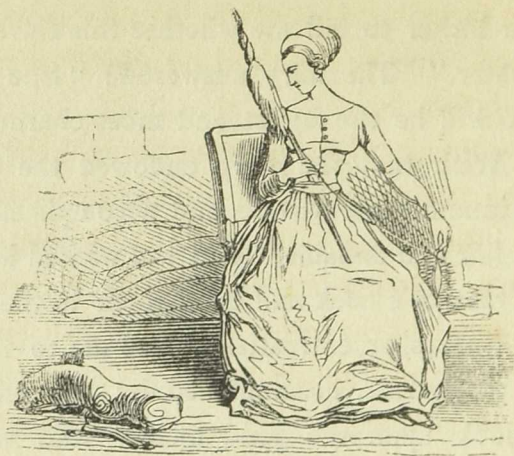
The king carried Felicia to his own country, swearing all the way that he was determined to hang her ; but, on second thoughts, finding she was likely soon to have a child, he determined to spare her life, for the present, and if she gave birth to a daughter to marry the latter to his son. Anxious to know if it were a daughter she was likely to have, he sent for a fairy who lived at no great distance from his palace. When she arrived, he entertained the fairy better than was his usual custom, and conducted her to the tower, in the upper part of which, in a small and miserably furnished garret, the poor queen was confined. There was no bed, but a wretched worn out old mattrass only, not worth two pence, on which the desolate Felicia sat and wept day and night.

When the fairy saw her, her heart melted with pity ; she courtesied to the queen and whispered in her ear, as she embraced her : “ Do not despair, madam, your misfortunes will not last for ever, and I hope to contribute to their speedy termination.” Queen Felicia, somewhat comforted by these words, returned the fairy’s embrace, and begged her to take pity on a poor princess who had never designedly injured any one, but had always endeavoured to do all the good in her power. They were conversing together, when the wicked

king interrupted them, with : "Come, not so many compliments ; I brought you hither to tell me whether this slave will have a son or a daughter." The fairy answered : " She will have a daughter, who will be the fairest and most charming princess ever seen." With that the fairy endowed the princess yet unborn, with innumerable virtues and accomplishments. " If she prove not fair and amiable," said the wicked king, " I will tie her to her mother's neck and hang them to the branch of a tree, nor shall tears or entreaties induce me to relent." He then quitted the garret, accompanied by the fairy, without bestowing a look upon the good queen, who was weeping bitterly, and saying to herself : " Alas ! what will become of me ? Should I have a pretty little daughter, he will give her to his monster son ; should she be ugly, he will hang us both. To what a miserable extremity am I reduced !"

As the time drew near when the queen expected to become a mother, her uneasiness increased : she had no friend to whom she could confide her trouble, or who might console her. Her jailor gave her daily three parched peas only, with a small allowance of water, and sometimes a very small piece of black bread. She soon therefore became thinner than a herring, and reduced to mere skin and bone.

As *she was spinning one evening* (for the wicked king, who was very covetous, made her work day and night), she saw a



very pretty little mouse creep through a hole into her room. "Alas! my darling," said the wretched Felicia, "there is nothing here for you? three peas a day are my allowance; so if you would not fast, go elsewhere for food." The little mouse ran to and fro, dancing and skipping so gaily, that the queen took much pleasure in watching its antics, and was induced to give it the only pea she had left for her supper. "Here, pretty one," she said, "eat this, it is all I have to offer you, but I give it willingly." The words had scarcely passed her lips, when she saw on her table a fine plump partridge, admirably dressed with bread sauce, and two boxes of *bonbons*. "In truth," said Felicia, "a kind action always brings its reward." With that

she ate a little, but having fasted so long, she was almost past eating. She threw a sweatmeat to the mouse, who soon began to nibble it, and, when he had done his supper, danced still more prettily than before.

The next morning, when the jailor brought the queen's three peas, which he carried in on a large dish with a cover, by way of ridicule, the little mouse crept softly to the dish and munched them all three, together with the morsel of bread. When it was dinner time, and the queen found the dish empty, she was somewhat angry with the mouse. "The greedy little creature!" said the hungry Felicia; "if it serve me so to-morrow, I shall pine to death." She was about to put the cover over the empty dish, when she found all kinds of nice things in it, and, rejoicing at this unexpected discovery, quickly began to eat; but while she was eating, it came into her mind, that the wicked king would perhaps in a few days put her and her child to death, and she ceased eating to indulge her tears; then, raising her eyes to Heaven, she exclaimed: "What! and is there no means of escape?" As she spoke, she observed her little friend playing with two or three long straws: Felicia took them from the mouse and began to plait them. "If I had but enough," said she, "I would make a covered basket large enough to hold my little daughter, and give her through the window to the first charitable person who would take charge of her."

She set to work with a good heart, while the good little mouse took care that she did not want for straw, continuing to drag it into the garret as fast as Felicia could use it, and dancing and skipping for her amusement. At meal times, the queen gave her three peas to the mouse, and received in exchange a good supply of delicious food. Felicia was extremely puzzled to imagine who it could be that sent her so many nice things. As she was one day looking out of the window to try the length of her straw plait, she observed at the foot of the tower a good little woman leaning on a staff, who, directly she saw the queen's face, said to her: "I am acquainted with your grief, madam, and am willing to assist you."—"Alas! my dear friend," answered the queen, "you will do me a great favour: come every evening under my window, and when my child is born, I will lower the dear baby to you; nurse it and bring it up for me, and when I am able I will amply reward you."—"I am not covetous," answered the old woman, "but am somewhat dainty, and there is nothing pleases my palate better than a nice, fat, plump mouse. If you can catch any such in your garret, kill them and throw them to me; I am not ungrateful, and your infant will fare all the better for your kindness."

When Queen Felicia heard this speech, she began to cry; and the old woman, after waiting her answer for a few minutes,



asked her the cause of her tears. "I grieve," said the poor queen, "because there is only one mouse which comes into my chamber, and it is so pretty, and so good, that I cannot put it to death."—"What!" answered the old woman, in a passion, "could you sacrifice your child for love of a little rogue of a mouse, who nibbles all that falls in his way? Very well, madam, please yourself, and I wish you much joy with your companion; I shall not want for mice without your assistance." With that the old woman went her way, grumbling and muttering between her teeth.

Although the queen had a nice meal on her table, and although the good little mouse came as usual to skip and dance for her amusement, she kept her eyes rivetted on the floor, her heart beating violently, while tears coursed each other down her cheeks.

That very night she became the mother of a little girl, a miracle of beauty; which, instead of crying, like other children, smiled in her face, holding out her tiny hands as if she had been very rational. The queen caressed and kissed the little stranger very tenderly, saying to herself: "Alas! my poor little darling, if you fall into the wicked king's clutches, it will be all up with you." She then placed her gently in the basket, and pinned to her clothes a scrap of paper, on which was written: *This unfortunate little girl's name is Amietta.* In a minute or two

she opened the basket again, and thought her infant looked prettier than ever; she kissed her again and burst into tears.

At this moment the good little mouse skipped into the room, and crept into the basket with Amietta. "Ah! little creature," said Felicia, "how dearly have I purchased your life! Perhaps I shall lose my dear Amietta! Who but I would have scrupled to kill you for the dainty old woman's dinner? well! I could not find it in my heart to do so cruel a deed." The good little mouse answered the queen in these words: "Do not regret your kindness, madam; I am not quite so unworthy of it as you may imagine." Fear and astonishment struggled in the queen's breast, when she heard the little mouse speak; and her fear not a little increased, when she observed its little snout take the form of a face, its little paws become hands and feet, and all at once its whole body increase in size. At last the queen recognized in the now entirely metamorphosed mouse, the fairy who had visited her in company with the wicked king, and who had manifested so much affection for her.

The fairy spoke: "I have tried your heart, and I find that it is good and generous. We fairies, although possessed of wealth and power, seek, as the greatest treasure upon earth, true friendship, and rarely do we find it."—"Is it possible, fair lady," said the queen, embracing her, "that you, rich and powerful as you are, have any difficulty to find friends?"—"Yes," answered

the fairy ; “ we are loved but for interest, and that is not the kind of love we care for, but when loved as you loved me, as a little mouse, no service is too great to show our affection. Anxious to put your goodness to the test, I assumed the figure of an old woman, and accosted you from the foot of the tower : you know that your heart was proof against the trial.” Thereupon the fairy embraced the queen, and having tenderly kissed the little princess three times, she said : “ I endow you, sweet child, to be the comfort of your mother, and richer than your father ; to reach the age of one hundred years, with undiminished beauty, free from illness, wrinkles, or other appearance of age.” The queen in raptures thanked the beneficent fairy, and entreated her to remove Amietta from the prison, and take care of her ; adding that she gave her child freely to be the fairy’s daughter.

The fairy accepted the present and thanked Queen Felicia ; she placed the baby gently in the basket, and lowered it through the window ; but, having waited a few moments to resume the shape of the little mouse, when she descended by the straw plait, the baby was no longer there. She returned hastily to the queen : “ All is lost,” she said, “ my enemy Caucaline has just carried off the princess ! you must know she is a cruel fairy who mortally hates me, and, being unfortunately my senior, is more powerful than myself. I know not how I can contrive to withdraw Amietta from her vile clutches.”

When the queen heard this sad intelligence, her grief was excessive : weeping very bitterly, she conjured her kind friend to endeavour to recover her darling Amietta at all hazards.

Meanwhile the jailor coming to pay his daily visit to the queen, saw that she had become a mother, and hastened to inform the wicked king, who went straightway to demand the child. Felicia said that a fairy, whose name she did not know, had taken it from her by force. On hearing this, the wicked king stamped his feet and gnawed his very finger nails with rage : " I promised " said he " to hang you, nor will I delay to keep my word." With that he seized the poor queen by the hair of her head, dragged her into a wood, climbed a tall tree, and was on the point of hanging her, when the fairy having rendered herself invisible, came close beside him, and pushed him down to the ground, dislocating his nose, and breaking four teeth in the fall. *The fairy then hastened away with the queen in her flying chariot*, and conducted her to a noble castle, where Felicia was carefully nursed, and, but for the loss of her little Amietta, would have been completely happy.

Time slipped away, and the queen's excessive affliction gradually diminished. Fifteen years had passed since the birth of her daughter, when she heard that the wicked king's son had offered his hand to a young girl who kept his father's turkeys, but that she had refused him. It was not a little



surprising that a turkey-keeper should refuse to become a princess, with a reasonable prospect of being one day queen. The nuptial dresses too were prepared, and it was to have been so gay a wedding that guests had come to witness it from three hundred miles round. The good little mouse was among these guests; and wishing to see the turkey-keeper at her ease, paid her a visit in the poultry-yard. *She found the turkey-keeper seated on a large stone, dressed in a coarse stuff petticoat, with neither shoe nor stocking on her feet. Dresses of gold and silver brocade, trimmed with diamonds, pearls, ribbons and the finest lace, were lying near her, trodden under the turkeys' feet, covered with dirt and completely spoiled. Presently the wicked king's son, who was lame, hump-backed, and blind of one eye, approached her, and said rudely: "If you still refuse*



to have me, I will be the death of you." The turkey-keeper answered haughtily : " I can never love, nor consent to marry you ; you are too ugly, and too much like your cruel father. Leave me in peace with my turkeys, I love them better than all your finery."

