

H. Brown

MINNIE

PLAYS FOR

THE
SLEEPING
BEAUTY

BY MISS CORNER

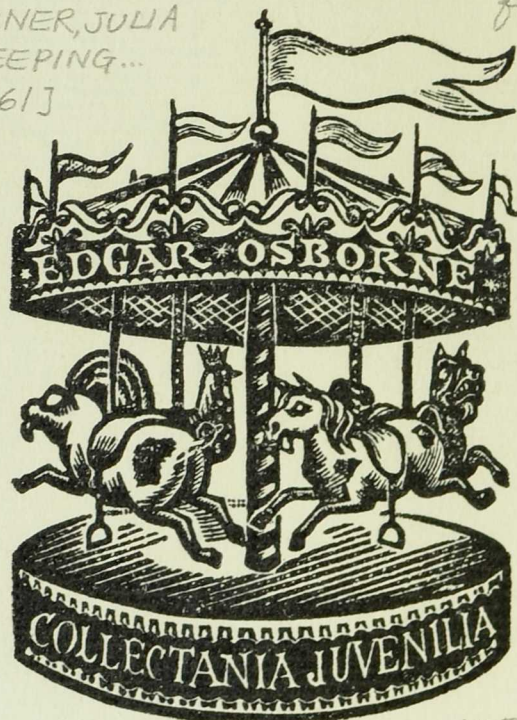
GROOMBRIDGE
AND SONS

LITTLE

ACTORS

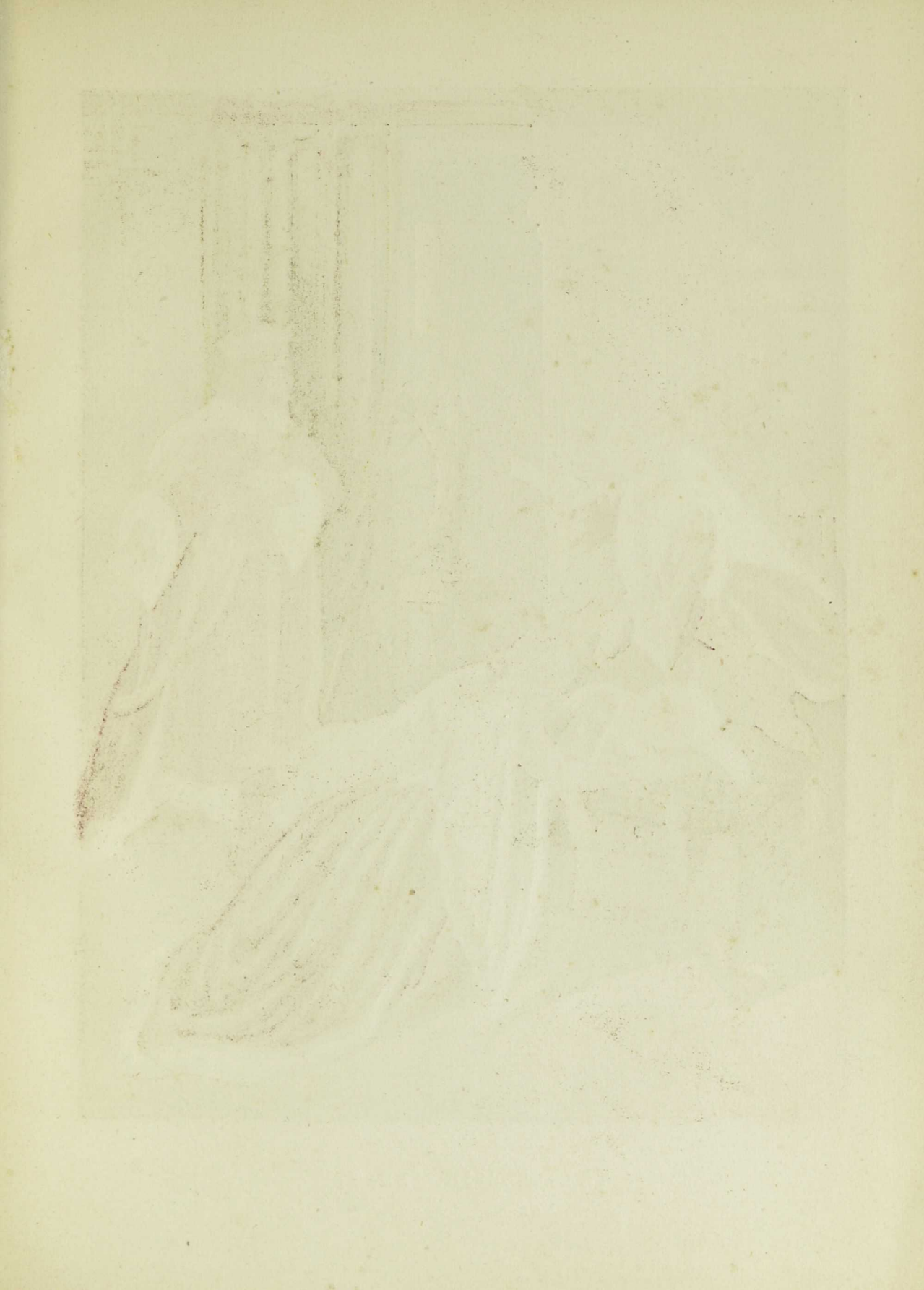
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THE SLEEPING BEAUTY.