The good little mouse gazed on her with admiration, for she was as beautiful as the moon. When the wicked king's son was out of sight, the fairy assumed the figure of an old sheperdess, and, accosting the rustic beauty, said : " Good-morrow, daughter, you have a fine flock of fat turkeys here." The young turkey-keeper smiled sweetly on the old dame, and said : " They are trying to persuade me to abandon them for a weary crown ; pray assist me with your advice."—" Daughter," said the fairy, " a crown is not to be despised ; you neither know its value nor importance."—" So well do I know both the one and the other," answered the turkey-keeper promptly, " that I am

resolved never to share one with an unworthy person ; yet I do not know who I am, nor who are my father and mother : I have neither relations nor friends.”—“ You have beauty and virtue, my child,” said the wise fairy, “ which are more valuable than ten kingdoms : tell me, I entreat you, who placed you here, since you have neither father, mother, relations, nor friends.”—“ A fairy,” answered the fair turkey-feeder, “ named Caucaline, is the cause of my being in this place : she brought me up from infancy, but treated me so cruelly, that one day I resolved to escape from her house, and, after wandering for some time, was resting in a wood, when the wicked king’s son happened to pass that way. He saw me, and asked if I would take care of his poultry : I accepted his offer and his turkeys were immediately placed under my charge. He came from time to time to see how they thrived, and of course saw me also ; when, alas ! without the slightest desire on my part for the honour, he fell so desperately in love, that I am teased out of my life by his importunities.”

When the fairy had heard this artless tale, she began to think that the turkey-keeper must be the princess Amietta. “ What is your name, my dear ?” said she. “ I am called Amietta,” answered the rustic. On hearing this, the fairy could no longer doubt the truth of her surmises ; so, throwing her arms round the princess’s neck, she almost devoured her with

caresses, and said: "Amietta, I have known you from your birth, and am very glad to find you so pretty and so prudent; but I should like to see you better dressed, as your present appearance is any thing but favourable; let me see how you look in these fine clothes."

Amietta, who was very obedient, immediately complied with the fairy's request: she uncovered her head, when immediately her long hair, which was finer than gossamer, and of the most delicate auburn, fell to the ground in graceful curls; then, taking in the palms of her delicate hands some water from a clear stream that ran near the hen-house, she bathed her face, when her complexion became clear as oriental pearl. Roses seemed to blow upon her cheeks and carnations on her lips; her mild breath was as sweet as the honeysuckle or wild thyme, her form was graceful as the fawn's, while the whiteness of her bosom surpassed that of drifted snow, or the lily of the valley.

*When she was dressed, the fairy declared her a miracle of beauty, and said: "Who now do you think you are, my dear Amietta?"—"In truth,"* answered the princess, "I cannot help fancying myself the daughter of some great king."*—"Should you be very glad if it were so?"* asked the fairy. "Yes, my dear madam," answered Amietta, curtsying, "I should be very, very glad."*—"Very well,"* said the fairy, "be happy then; I will tell you more to-morrow."





Thereupon the fairy departed, and returned in all diligence to her fine castle, where queen Felicia was employed spinning silk. “Will it please your majesty,” cried the good little mouse, “to wager your spindle and your distaff, that I do not bring you the best news you ever heard.”—“Alas!” answered the queen, “since the death of King Felix, and the loss of my darling Amietta, all the news in this world is nothing to me.”—“A truce to your sorrow,” said the fairy; “the princess, whom I have just seen, is quite well, and so exceedingly beautiful, that it will be her own fault if she do not become a queen.” The good fairy then related all she had learnt, and the queen shed tears of joy to hear that her daughter was still alive and so beautiful, but was overwhelmed with sorrow to learn that she was a turkey-keeper. “When my dear husband and myself were a powerful king and queen, and in the height of our

prosperity, we little thought a child of ours would ever be a turkey-keeper!"—"Never mind," said the fairy, "it is a trick of the wicked Caucaline, who, aware of my affection for you, has reduced Amietta to this condition; but I will be equal with my rival yet, and will either restore the princess to her proper rank, or burn my books."—"I have no ambition to see my child married to the wicked king's son," said the queen; "so do not delay to bring her hither."

In the mean time, the wicked king's son, repulsed by Amietta in the presence of the good little mouse, was very much enraged against her; and seating himself under the palace wall, he began to cry so hard, that the wicked king overheard him.



Throwing up the window, and putting out his head: "*What is the matter? What are you making all this noise about?*" said

he. "Our turkey-keeper loves me not," answered the son. "How! loves you not?" said the wicked king; "but I say she shall love you." With that he called his guards, and gave orders for them to bring the turkey-keeper to his presence, adding that he would make her bitterly repent her obstinacy in refusing to love his handsome son.

The guards, in obedience to the orders they had received, went immediately to the turkey-yard, when they found Amietta attired in a superb robe of white satin, embroidered with diamonds and rubies, and tastefully trimmed with ribbon. Never in their lives had they seen so noble looking and beautiful a lady; and believing her to be a princess, they were afraid to speak. "Pray tell me whom you seek?" said Amietta, in a very sweet and amiable voice. "Madam," they answered, "we come, by the king's orders, in search of a wretched young woman named Amietta."—"Alas!" answered the princess, "that is my name; what would you with me?" They dared not hesitate to seize her; so, binding her hands and feet with strong cords, they dragged her before the wicked king and his son. When the king saw how very beautiful she was, in spite of himself, he was a little moved; indeed she must have excited the kindest feelings in his bosom, if he had not been the most wicked person in the world. When he had surveyed her from head to foot, he said: "So, madam! I hear that you will not

consent to marry my son. He is a hundred times too good for you; and, fine as you think yourself, one of his looks is worth



more than all your charms. *Come, marry him immediately, or I will have you flayed alive.*” The princess, trembling like a dove in the net of the fowler, threw herself at his feet, and embracing his knees, said: “Sire, I conjure you to have pity on me; to injure an unprotected girl would be unworthy of your royal dignity. Give me a day or two to reflect, and I will then no longer oppose your wishes.” The son, furious at her not consenting on the spot, would have had her flayed at once; but the king finally resolved to place her in confinement, and she was conducted to a high tower, where she was deprived of the light of the sun.

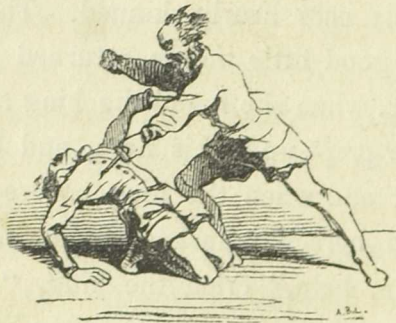
At this crisis the good fairy and the queen arrived in the flying chariot, and soon learned all that had taken place. The queen began to weep bitterly, saying that her misfortunes were interminable, but that she would rather see her daughter dead,

than married to the wicked king's son. "Be of good cheer," said the fairy, "I am about so to annoy them that you shall be amply avenged."

When the wicked king went to bed, the beneficent fairy, having assumed the shape of a mouse, concealed herself under the bolster of his bed, and just as he was falling asleep, crept out and gnawed his ear. Muttering an oath, he turned round in bed, when the little mouse gnawed his other ear. The king flew into a passion and called aloud for help. The attendants entered the room, and found the king with both his ears so severely bitten, and bleeding so fast, that all their efforts to staunch the wounds were unavailing. While a diligent search was making for the mouse, she paid the wicked king's son a visit, and served him in the same manner. He was soon heard bawling for assistance, and when the servants came into his apartment, they beheld him with his ears nearly skinned. The surgeon was sent for; and the good little mouse returned to the wicked king's bed-chamber, when she found the king again dozing off to sleep. She now crept up to his nose, and began to nibble with all her might, and when the king covered that with his hands, she applied herself industriously to bite and scratch them also. "Help, help," cried the king, "I am suffering martyrdom!" and while he was shouting, the little mouse crept into his mouth, and nibbled his tongue, lips, and cheeks. The

attendants rushed into the room, and found the king looking ghastly, and almost speechless, from the effects of the mouse's little teeth on his tongue. All he could do was to make signs that a mouse was the author of this new mischief, when the mattress, the bolster, and every hole and corner of the room, were again searched in vain, for the mouse was off, a second time, to the son, whom she completely blinded, for she gnawed his remaining eye (he was already blind of one). In a transport of fury, with his drawn sword in his hand, he blundered into his father's room, whom he found storming and swearing, that he would destroy every thing an inch high, and an hour old, if the mouse were not found.

When the king saw his son he stormed also at him; and the latter, whose ears were bound up, not recognizing his father's voice, immediately attacked him. *The wicked king, amazed,*



*thrust his sword through the body of his son, and stumbled in his*

*eagerness on his adversary's weapon, which impaled him, and thus father and son rolled on the floor dead at each other's hands. Their subjects, who hated them mortally, and only obeyed them out of fear, no longer dreading their anger, tied cords to their feet and dragged them into the river, saying that they were very glad to be rid of them so easily.*

Thus died the wicked king of Tearland, and his equally wicked son. The beneficent fairy hastened to inform the queen of the event, and they went together to the black tower, in which Amietta was confined under more than forty locks. The fairy struck the outer door three times with her little nut-tree wand, when it immediately flew open, as did all the others, and they found the poor princess in the deepest affliction. Throwing herself on her daughter's neck: "My long lost darling," said the queen, "I am your unfortunate mother, Queen Felicia." Thereupon she communicated to the princess every particular of her history, at which Amietta was so transported with joy, that it almost cost her her life. She threw herself at the queen's feet, embraced them, bathed them with her tears, and kissed them again and again. She then tenderly embraced the fairy, who had brought her baskets full of jewels of enormous value, with gold, diamonds, bracelets, pearls, and the portrait of King Felix, set in jewels, which she held up for her inspection. "But we have no time to lose," said she, "now is the time for

a master-stroke : let us go to the large hall of the palace, and harangue the people."

The fairy led the way, with a very sedate and serious countenance, wearing a robe with a train more than six ells long ; the queen's dress was of blue velvet, covered with gold embroidery, and had a still longer train. In order to make this display, they had brought their richest suits with them ; they wore likewise crowns on their heads, which sparkled like so many suns. The princess Amietta followed her mother, looking as modest as Diana, and as beautiful as Venus. They courtseyed to all whom they met, gentle or simple. A crowd soon collected about them, anxious to learn who these fair and noble-looking ladies could be. They entered the large hall, in which the court was usually held, and when it was as full as it could hold, the beneficent fairy told the people, that she proposed to give them for their queen the daughter of King Felix of Happy Land, whom she then introduced to their notice ; adding, that they would certainly be contented with her government, and that if they accepted her for their sovereign, she, the fairy, would find Amietta a husband as perfect as herself, and would restore cheerfulness to the kingdom, and for ever banish melancholy from their hearts. When these words were heard, loud shouts of " Long live Amietta, Queen of Tearland, now Happy Land," resounded from the multitude, and almost split



the roof. At the same moment, a hundred different musical instruments struck up a lively waltz by Beethoven, and the people joined hands and began to dance round the queen, her daughter, and the benignant fairy, singing with one voice.

All hail to our queen, who brings brightness and joy  
To the hearts of a people by care long oppressed !  
Long, long may she live ; while each thought we employ,  
To render her happy by whom we are blessed.  
A wiser or better earth never has seen ;  
Then, live Amietta ; long, long live the queen.

Thus kindly were they welcomed ; and never until the time in which we live was there a queen more beloved.

At her coronation, which, as may be expected, was magnificent in the extreme, tables were spread in the park, collations were served, all present ate, drank, and were merry, and then retired to rest, blessing their youthful queen. Shortly afterwards the fairy presented to the gentle Amietta the most handsome prince that eyes ever looked upon, and what is more, as good as he was handsome. The fairy, who had to seek such a paragon of a husband in a very remote kingdom, brought him in her flying chariot ; and so well were they matched, that, directly they met, they conceived the most tender and lasting attachment for each other. Magnificent preparations were

made for the wedding, and the ceremony was performed with the utmost splendour, and followed by rejoicings, which lasted six months, throughout the kingdom.





## THE STORY OF THE HIND IN THE FOREST.

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ONCE upon a time, there lived a king and queen whose union was perfect ; they loved each other tenderly, and were adored by their subjects : one thing only was wanting to complete the felicity of both subjects and sovereigns, and that was an heir to the throne. The queen, who was persuaded that her husband would love her still more fondly if she had a son, prayed continually to Heaven to bless her with one.

One day, having taken a walk in a forest, the queen seated herself near a fountain; and having desired her ladies



to leave her alone, *began her ordinary lamentations*: “Alas! how unfortunate I am to have no children!” she said. “The poorest woman in my dominions is blessed with them; while I, though I have prayed day and night for the last five years for a son, am still denied this fondest wish of my heart!”

As the queen thus spoke, she observed the water become troubled; and, almost immediately, *an immense craw-fish appeared above its surface*, and said: “Great queen, your desire is at last about to be satisfied; you must know that there is



near this spot a superb palace, built by the fairies, which, however, it is impossible for you to find because it is surrounded by very thick clouds, which are impenetrable to the eyes of mortals: still, as I am your very humble servant, if you will trust yourself to the keeping of a poor craw-fish, I will conduct you to it."

The queen listened to this address in silence, for the novelty of hearing a craw-fish speak very much surprised her, but said she would accept the offer with pleasure, although she did

not know how to walk backwards. The craw-fish smiled, and immediately taking the shape of a handsome little old woman: "Now, your majesty," she said, "now we need not walk backwards, eh? You will not refuse to accompany me now; and above all regard me as your friend, for my sole desire is to be of service to you."

The little woman then stepped out of the fountain attired in a beautiful white dress lined with crimson, which with her grey hair, decked out with green ribbons, were unspotted by the water; indeed there never was a gayer looking old lady. She saluted the queen, and, having been embraced by her majesty, shewed her, without further delay, a path in the forest that not a little surprised her; for, though she had been there thousands and thousands of times before, she had never discovered it. In fact, how should she? it was the path by which the fairies always visited their fountain, and was generally choked up with thorns and brambles; but, when the queen and her conductress appeared, rose trees immediately burst into blossom, jasmine and orange trees entwined their branches to form a bower, covered with leaves and blooming with flowers, for their accommodation; violets sprung up wherever they placed their feet; and thousands of singing birds filled the air with a melodious concert.

The queen had not recovered from her surprise when her

eyes were struck by the unparalleled lustre of a palace built entirely of diamonds ; the walls, roof, ceilings, floors, staircases, balconies, and even the terraces, all were composed of that precious material. In the excess of her astonishment, she could not forbear asking the gay old lady, who accompanied her, whether what she saw were a dream or reality. “ Nothing can be more real, madam,” replied the fairy. As she spoke, the doors of the palace opened, and six fairies came from it ; but what fairies ! they were the most beautiful and most magnificent that ever existed. They approached the queen, and courtseying in the most graceful manner, presented her with a bouquet made of precious stones, containing a rose, a tulip, an anemone, a hyacinth, a pink, and an auricula. “ Madam,” said one of the fairies, addressing the queen, “ we cannot show you a greater mark of our perfect respect, than by permitting you to visit us in our palace ; and we are most happy to announce to you, that you will soon have a beautiful princess whom you must christen Welcome, which we are sure she will be to you. Fail not, directly she is born, to call us to you, for we intend to endow her with all kinds of good qualities : you have only to take the bouquet we have given you, and name each of the six flowers, and be assured you will soon see us in your chamber.”

The queen, transported with joy, threw herself on their necks,

and their embracings lasted a full half hour. They then entreated the queen to enter their palace, to which no description can do justice. The fairies had procured an architect from the sun, and he had made their residence an exact miniature model of that luminary, so that the queen could hardly bear its dazzling lustre, and was continually shutting her eyes. The fairies conducted their guest to the garden, which produced the finest fruits that were ever seen. There were apricots larger than one's head, and cherries so large, that to eat them it was necessary to divide them into quarters, and of such exquisite flavour that the queen never afterwards cared to eat any others.

To tell the queen's transport, as how much she spoke of the little princess Welcome, and how many times she thanked the amiable persons who had announced such agreeable news, is what I will not attempt, but I must say, that no expression of affection and gratitude was wanting on her part. The fairy of the fountain, who was not neglected in the queen's thanks, entreated her guest to remain until the evening in the palace; and as her majesty was fond of music, her hosts, by their delightful singing, completed her enchantment; after which, loaded with presents, she retired, accompanied by the fairy of the fountain.

Meanwhile the king and all the household were dreadfully alarmed at the queen's absence, and a rigorous and anxious



search was made, which of course ended unsuccessfully. As she was young and beautiful, it was feared that some audacious strangers had carried her off. Every body about the court was therefore overjoyed to see her return; and, as she was herself in excellent spirits at the promises which had just been made to her, her conversation was so brilliant and agreeable, that she charmed more than ever.

In due time, the queen became the mother of a princess, whom she immediately christened Welcome; then, taking the bouquet that had been given to her, she repeated the names of the flowers one by one, and the six fairies immediately arrived. They came in chariots, each constructed in a different style and of different materials; one was of ebony, drawn by white pigeons; another of ivory, drawn by small ravens; the rest of cedar, zebra, and other valuable woods. These were their equipages of amity and peace; for, when angry, they rode on flying dragons, or winged serpents, which shot fire from their mouths and eyes; or on winged lions, leopards, or panthers, which transported them through the air, from one end of the world to the other, in less time than it takes to say, good bye, or, how d'ye do; but, on this occasion they were in the best humour possible.

They entered the queen's chamber with a pleased and majestic air, followed by male and female dwarfs, all bearing presents.

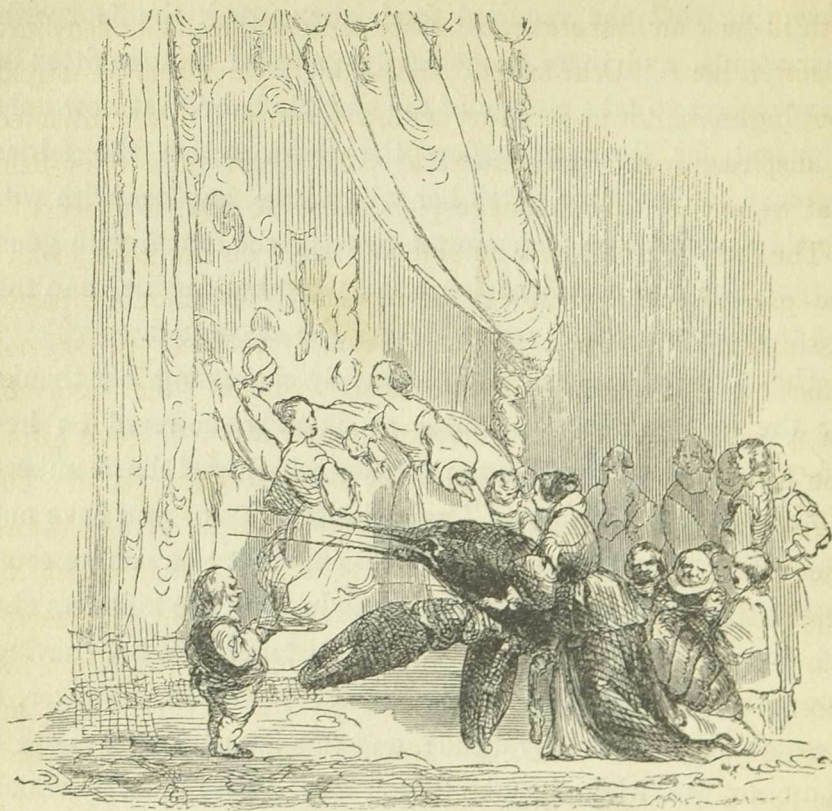
After they had embraced the queen, and kissed the infant princess, they displayed the baby linen, the delicate material of which was spun by the fairies in their leisure hours, and although fine as a web, was yet so good that it might have been used for a century; while the lace with which it was trimmed surpassed in quality, if possible, that of web itself, and on it was worked the history of the whole world. The swaddling clothes and coverlets, which they had embroidered expressly for little Welcome, were worked, in the most lively colours, with thousands of different games at which children amuse themselves. Never, since embroidery was first practised, was seen such perfect work; but when the fairies produced the cradle, the queen exclaimed again with admiration, for it surpassed all they had as yet shown her. It was made of so beautiful and uncommon a kind of wood, inlaid with mother of pearl, that its worth could not be estimated. Four little Cupids bore it on their shoulders, and they were indeed four master-pieces of art, made entirely of diamonds and rubies, and so beautifully that no language can do justice to them. These little Cupids had been so far animated by the fairies that when the baby cried, they rocked and soothed it to sleep, which certainly was very convenient for the nurses.

The fairies themselves took the little princess on their knees, dressed it, and kissed it a hundred times: she was already so

handsome that it was impossible to see her without loving her. Observing that she required food, they struck the floor with their wands, and there immediately appeared a nurse fitted in every respect to take charge of the amiable baby. It now only remained for them to endow the child, which the fairies hastened to do. One gifted her with virtue, another with wit, the third with more than mortal beauty, the fourth with good fortune, the fifth promised her a long and healthy life, and the last that she should do well whatever she attempted.

The overjoyed queen was eloquently expressing her thanks for the favours that the fairies so liberally showered on her infant princess, when an immense craw-fish entered the chamber: "*Ah! too ungrateful queen,*" said the fish, "so, you have not deigned to remember me! Is it possible that you can so soon have forgotten the fairy of the fountain, and the kindness she did you in conducting you to her sisters? Why, having summoned them all, am I only neglected? I had, however, a presentiment of this ingratitude, and this induced me to appear as a craw-fish when I spoke to you for the first time, by which I meant to imply that your friendship instead of advancing would recede."

The queen, inconsolable for the fault she had committed, interrupted the fairy of the fountain to beg her pardon; saying, in excuse for her forgetfulness, that the fairy had neglected to



name her flower like the others ; that she was incapable of ever forgetting the obligations she had received at her hands, and concluded by entreating her not to withdraw her friendship, and, above all, not to injure the little princess. All the fairies,

who feared that their offended sister would endow Welcome with ill-luck and misfortunes, seconded the queen's endeavours to soften her: "Dear sister," they said, "permit us to entreat your highness not to be angry with a queen who never intended to displease you; pray lay aside your figure of a craw-fish, that we may see you again resplendent with all your charms."

The fairy of the fountain piqued herself on her good looks; the praises that her sisters bestowed on her therefore partly dissipated her anger. "Well, sisters," said she, "I will not inflict upon the little Welcome all the evil that I had resolved, for it was my intention to effectually mar all your good gifts: you have, however, prevailed upon me to alter my mind; but I give you fair warning, that if she see the light of day before she attain the age of fifteen years, she will have reason to repent it; nay, it may cost her her life." Neither the queen's tears, nor the supplications of the other fairies could induce the incensed fairy of the fountain to alter this decree; and she retired backwards, for she had not condescended to quit the figure of a craw-fish.

When the fairy had left the chamber, the sorrowful queen asked the six fairies to inform her how she might preserve her daughter from the evils that threatened her.

They held a council; and, after a lengthened and animated discussion, came to an unanimous opinion that the best plan

would be to build a palace without doors or windows; with only one, and that a subterranean entrance; and in this palace to bring up the princess, until she should complete her fifteenth year.

Three strokes with their wands sufficed to begin and finish a most superb edifice. Externally the walls were of green marble, and internally of white; the floors and ceilings were of diamonds and emeralds, disposed in the forms of flowers and birds, and innumerable pretty devices. The walls were hung with tapestry of different colours, embroidered by the fairies' own hands; and, as they were well acquainted with history, past, present, and to come, they depicted thereon its most remarkable personages and events, and among the rest the



heroic actions of *the great King of France, Louis XIV.* and the future glories of the reign of *Victoria of England.*

The princess Welcome's residence was lighted by wax tapers only; but there was such an immense quantity of them that they made a perpetual day. Masters, requisite to perfect her education, were conducted by the fairies to her palace; but her natural wit and intelligence almost always anticipated their instructions, and they were continually charmed and astonished at the surprising things uttered by her at an age when most children can hardly repeat their nurse's name: verily, people are not endowed by fairies to remain ignorant and stupid.

If her wit charmed all who were thrown into contact with her, her beauty was not less powerful in its effects, but delighted the most insensible. The kind fairies came from time to time to see her, and at every visit brought presents of the most costly and rare description; dresses so tastefully made and of such precious materials, that they would have been even suitable for a certain young queen, who is no less amiable than the princess of whom I speak. The fairies never came without reminding the queen of the importance of not permitting her to see the light of day before the prescribed time: "Our sister of the fountain is vindictive," they would say: "and, however interested we may be for the welfare of your child, she will not fail to do her a mischief if she can; therefore, madam, you cannot be too vigilant on this point." The queen promised to pay the utmost attention to their kind recommendations; but,

as the time approached when her beloved daughter would be able to quit her palace of confinement, she had her portrait taken, and sent copies of it to all the great courts in the world. To have beheld the beautiful Welcome's portrait, and not to have been charmed with it, would have been impossible; but one young prince was so struck by its surpassing loveliness, that he could not endure that it should be out of his sight. He shut himself up with it in his cabinet, and, speaking as though



it were capable of understanding him, *addressed the most impassioned declarations to the beautiful resemblance.*

The king, no longer observing his son at his usual occupations,



enquired what had estranged him, and what it was that caused him to look less happy and cheerful than usual. Some courtiers, speaking too hastily (there are many of that character), told his majesty, that they feared the prince had lost his senses, as he was in the habit of shutting himself up for whole days in his closet, and talking to himself in the most extravagant terms.

The king, alarmed at hearing this intelligence, said to his confidant: "Is it possible that my son should have lost his reason; he who always displayed so much intelligence and wit? I have not observed any wildness in his looks, although he appears somewhat thoughtful and melancholy; but I must talk with him; perhaps I may discover what it is which affects him."

Accordingly, the king sent for his son, and asked him what had happened that his person and temper should have undergone so sudden a change. The prince, thinking it a favourable opportunity, threw himself at his father's feet. "You have determined," said he, "to marry me to the Black Princess, and you would certainly derive advantages from my alliance with her, which I cannot promise you would result from my union with the princess Welcome; but, Sir, I find charms in the latter that I shall never see in the former."—"And how pray have you been able to make a comparison?" demanded the king. "The portraits of both princesses have been brought to

me," replied Prince Valiant (so the young prince was called in consequence of having greatly contributed to the achievement of three splendid victories); "and I have conceived so violent a passion for the princess Welcome, that if you do not recall your promise made to the Black Princess, I must die, happy, however, to quit this life, when all hope of possessing her I love is lost to me for ever."

"It is then with her portrait," replied the king gravely, "that you hold conversations which render you ridiculous in the eyes of my courtiers: they think you insane; and if you knew how much the idea annoys me, you would be ashamed to display a weakness which gives countenance to such a report."—"I cannot reproach myself with any weakness," answered Valiant; "when you shall have seen the portrait of the charming princess, you will, I am sure, approve of my preference."—"Go and fetch it immediately," said the king, with an air of impatience, which showed he was not very well pleased. The prince would have been pained at this, but that he was certain that Welcome was the most beautiful princess in the world. He ran, therefore, to his closet, and returned with the portrait to the king, who was almost as much smitten by it as his son. "Aha!" said he, "my dear Valiant, I grant you your desire; *I shall grow young again myself, when I have so lovely a princess at my court*; I will immediately despatch



ambassadors to the court of the Black Princess, and recall my promise, though a war should be the consequence."

Valiant respectfully kissed his father's hands, and repeatedly embraced his knees. He was so overjoyed, that he did not look like the same person, and begged the king to despatch ambassadors not only to the Black Princess, but to Welcome,

and that he would choose for the latter the richest and most intelligent of his courtiers, as it would be necessary to make some appearance on this occasion, and to urge his suit with more than ordinary eloquence. The king immediately sent for Becafica, a very learned, amiable and rich young lord, the intimate friend of Valiant. To please his friend, Becafica chose the grandest equipage and the handsomest livery imaginable; his diligence was extreme, for the prince's love increased every day, and he unceasingly conjured his friend to hasten his departure. "Believe me," said he, confidentially, "when I say that my life depends on the success of your mission; that I am almost mad when I think that the princess's father may have entered into engagements with some more favoured suitor which he may be unwilling to break in my favour, and that Welcome may thus be lost to me for ever." Becafica re-assured Valiant in order to gain time, for he was anxious to make as imposing an appearance as possible. His equipage consisted of eighty carriages resplendent with gold and diamonds; the most elaborately finished miniature could not be compared with the paintings which ornamented them; there were likewise fifty other carriages, eighty thousand pages on horseback, more magnificent than princes; and the other parts of this sumptuous cortège were on an equally gorgeous scale.

When the ambassador had his last audience with the prince,

previous to his departure, the latter embraced him affectionately : “ Remember my dear Becafica,” he said, “ that my life depends on the marriage you are about to negotiate ; use then all your eloquence to attain it for me, and to bring back with you the amiable princess whom I adore.” Valiant loaded his friend with a thousand presents for Welcome, in which gallantry surpassed costliness : they consisted of amorous devices engraved on diamond seals ; watches in cases of carbuncle, bearing the initials of Welcome’s name ; ruby bracelets carved in the shape of hearts : in short, it would fill volumes to relate all that he had imagined to please her.

The ambassador carried with him Valiant’s portrait, painted by so skilful a man that it spoke, and could make witty and complimentary little speeches ! It did not indeed reply to all that was said to or asked of it ; nor was it necessary that it should, as Becafica promised to neglect nothing that might further the object of his embassy, adding, that he should take such immense sums of money with him that, if the princess should be refused him by her father, he did not doubt but that he should still find some means of gaining over her women to enable him to carry her away. “ Ah !” cried the prince, “ I cannot consent to that ; the amiable Welcome would be offended by a proceeding so disrespectful.” To this observation Becafica made no answer and forthwith set out.

The report of his coming preceded the ambassador, and the king and queen were delighted with the news, as they esteemed and respected Valiant's father, and were not unacquainted with the prince's heroic actions, and his rare personal merit, with which they were so satisfied that, had they searched over the whole world for a husband for their daughter, they could not have found one more worthy of her in their estimation. A palace was accordingly prepared for Becafica's reception, and all the necessary orders given for the court to appear in the utmost magnificence.

The king and queen had decided that the ambassador should see Welcome, when the fairy Tulip sought out the queen and said to her : " Take care, madam, that Becafica be not introduced to our child (so she called the princess) at present, and do not be induced to consent to send her to the court of the king who is about to demand her in marriage for his son, before she shall have completed her fifteenth year ; for, be assured, that if she leave the palace in which she now resides, some misfortune will befall her." The queen embraced the good fairy Tulip and promised to follow her advice ; they immediately went to visit the princess.

The ambassador arrived, his equipage taking twenty-three hours to proceed from the city gates to the palace, for he had six hundred thousand mules, shod with gold, and bearing small

golden bells fastened to their necks, their trappings being of velvet and brocade embroidered with pearls ; the streets through which they passed were completely blocked up by the dense crowd of spectators from all parts of the kingdom. The king and queen went out to meet Becafica, so pleased were they with his coming. It is useless to speak of the harangue that he made, or of *the ceremonies that passed on both sides*, they may easily be



imagined : but when he begged permission to pay his respects to the princess, he was not a little surprised that this honour was refused him : “ If, my lord Becafica,” said the king to the ambassador, “ we refuse you a request which appears so

reasonable, be assured that it is not through caprice or want of respect, but from a strange fatality which attends our daughter, and of which we will inform you that you may act accordingly.

“A fairy, at the moment of her birth, threatened her with a very severe misfortune, if she should by any chance see the light of day before she had attained the age of fifteen years; accordingly we have hitherto kept her in close confinement, in a palace of which the finest apartments are under ground. We had resolved that your excellency should visit her, but the fairy Tulip, one of her guardians, has charged us on no account to allow you so to do.”—“Sire,” replied the ambassador, in astonishment, “shall I then have the disappointment of returning without her? you will surely grant her in marriage to the prince, my master’s son; she is looked for at his court with the utmost impatience, and is it possible that you can be influenced by the ridiculous predictions of fairies? There is prince Valiant’s portrait, which I have orders to present to your daughter; it is so excellent a likeness that I fancy I see him when I look upon it.” Thereupon Becafica displayed the portrait, which immediately said: “Charming Welcome, you cannot imagine with what eagerness I attend your coming; hasten to our court, to grace it with those charms which render you incomparable.” Then the portrait was silent, and the king and queen were so surprised, that they entreated



Becafica to allow them to present it to the princess. The ambassador, overjoyed at this request, readily transferred it into their hands.

Hitherto the queen had not mentioned to her daughter what was passing, and had moreover forbidden Welcome's attendants to say a word on the subject of the ambassador's arrival. This of course was enough to make them tell her all about it, and the princess soon knew the whole history of the intended marriage; but she was sufficiently prudent not to hint such knowledge to her mother. Still when the queen showed Welcome the portrait of the young prince, which immediately spoke, and paid the princess a compliment as elegant as it was appropriate, she was much astonished, for she had never seen a talking portrait before, nor indeed one of so handsome a young man as Valiant, whose regular features and refined air charmed her as much as the homage paid to herself. "Should you be sorry," said the queen, laughing, "to have a husband resembling this portrait?"—"Madam," replied Welcome, like a good girl, "it is not for me to make a choice; I shall be certainly satisfied with the husband on whom you shall think fit to bestow me."—"But," added the queen, "tell me, if the original of this portrait were our choice, should you not esteem yourself as fortunate?" Welcome blushed, cast down her eyes, and made no answer. The queen embraced her

tenderly, and could not forbear shedding tears to think that she was on the point of parting with her, for it only wanted three months to complete her fifteenth year. Concealing her uneasiness, however, the queen informed her daughter of the object of Becafica's embassy, and gave her presents that he had brought from Valiant. Welcome could not but admire them, and praised with much taste the most curious among them; but her eyes wandered from time to time to gaze on *the portrait of prince Valiant, which she contemplated with a pleasure which had until then been unknown to her.*



Meanwhile the ambassador, finding that all his entreaties failed to induce the king to allow Welcome to return with him

to his court, and that he could only obtain the promise of her hand for Valiant (though that promise was given so solemnly that he could not doubt the king's intention to fulfil it), made but a short stay with the king, and hurried home to inform his royal masters of the result of his mission.

When the prince learned that he could not hope to see his beloved Welcome for more than three months to come, his lamentations afflicted all the court; he took neither food nor rest and *became sorrowful and thoughtful*. His brilliant com-



plexion gave way to wan cheeks and sunken eyes, and he remained whole days in his closet, reclining on a sofa, and

gazing on the portrait of his princess. He wrote the most impassioned verses which he presented to the insensible canvass, as if it had been capable of reading them. At last his strength completely left him, and he was gradually wasting away with an illness which neither physicians nor surgeons could remove.

The king's grief was excessive, for he was doatingly fond of his son, whom he feared he was now on the point of losing. What an affliction for a tender parent ! In this great extremity, he resolved to visit the king and queen who had promised their daughter to Valiant, to entreat them to have pity on the prince, in the condition to which he was reduced, and to defer no longer a marriage which could never take place, if they were resolved on waiting till the princess was fifteen years of age. Unfortunately, there was one difficulty which was insurmountable, it was that his great age obliged him to travel in a litter, a mode of conveyance which accorded but ill with his son's impatience ; the trusty Becafica was therefore despatched in advance, charged with the most touching epistles, in which prince Valiant conjured the king and queen to yield to his wishes.

Meanwhile, Welcome received as much pleasure in the contemplation of the prince's portrait, as Valiant had in regarding her own. She was continually in the chamber in which it hung, and, careful as she was to conceal her sentiments,

her attendants were not slow in perceiving their direction, and, among others, Flora and Narcissa, two of her maids of honour, soon observed the uneasiness that had begun to trouble her. Flora passionately loved her mistress, and was faithful to her, but Narcissa had always felt a secret envy of Welcome's beauty, birth and accomplishments. Narcissa's mother having educated the princess, had afterwards become her mistress of the robes. As her instructress, she ought indeed to have loved Welcome as the most amiable child in the world, but, doating on her daughter, and perceiving the hatred the latter bore towards the beautiful princess, her feelings had become estranged from her pupil.

The ambassador who had been despatched to the court of the Black Princess did not, as you may suppose, experience a very flattering reception, when he made known the object of his embassy. The Ethiopian princess, who was the most vindictive creature in the world, was extremely indignant that after having entered into engagements with her, she should be treated with so little respect. Her royal highness had seen and become enamoured of a portrait of prince Valiant, and Ethiopians, when once they conceive a passion, are more extravagant in their ardour than any other nation under the sun: "What, master ambassador," said the princess, "does your master think I am not sufficiently rich or handsome?"

Make a tour of my kingdom, and you will find that it is an extensive one ; visit my royal treasury, and you will behold more gold than the mines of Peru can furnish ; behold, too, the rich black of my complexion, this well-turned nose, these pouting lips, and deny, if you can, my claims to beauty.”—“ Madam,”



replied the ambassador, *who dreaded the bastinado*, for they did not treat ambassadors ceremoniously among the Ethiopians, “I blame my master as much as a subject dare ; and if Heaven had placed me on the first throne in the world, I know too well with whom I should have wished to share it.”—“These words have saved your life,” said the Black Princess ; “I had determined to begin my revenge on you, but it would be unjust

to do so, as you are not the cause of your master's crime. Hasten whence you came, and tell your master that I am very happy to break with him, and that he is king of an unworthy people." The ambassador, who wished for nothing better than his dismissal, profited by it to hasten from Ethiopia as fast as he could.

But the Black Princess was too deeply offended with prince Valiant to forgive him so easily. Having seated herself in an



*ivory chariot, drawn by four ostriches, which travelled at the rate*

of ten leagues an hour, she hastened to the palace of the fairy of the fountain, who was her godmother and best friend. She related what had transpired, and entreated the fairy to assist her in her revenge. Sensible to the cause of her god-daughter's grief, the fairy of the fountain consulted her book, which tells every thing, and immediately perceived that prince Valiant had only given up the Black Princess for the sake of princess Welcome; that he was passionately in love with the latter, and that the sole cause of his present illness was his impatience to see her. When the fairy of the fountain was aware of this, her anger, which, as we have said, had been somewhat softened, now became as strong as ever. As she had not seen Welcome since her birth, it is probable that she would have done her no further mischief, if the revengeful Black Princess had not now recalled her to her recollection. "What!" cried she, "and is this wretched Welcome always to thwart me? No, charming



*princess, no, my darling, I will not allow any one to affront*



*you* ; all the elements are interested in this business ; return to your court, and rely on your dear godmother." The Black Princess thanked her and retired, after making her a present of flowers and fruits with which she was very well pleased.

We left the ambassador Becafica advancing with all diligence towards the capital where Welcome's father held his court. Having arrived, he sought out the royal apartment, threw himself at the king and queen's feet, and, his eyes filled with tears, informed them, in the most moving terms, that prince Valiant would surely die if they still refused to grant him the pleasure of seeing their daughter ; that it only wanted three months to complete her fifteenth year ; and that surely no harm could befall her in so short a space of time. He added, that he trusted they would excuse the liberty he was about to take, in telling them that such implicit belief in the promises or threats of insignificant fairies was unbecoming their royal dignity : in short, Becafica was so eloquent that he carried his point. The king and queen wept at hearing his account of the sorrowful condition to which the young prince was reduced, and told his excellency that they yielded, and would only take a day or two to consider in what manner his wishes could best be accomplished. But this did not satisfy Becafica ; he told them again to what extremity his master was reduced, and that if they wished to

save his life, an hour or two must suffice for their preparations. Their majesties accordingly assured the ambassador that he should know their determination that evening.

The queen hastened to her beloved daughter's palace, to inform her of all that had passed. Welcome's grief was excessive on hearing of Valiant's illness; her heart beat violently, and she fainted away, thus exposing to the queen the extent of her passion for the prince. "Do not afflict yourself, my dear child," said her majesty, "his cure depends on you alone; I am only alarmed at the fairy of the fountain's threats."—"I trust, my dear madam," answered Welcome, "that by taking every precaution we may avoid the malice of the vindictive fairy. Can I not, for instance, travel in a carriage so closely shut up as not to admit day-light? They might open it at night to give me food; and I should thus arrive in time to save prince Valiant's life, and yet incur no danger."

The queen liked the idea which love had suggested to the princess, and communicated it to his majesty, by whom it was also approved. Becafica was therefore informed that Welcome would set out immediately, and that he might hasten back to his master with the intelligence; but, as no time was to be lost, they would not be able to prepare such magnificent clothes for the princess as they could wish, or an equipage suitable to

her rank. The ambassador, transported with joy, once more threw himself at their majesties' feet, to express his gratitude, and set out to return without having seen the princess.

Separation from the king and queen would have been insupportable to Welcome, had she been less prepossessed in favour of the prince; but there are some emotions which stifle almost all others. For her accommodation, a carriage was built of costly wood, covered with green velvet and plates of gold, and lined with rose-coloured brocade embroidered with silver. It was large and commodious but had no windows, and the door was contrived to shut so closely that there was not a crevice left by which the smallest ray of light might enter, while a peer of the realm had charge of the keys. The king and queen then presented Welcome with some fine clothes and jewellery; and, after bidding adieu to her parents and the courtiers, who were overwhelmed with grief at parting with her, she was locked up in the dark carriage with her maids of honour, Narcissa and Flora.

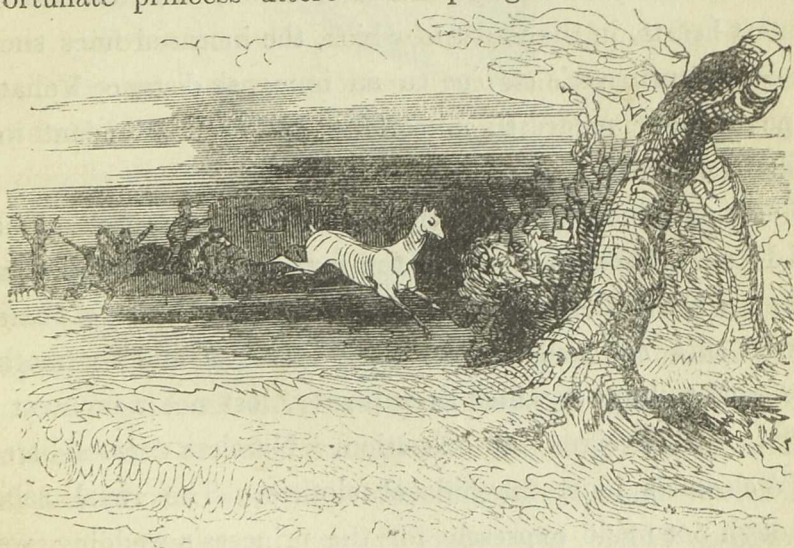
Perhaps our readers have not forgotten that Narcissa did not like the princess Welcome; they must now be informed, that she was passionately in love with Valiant, whose speaking portrait she had seen. So deeply was she affected, that, before setting out with Welcome, she told her mother she could never survive the princess's union with the prince; and that if

she wished to preserve her daughter, she must manage to break off the intended marriage. The mistress of the robes told her daughter not to afflict herself, as she had no doubt of finding some means to render her happy.

On parting with her dear child, the queen recommended her most strenuously to the care of the wicked mother of Narcissa. "What a treasure have I placed under your charge!" she said. "My child is dearer to me than my life. Watch then tenderly over her, and take especial care that she see not the light of day, for if she do, you know with what misfortunes she is menaced: I have made arrangements with prince Valiant's ambassador that, until the remaining weeks of her fifteenth year shall have expired, she may reside in a castle lighted only by wax tapers." The queen then made the mistress of the robes several handsome presents, in order to induce her to observe her instructions more exactly, at the same time exacting a promise from her, that she would be faithful, and send a good account of the princess immediately on her arrival.

The king and queen, trusting to her attendants' vigilance, felt no uneasiness on their dear daughter's account; and their confidence in her safety served in some sort to moderate the grief occasioned by her departure. But Narcissa, who learned from the servants who opened the carriage door every night at supper time, that they were drawing near the court of Valiant's

father, where they were hourly expected, now pressed her mother on the subject, lest the king or the prince should come to meet the princess, and thus frustrate their designs. Accordingly, about noon the next day, the wicked mistress of the robes produced a large knife, which she had brought with her on purpose, and suddenly cut a large hole in the roof of the carriage. The sun was shining brilliantly at the moment, and, for the first time, Welcome saw its light. In a moment, the unfortunate princess uttered a deep sigh, and was metamor-



phosed into a *white hind*. She bounded through the aperture in the roof of the carriage, and was soon lost in a neighbouring forest, where she sought a shady thicket, in which, unobserved, she

might regret the charming form of which she had been so cruelly deprived.

The fairy of the fountain, who had contrived this cruelty, observing that the princess's attendants hastened, some in pursuit of their metamorphosed mistress, and others to the town, to give prince Valiant notice of what had occurred, seemed, in the transport of her anger, to attempt the destruction of all nature. Flashes of forked lightning darted through the sky, followed by deafening peals of thunder, that terrified the stoutest hearts, in the midst of which, the incensed fairy transported the princess's *cortège* to an immense distance from the scene of their mistress's misfortune, and each attendant in a different direction.

There remained only with the carriage Narcissa, her mother, and Flora. The last ran into the forest, in the direction she had seen her mistress take, *making the rocks and leafy avenues re-echo with her lamentations*, while Narcissa and her mother overjoyed to have regained their liberty, lost not a moment in putting their designs into execution. Narcissa dressed herself in Welcome's most magnificent clothes. The royal robes, although not made expressly for the princess's wedding, were still rich and costly beyond description, and the crown was set with diamonds twice or thrice as large as one's hand; the sceptre was made of a single ruby; and the ball, held on state



occasions in the left hand, was made of one pearl as large as a cricket ball, and was consequently of enormous value, and in accordance with the princess's great beauty and worth. Thus dressed in Welcome's robes, and followed by her mother, bearing her train, Narcissa proceeded towards the capital. The counterfeit princess walked very slowly, confident that she should be met ere she reached the city, nor was she disappointed; for she had not advanced many steps, when she observed a numerous body of horsemen, surrounding two litters, glittering with gold and precious stones, and borne by mules, wearing plumes of green feathers. The king and the sick prince, who were in the litters, could not tell what to

make of the ladies whom they perceived coming towards them. Some of the courtiers in advance of the troop, who galloped up to them, judged from the magnificence of their dress, that they must be persons of rank. They accordingly alighted, and accosted them respectfully: "Will you have the goodness to inform me," said Narcissa to them, "who are in those litters?" "Madam," answered the cavaliers, "the king of these realms and the prince his son, who are coming to meet the Princess Welcome."—"In that case," said Narcissa, "I entreat you to inform them she is here. A malicious fairy, envious of my happiness, has dispersed my equipage in a terrible storm of thunder and lightning; consequently, my only attendant is my mistress of the robes, who is fortunately in possession of the king my father's letters and my jewellery."

On hearing this, the courtiers kissed the hem of Narcissa's robe, and hastened back to inform the king that the princess was at hand. "What!" cried his majesty, "the princess on foot, and at mid-day!" Then the horsemen related to the king all they had just heard from Narcissa. Prince Valiant, burning with impatience, called them to his side, and immediately addressing them: "Confess," said he, "that she is a miracle of beauty, an angel, an all-accomplished princess." Their silence not a little surprised the prince. "Seeing that she is beyond all praise, I suppose you prefer saying nothing?"



he continued. "My lord," said the most courageous of them, "you will soon be able to judge for yourself; perhaps the fatigue of travelling has altered her appearance." The prince was all astonishment, and, had he been less weak than he was, would have sprung from the litter to satisfy his impatience and curiosity. But the king alighted, and advancing, surrounded by his courtiers, soon joined the counterfeit princess; no sooner, however, did he obtain a glimpse of her features, than he uttered a loud cry, and exclaimed, falling back a few steps: "What do I see? what treachery is this?"—"Sire," said the mistress of the robes, stepping boldly forward, "behold the princess Welcome; here are her parents' letters, which I deliver into your hands, together with the casket of jewels which they entrusted to my keeping previous to our departure."

In the mean time the prince, leaning on Becafica, drew near Narcissa. Mercy on us! what was his astonishment when he beheld her revolting and extraordinary figure! She was so tall that the princess's clothes hardly covered her knees; she was as thin as a lath, and her nose, more crooked than a parrot's bill, was as red as a mulberry; her teeth were the blackest and most irregular ever seen; in short, she was as ugly as Welcome was beautiful.

The prince whose mind was solely occupied by the idea of his charming princess, was for some time dumb with astonishment at



the sight of her wretched representative. At last turning to the king: "I am betrayed," said he; "*the wondrous portrait which has captivated my heart, is no likeness of this person; we are the victims of a stratagem which will cost me my life.*"—"I do not understand you, my lord," said Narcissa. "You will not be deceived in marrying me." Her arrogance and

impudence were unparalleled, while her wicked mother seconded her daughter most worthily. "Ha! my fair princess," cried she, "where are we? Is this the way to receive a person of your rank? What can be the meaning of such gross misconduct? But the king your father will know how to obtain satisfaction!"—"That is for us to demand," replied the king; "he promised us a lovely princess, and he sends us a frightful mummy: I am no longer astonished that he should have been so careful to conceal this rare beauty for fifteen years; he had a mind to entrap some one into marriage with her, and my son has been unfortunate enough to be his first dupe. However, vengeance is in our power."

"What an affront!" cried the counterfeit princess: "unfortunate girl that I am, to have accepted the proposals of such people! All this fuss because my portrait is painted a little more beautiful than I really am! Why! that happens every day. If princes, for such trifles, always send back their brides, there would be but few royal marriages."

The king and the prince were too indignant to make any remark to this insolence, but re-entered their litters without further ceremony; while the false princess and her mistress of the robes mounted on horseback behind two of the body-guard, were carried to the capital and, by the king's orders, confined in the Black Tower.

Prince Valiant was so overwhelmed by the disappointment he had just experienced, that no words could express his affliction. How bitterly did he bewail his hard fate! His love was still passionate as ever, although its object was now only a portrait. All his hopes were blighted, all the charming ideas that had filled his mind with regard to Welcome had suddenly vanished, for he would have preferred death itself to an union with her whom he believed to be that princess; in a word, never was grief equal to his. No longer able to endure his father's court, he resolved, so soon as his health should permit him to retire, to find some solitary place where he might pass the remainder of his sorrowful days.

He communicated his design to his faithful Becafica, whom he was convinced would share his flight, and with whom he found a melancholy satisfaction in discoursing of the injury he had received. In a short time he set out, leaving on his closet table a long letter for the king his father, in which he assured his majesty, that when his heart should have recovered the shock it had received, he would return to court, entreating him, meanwhile, not to lose sight of their common vengeance, and to keep the ugly princess a close prisoner.

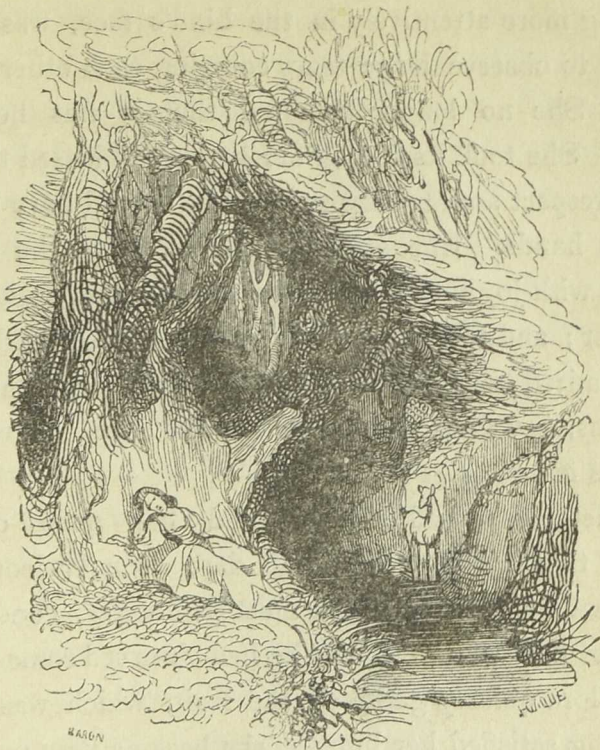
It is easy to imagine the king's grief when one morning this letter was put into his hands, the separation from his beloved son nearly cost him his life; but while the courtiers

were occupied in soothing his majesty's affliction, Valiant and Becafica were hastening on their journey. At the end of three days they came to a vast forest, where the trees afforded so delightful a shade and the turf was so green and flowery, that the prince fatigued with travelling, being still far from well, alighted from his horse, and threw himself sorrowfully on the bank of a rivulet. "While your lordship reposes," said Becafica, "I will seek for some fruit, and reconnoitre what part of the world we have lighted on." The prince made no answer, but silently acceded to Becafica's proposal.

We have not spoken for a long time of the hind in the wood, or rather, the incomparable princess Welcome. Having left the carriage as described, she stopped at a clear fountain in the forest, and was lamenting her sorrowful destiny, when she observed her shadow in the water: "What do I see?" said she, "Alas! alas! I am surely brought to a more miserable condition than ever the malice of a fairy reduced an innocent princess like myself! How long must I endure this dreadful change? Whither must I fly for protection from the lions, bears, and wolves? And can I then live on grass?" Thus she continued to exclaim, her grief continually augmenting, until it became almost unbearable. The only consolation she had, if indeed that were a consolation, was to know that her beauty as a hind was equal to her loveliness as a princess.

At last, feeling hungry, she began to nibble the grass, and found it so much to her taste that she ate with good appetite, not a little surprised at the novelty of her food. She then laid down on the turf, but her terror, when night came on, effectually prevented her from sleeping. She heard the wild beasts of the forest howling around her for their prey, and frequently, forgetting that she was a hind, endeavoured to climb a tree. Becoming a little calmer towards day-break, she saw, for the first time in her life, the sun rise in all his glory, and was so struck with admiration at its brilliancy that she could not withdraw her eyes from it, and for a time forgot her metamorphosis. All she had heard of its splendour fell far short of the reality of what she now witnessed, and gazing on the sun became a consolation she had not hoped for in that desert place, where she remained for several days.

The fairy Tulip was sensibly afflicted at Welcome's misfortune, although extremely vexed that the queen should have taken so little notice of her admonitions ; for she had told her, repeatedly, that if the princess left her palace, before she had completed her fifteenth year, some accident would certainly befall her. The amiable Tulip would not therefore abandon her favourite to the mercy of the fairy of the fountain, and directed Flora towards the forest, that she might console her mistress in her sufferings.



*Flora had seated herself under a shady tree, on the bank of a rivulet, and was sorrowfully considering what direction she should take in search of her dear mistress, when the white hind, perceiving her from the opposite bank, on which she had been leisurely walking, with one bound cleared the stream, and, running up to Flora, covered her with caresses. The maid of*

honour was astonished at being so unexpectedly accosted ; but, on looking more attentively in the hind's face, was still more surprised to observe large tears coursing each other down its cheeks. She no longer doubted that it was her beloved princess. She took its feet in her hands and kissed them, with as much respect and tenderness as she would have kissed the princess's hands. She spoke affectionately to the hind, and perceived with joy that it understood her, although it could not answer her ; and tears and sighs now redoubled on both sides. Flora promised her mistress never to forsake her, and the hind made signs, as well as she could, that she should be very glad of her maid's company.

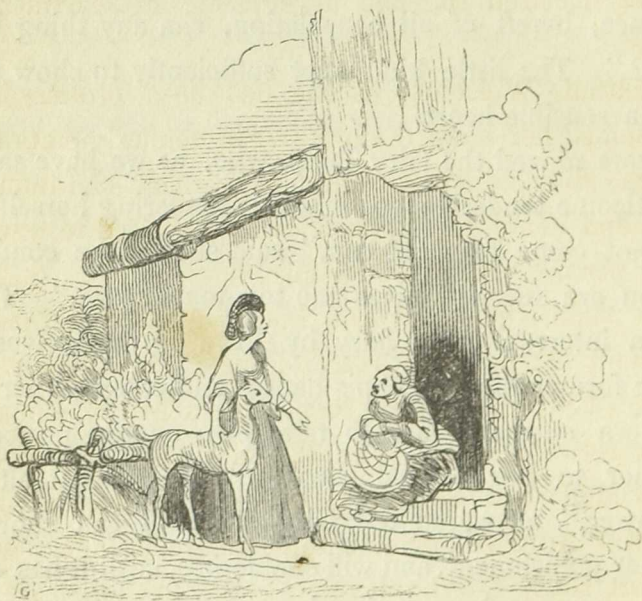
The metamorphosed princess and her maid of honour remained thus together nearly all day, when Welcome, recollecting that her faithful Flora must be hungry, conducted her to a part of the wood in which she had observed some wild fruit-trees. Flora quickly gathered the fruit, which was not bad, but, having satisfied her hunger, she became very uneasy as to where they should pass the night ; for the idea of remaining in the open forest, exposed to the night air and to wild beasts, seemed out of the question. " Are you not terrified, charming hind," said she, " at remaining all night in the wood ? " The hind turned her eyes towards Heaven and sighed deeply. " But, as you have traversed a part of this vast



forest," continued the maid of honour, "are there no huts, no charcoal-burners, no wood-cutters, not even a hermitage to be found?" The hind shook her head, intimating that she had seen nothing of the kind. "Alas!" cried Flora, "I shall never live through the night; for, if by good fortune I am not attacked by tigers or bears, fear alone will kill me. But think not, dearest princess, that I regret this on my own account; it is for your sake, alone, I fear to die: to leave you in this desert place, bereft of all consolation, can any thing be more dreadful?" The little hind wept sufficiently to show that she had still a sensible heart.

Her tears moved the fairy Tulip, who, as we have said, still loved Welcome tenderly; so, suddenly rendering herself visible, "I am not come to scold you," said she; "the condition to which you are reduced gives me too much pain." The hind and Flora interrupted the fairy by throwing themselves at her feet: the former kissed Tulip's hands, and caressed her fondly, while Flora entreated her to take pity on the princess and restore her to her natural shape. "That is not altogether in my power," answered the fairy; "but I can shorten the time of her punishment, and will enable her, until it has expired, to quit her present form at the close of the day, but directly the morning appears, she must again become a hind, and wander through the woods and plains like other deer."

This was a great relief to the unhappy princess, who testified her joy by skips and bounds, which pleased the kind Tulip. "Follow this footpath," said the fairy; "it will take you to a little cabin, pretty well furnished for such an out of the way place." She then disappeared, and Flora, accompanied by the hind, immediately taking the direction pointed out by the fairy, presently came to a small cottage, *at the door of which*



*was seated an old woman, who was making a wicker basket.* "Good mother," said Flora, "will you have the kindness to

accommodate myself and my hind for the night in your cottage ; we require but a little room between us ? ” — “ Yes, daughter, ” answered the good dame, “ I will give you a lodging with pleasure : come in, and bring your hind with you. ” With that she showed them into a very pretty little room, wainscotted with cherry wood, in which stood two small beds with dimity furniture, fine sheets, and all so nice and clean that the princess afterwards declared she had never seen an apartment more to her taste.

At nightfall, Welcome, as she had been promised by the fairy, resumed her natural shape. She tenderly embraced her dear Flora, thanked her for the affection that had induced her to follow and share her fortunes, and promised to reward her when her penance should be completed.

After a while, the old woman knocked softly at their door, and, without entering the room, gave Flora a basket of fine ripe fruit, of which the princess made a hearty supper, and they then retired to bed. In the morning, Welcome again became a hind, and began scratching at the door for Flora to let her out. After an affectionate parting, although it was only for a short time, the hind entered the thickest part of the neighbouring forest.

I have said that prince Valiant stopped in the forest, and that Becafica left him in search of fruit. About nightfall he

arrived at the cottage of the good old woman who had sheltered Welcome and Flora, and very civilly begged the old lady to give him something for his master's refreshment. Accordingly, she filled a basket with fruit, and having given it to Becafica, said : " I fear that if you pass the night in the open forest, some misfortune will befall you. You are welcome to a room in my cottage, which, although poor, will at least protect you from wild beasts." Becafica thanked her, and said that he and his companion would accept her hospitality. He then returned to prince Valiant, whom he succeeded in persuading to accompany him to the cottage. They found the old woman at her door, and she quietly led them to a room exactly like that occupied by Flora and the hind, and separated from it by a thin partition only.

Prince Valiant passed a restless night, as usual. Directly the sun's first rays shone on the windows of his room, he arose, and, to divert his sorrow, walked into the forest, telling Becafica not to accompany him. He walked about a long while, heedlessly, and presently came to a shady thicket, from which there immediately rushed a white hind. Valiant could not forbear pursuing it, for the chase was his favourite exercise, and, although he had not hunted lately, he still carried his bow. His enthusiasm returning, he started off warmly in pursuit, and from time to time shot arrows at the poor hind, which almost frightened her to death. Protected by the fairy

Tulip, however, she escaped them all, though Valiant was so excellent a marksman that nothing less than the powerful arm of a fairy could have preserved her life. Never was any one so tired as our royal hind: at last, almost exhausted, she suddenly and dexterously turned into a path-way, and so baffled her pursuer.

The hind was very glad when twilight came, and turned her steps towards the cottage, where Flora impatiently awaited her. When she reached her apartment, she threw herself, out of breath and covered with perspiration, on the bed, while her attendant caressed her tenderly, almost dying with anxiety to know what had happened to her in the forest. Night having set in, the beautiful princess resumed her natural shape, when, throwing her arms round her favourite's neck: "Alas!" said she, "I thought I had only to fear the fairy of the fountain and the cruel tenants of the forest; but I have been pursued to-day by a young huntsman, whom I hardly saw, in my precipitation to escape from his arrows, which he shot at me repeatedly; and, I know not by what miracle I have been preserved from death."—"You must not go into the forest again, my princess," replied Flora: "pass in this chamber the fatal period of your penance; I will go to the nearest town to purchase books for your amusement. We will read the 'CHILD'S FAIRY LIBRARY' together, or we will compose songs

and sonnets.”—“Nay, books would be unnecessary, my dear Flora,” answered the princess; “the charming idea of prince Valiant is sufficient to employ my thoughts agreeably. But, unfortunately, the same power that reduced me to the condition of a hind, compels me, in spite of myself, to scour the plains, to leap across brooks and fences, and to eat grass like other hinds; consequently, the confinement of a chamber would be insupportable.” Then, having acquired a good appetite by her violent exercise, she asked for her supper, and, directly she had eaten it, went to sleep and slept soundly until the next morning at day-break, when she again sought the forest.

Meanwhile the prince, returning in the evening to rejoin Becafica, said to him: “I have spent my time in chasing the loveliest hind I ever saw; she gave me the slip a hundred times with wonderful adroitness, for I took such care to hit her that I am at a loss to conceive how she escaped my arrows; but I intend to resume my pursuit of her to-morrow. Becafica was not sorry to perceive that the prince’s passion for the chase had revived. He encouraged him, therefore, in his determination to return next morning to the place where he had first seen the hind, who, however, took care to avoid the spot, fearful of another adventure of the same kind. Valiant looked cautiously around him, but walked through and through the thicket to no purpose. Tired and heated by his fruitless search, he was not a little

pleased when he came to a tree laden with apples, which looked so ripe and tempting that he gathered and ate some of them, when he almost immediately felt so sleepy, that, coming to a spot where myriads of singing birds seemed to have made their rendezvous, he threw himself on the grass under the trees and fell fast asleep.

Scarcely had Valiant closed his eyes, when our timid hind entered the grove where he was reposing. She came close to where he lay before she saw him, and, his breathing informing her that he was asleep, paused to contemplate his features. Mercy on us! how was she astonished when she recognized in the sleeper the original of her lover's portrait! Her mind was too full of his charming image to have forgotten Valiant in so



short a time. *Love, Love, what would you do?* Must then the

lovely hind be exposed to lose her life by the hand of her lover ? Yes, she exposes her life, her safety is already endangered. She laid herself down at a short distance from the prince, and her eyes, delighted with the sight of her lover, were fixed on him intently : she sighed, and, at last, becoming more assured, drew close to and touched him, at which he awoke.

The prince's surprise, as may be easily imagined, was extreme at recognizing the hind that had given him so much trouble the preceding day, and that he had been seeking so diligently before he fell asleep ; but that it should be now so familiar appeared to him extraordinary. She did not stay to be taken, but set off as fast as she could, followed by the prince. Sometimes they paused to take breath, for they were both much fatigued by the previous day's exertion, when the prince observed the hind turn her head towards him, as much as to ask if he were indeed bent on hunting her to death ; but the instant he endeavoured to close with her, she made fresh efforts to elude him. " Ah ! could you but understand me, pretty hind," cried he, " you would not thus fly from me ; I love you, and would not kill you for the world." The hind, however, heard him not, and continued to fly rapidly onwards.

At last, having made a complete circuit of the forest, and being completely exhausted, she slackened her steps, when the prince, redoubling his efforts, came up to her with a joy that



he thought he should never feel again. She was stretched on the ground, and to all appearance dying, when to her surprise he began to pat and caress her. "Pretty hind," said he, "be not afraid, I will take you home with me, will nurse you tenderly, and take care of you." Thereupon Valiant cut branches from the trees, matted them neatly together, covered them with moss and strewed them with roses, which he gathered from a neighbouring bush. He then took the hind gently in his arms, and placing her on the litter, seated himself by her side, gathering from time to time tufts of tender grass, which he offered her, and which she ate from his hand, talking to her continually, although he never imagined she could understand him.

Pleased as she was at his kindness and attention, she became uneasy as night approached. "What would happen," said she to herself, "if he were to see me suddenly change my shape? he would fly from me with horror; or if he did not, what should I not have to fear, thus alone in the forest?" While she was revolving in her mind how to effect her escape, the prince himself offered her an opportunity; for, thinking the hind must be thirsty, he left her to seek for water at the nearest brook, and while thus occupied, she took to flight, and returned to the cottage. She threw herself on her bed, and when night came on, and she regained her proper form, she recounted her adventure to her companion.

“Would you believe, my dear Flora,” she began, “that Prince Valiant is in this forest. He it was who pursued me yesterday, and who, having caught me to-day, has loaded me with caresses. Ah! what a poor likeness of him is the portrait I received! he is a hundred times more handsome. Am I not unfortunate, to be obliged to fly from the prince for whom my parents have destined me, whom I love so dearly, and by whom I am loved in return?” These thoughts made her weep, while Flora endeavoured to console her, by repeating to her Tulip’s promises, that after a time her sorrow would be changed into joy.

In the meanwhile, Prince Valiant having returned to the place where he had left the hind, was surprised to find she was no longer there. He looked in every direction, but in vain, and felt as much sorrow at her loss, as if she had been his dearest friend. “What,” cried he, “am I then destined always to be unfortunate in the objects of my attachment?” He returned to the cottage, overwhelmed with melancholy, and related to Becafica the story of the white hind, whom he accused of ingratitude. Becafica could not forbear smiling at the prince’s anger, and advised him to punish the hind, when he should next meet with her, for her infidelity.

The next morning, at daybreak, the princess was undecided whether to seek the prince or to avoid him. At last she resolved

to go to an immense distance from the part of the forest where she had met with him on the two previous days; but our prince, quite as cunning as the hind, did the same, thinking he should by that means, as in fact he did, discover her. She believed herself safe from pursuit, when suddenly she perceived the prince. With one bound she cleared the bushes, and, as though she dreaded her pursuer still more on account of the trick she had played him the previous afternoon, flew along more swiftly than the wind; but, while she was crossing a foot-path, Valiant took so good an aim that he succeeded in burying an arrow in her leg. The hind thus wounded, and unable to fly farther, sank upon the ground.

The prince hastened to the spot. All his anger vanished, and he felt a deep sorrow on seeing the blood flow from the wound he had inflicted: he gathered some herbs, and after binding them on the wounded leg to soothe her pain, made her a new bed of branches and moss, *resting the pretty hind's head upon his knees*. "Are you not the cause, little runaway," said Valiant, "of what has happened? What did I yesterday, that you ran away from me? But you shall not do so to-day, for I will carry you home." The hind made no answer, while the prince caressed her most tenderly. "How deeply I regret wounding you," continued he, "you will hate me, and I wish you to love me." To have heard him, one would have thought



that some fairy inspired all he said. At last the prince resolved to remove the wounded hind, but was not a little embarrassed with carrying, leading, and sometimes drawing her after him on the litter. Welcome was in an agony the while:—"What will become of me?" she said to herself. "I shall be alone with the prince! No, I would rather die!" Then she bore as heavily as she could on Valiant, and almost made him sink under her weight, so that, although not far from the old dame's cottage, he felt that without some assistance he could not carry her thither. He therefore resolved to fetch his

faithful Becafica ; but, before leaving his prize, he tied her with ribbons to a tree, that she might not escape.

Alas ! who would have thought that the most lovely princess in the world could be thus treated by a prince who adored her ? In vain the white hind tried to break the ribbons ; her efforts only tightened the knots, and she had almost strangled herself, when Flora, who had been walking in the forest, came by chance to the spot where she was struggling. What was her astonishment to perceive her dear mistress in such a condition ! She ran to her assistance, and, after disentangling and untying the ribbons, had nearly released her, when Prince Valiant, accompanied by Becafica, arrived.

“ Whatever respect I may have for your sex, madam,” said the prince, “ I cannot permit you to release this hind ; I struck her in the forest, she therefore belongs to me, and I entreat you to allow me to remain her master.”—“ Sir,” answered Flora courteously, (for she was handsome and well spoken), “ this hind was mine before she was yours, and I would rather lose my life than part with her. If you would convince yourself of the truth of what I say, I only ask you to set her at liberty. Come, Blanche, Blanche,” continued Flora, “ come and embrace me.” Welcome threw her fore-legs round her maid of honour’s neck. “ Kiss my right cheek :” she did so.

“Touch my heart:” she placed her fore-foot on Flora’s bosom. “Sigh:” and the hind sighed. The prince could not, after this, doubt what Flora had told him. “I restore your hind,” said Valiant, obligingly, “but I confess that it is not without reluctance.” Flora thanked him, and hastened from the spot, accompanied by the hind.

They had no idea that the prince resided in the same cottage with themselves: he also, after following them for some time, was greatly surprised to see them enter the old woman’s cottage.

Prompted by curiosity, he demanded of the old dame who the young person was whom he had seen enter the cottage with the hind. She answered that she did not know, but that she had received her with her hind a few days before; that she paid her well, and lived quite retired. Becafica asked in what part of the cottage her room was situated. The old woman answered that it was separated from their own by a thin partition.

When the prince had retired to his apartment, Becafica said that he was greatly mistaken if the young lady they had seen had not lived with the Princess Welcome; and that he had seen her at the palace on the occasion of his embassy. “What a sorrowful remembrance have you brought to my mind,” said Valiant; but by what chance can one of the princess’s attendants be here?”—“Of that I am ignorant,” replied Becafica; “but,

my lord, as our room is only separated from hers by a thin wainscotting, I will make a hole through it, and perhaps we may discover the cause of her retirement.”—“Useless curiosity,” said the prince, for Becafica’s words had renewed all his sorrows; so turning to his window, which looked out into the forest, he opened it, and was soon absorbed in thought.

Meanwhile Becafica set to work, and soon made a hole large enough to look through. To his astonishment, he saw a charming princess, dressed in a gown of silver brocade, embroidered with pink flowers, and bordered with gold and emeralds: her hair fell in large ringlets around the finest neck ever seen, and, in her complexion, the lily was blended with the rose to the most enchanting perfection, while no words can do justice to her sparkling black eyes. *Flora was on her knees, binding up her fair mistress’s arm*, from which blood was flowing in streams. “Let me die,” said the princess; “death were preferable to the unhappy life I lead. To continue a hind all day, and to see him I love, without being able to speak to him, to inform him of my fatal metamorphosis! Alas! had you heard all the tender things he said to me to-day with his gentle voice,—had you witnessed his graceful and noble manners, you would lament still more than you do my misfortune.”

Becafica’s amazement at what he saw and heard may be easily imagined. He ran to the prince, and pulled him from the



window in a transport of inexpressible joy. “Ah! my lord,” said he, “*behold the original of the portrait which has stolen your heart.*” Prince Valiant, surprised at his companion’s excitement, put his eye to the hole, and immediately recognized his princess. What words can tell the pleasure he experienced, although he feared he was the sport of enchantment: in truth, how could he reconcile so surprising a rencounter, with his



recollections of Narcissa and her mother, whom he had left confined in the black tower, and who called themselves, the one Welcome, and the other her mistress of the robes?

However, his passion flattered him : the human mind has a natural tendency to persuade itself of whatever it wishes to be true. So, dying with impatience to clear up his doubts, prince Valiant went immediately and knocked gently at the door of the princess's chamber. Flora, supposing that it was the old woman, whose assistance she wanted to bind up her mistress's arm, hastened to open it ; and was not a little surprised to see the prince, who entered the room, and threw himself at Welcome's feet. His excess of joy so effectually prevented his speaking coherently, that, although we have cross-examined Becafica and Flora themselves, as to what he said on the occasion, neither of them could inform us. The princess was equally embarrassed in her reply ; but love, who can interpret for the dumb, came to their aid, and persuaded them both that nothing more eloquent had ever been spoken. Tears, sighs, vows, and even some gracious smiles, were nearly all that passed between our young lovers. The night having passed, the day appeared unexpectedly to Welcome ; but, to her agreeable surprise, she was not changed into a hind. Her joy was boundless, and she then began the recital of her life to her lover, telling him the history of her metamorphosis with extreme natural grace and eloquence.

“What,” cried prince Valiant. “What, lovely princess, have I wounded you in the form of a hind! How can I expiate so heavy a crime? Will it be enough to die of grief before your face?” He was so sensibly afflicted, that his countenance gave visible tokens of his deep sorrow. Welcome suffered more at witnessing her lover’s grief than from the wound, and assured him that it was merely a scratch; and that she could not help looking upon it with delight, since it had procured her so much happiness.

Her manner was so affectionate that he could not doubt her sincerity. He then related to her the fraud practised by Narcissa and her mother, adding that Becafica must hasten to the king to inform him of his son’s good fortune, as he was about to wage a terrible war against her father’s kingdom, in revenge for the affront he believed himself to have received. Becafica was on the point of setting out when a loud concert of trumpets, clarions, cymbals and drums was heard in the forest; they fancied that they heard also the tramp of many feet at no great distance from the cottage. Valiant looked out at the window, and immediately recognized several of his father’s officers, with the colours and standards of their regiments, and commanded them to halt.

Never were soldiers more delighted than were these on recognizing Valiant; the universal opinion being that the

prince was about to put himself at their head and to lead them against Welcome's father. The king, himself, notwithstanding his great age, commanded the army. He was in a litter of velvet, embroidered with gold, followed by an open chariot, in which Narcissa and her mother were seated. When Valiant recognized his father's litter he ran up to it, and the king received him with open arms, and embraced him with every testimony of paternal love. "Whence come you, my child?" cried he; "how little do you know the affliction your absence has caused me!"—"Sire," said Valiant, "deign to listen to me." The king immediately alighted from his litter, and, retiring to a grove hard by, his son informed him of his fortunate meeting with Welcome, and of the treachery of Narcissa and her mother.

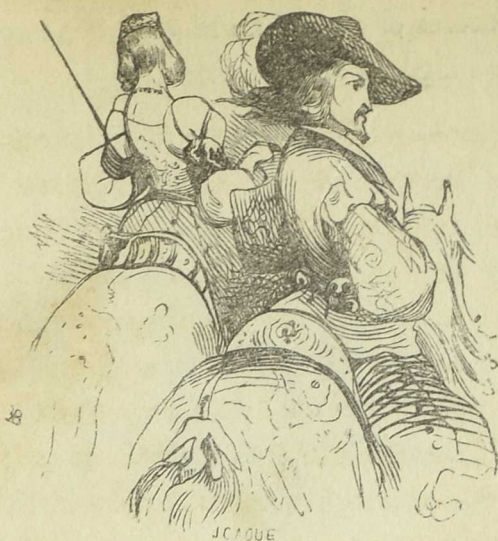
The king, filled with gratitude at this good news, raised his hands and eyes to Heaven to return thanks; and, at that moment, the princess Welcome appeared before him, more lovely and more brilliant than all the stars. She was mounted on a superb curvetting palfrey; a hundred feathers of different hues ornamented her head, and her jewels consisted of the largest diamonds ever dug from the earth. She wore a hunting dress, as also did Flora, who followed in her mistress's train. All this was the result of the fairy Tulip's protection, who, it must be allowed, had conducted the affair with care and success.

The pretty cottage in the wood had been placed there for the accommodation of the princess, and under the figure of an old woman, she it was who had received them.

When the princess appeared to the king, he was so enraptured, that he could hardly persuade himself she was mortal. His majesty said all the appropriate and obliging things imaginable, and entreated her at once to make his subjects happy by becoming their queen: "for I am resolved," he concluded, "to abdicate in favour of prince Valiant, in order to make him more worthy of such a bride." Welcome answered the king with all the politeness natural to so well educated a princess; then, turning to the two prisoners who were in the open chariot, hiding their faces with their hands, she asked their pardon of the king, which he immediately granted, while he praised the generosity of her disposition.

The army now received orders to retrace its steps. *The prince mounted on horseback to accompany his beautiful princess,* and they were welcomed to the capital with the most exuberant manifestations of loyalty and affection. Grand preparations were made for the wedding, which was dignified and graced by the presence of the six benign fairies who protected the princess.

The faithful Becafica, who had been charmed by the beauty and fidelity of Flora, (who, on her side, entertained no less



admiration for the noble qualities of the ambassador) begged his master to request, on his behalf, of Welcome, that she would consent to their union, and allow their nuptials to be solemnized on the day he should marry the princess. Valiant pleaded accordingly for his ambassador, and, as may be supposed, succeeded without any great difficulty, and the fairy Tulip, still more liberal than her sisters, gave Flora four mines of gold in the Indies, that her husband might not have the advantage of her in point of wealth. The wedding-feast of the prince and princess lasted several months, and each day added to their attachment. They lived happily, and reigned

peaceably over their subjects, until they reached a good old age ;  
and the adventures of the white hind in the forest, have been  
sung in every kingdom of the world.