Act 2. Scene 1.

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY.

A PLAY FOR HOME ACTING AND YOUNG PERFORMERS.

BY JULIA CORNER,

Author of "Beauty and the Beast," "Cinderella," and "Puss in Boots."

LONDON:
GROOMBRIDGE AND SONS, PATERNOSTER ROW.

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY.

CHARACTERS.

THE KING OF THE GOLDEN ISLES.

PRINCE PHARAMOND.

LORD FANDANGO . . . *Chief Minister of State.*

THE DRAGON OF THE WOOD.

RICK *A Sprite, Slave of the Dragon.*

GENTLEMEN OF THE COURT.

MESSENGER.

THE QUEEN OF THE GOLDEN ISLES.

THE PRINCESS FAIR STAR.

LADY CHRISTABEL . *Lady in Waiting to the Queen.*

FAIRY MOONBEAM.

SECOND FAIRY }
THIRD FAIRY } . . . *Sisters of Moonbeam.*

THE FAIRY MILDEW *An old malignant Fairy.*

NURSE.

The mode of naming the infant Princess is made to be somewhat similar to the custom observed by the Ancient Greeks, as it would have been irreverent to make the slightest approach to our own baptismal rites.

HINTS RESPECTING THE COSTUME.

The FAIRIES should wear full, short dresses of white or light blue tarleton, ornamented with gold and silver, which is easily done by cutting stars, half-moons, and other devices, out of gold and silver paper, and sticking them on with gum-water. A pretty border may be formed in this manner with natural ivy leaves and gold or silver fruit or acorns, with artificial flowers intermixed. Green chaplets should encircle their heads, and each should carry a white wand, twisted with silver or gold.

PRINCE PHARAMOND, when travelling, might put on over his state dress a long loose cotton garment, fastened round the waist with a coloured scarf, and a plain cap without feathers. This would save the trouble of changing his dress, as he ought to appear in the last scene in the proper costume of a Prince.

The DRAGON must be made to look as hideous as possible, with a frightful mask, from which should protrude a long red tongue. A close-fitting dress of some brown shaggy material, and large gloves of the same; and he should be provided with a flame-coloured sword.

The Sprite RICK may be habited in any fantastic apish fashion, and wear an ugly mask.

All the rest may safely be left to the good taste and resources of the performers, who will of course dress as much as possible in accordance with the characters they take. The KING and QUEEN, however, having to appear at three different periods of time, and not being supposed to be the same persons in the last scene as at first, should make some alteration in their dresses each time.

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY.



ACT FIRST.

SCENE I.—*A room in the palace.*

[*In the centre is a small raised platform, about three or four feet square, to represent a hearth, on which should be placed an urn, or anything that looks as if it would hold fire. On one side are chairs of state for the KING and*

QUEEN, *who are seated, the chief minister, LORD FANDANGO, standing by the KING, and LADY CHRISTABEL by the QUEEN. On the other side, and behind the altar or hearth, are ranged several ladies and gentlemen, supposed to have been invited to the ceremonial of naming the infant PRINCESS.*]

King. My lords and ladies, we've assembled here
To give a name unto our daughter dear.
I need not tell you it has always been
A cause of sorrow to your king and queen
To have no children. Now that grief is past;
The Fates have given us a child at last,
To our great joy; and we are glad to see
Our faithful people are as pleased as we.

Queen. How often I have wished for such a treasure,
And now I've got it.

Lord Fan. Madam, it gives pleasure
To all the nation; and I understand
There have been great rejoicings through the land—
Fireworks and feasting;—everywhere, they say,
Your loving subjects have made holiday.

King. 'Tis well. It shews their loyalty at least.

Queen. I think we ought to give a public feast
On this occasion.

King. Yes, I think so too;
Pray, my good Lord Fandango, what say you;

Lord Fan. That it would be a very glorious thing,
Well worthy so magnificent a king.

King. Then see it done. Let all have cause to bless
The birth of their illustrious princess.

Queen. She's three months old to-day, the pretty dear!
And that is why you are invited here,
To witness this, her solemn dedication,
To the presiding Genius of the nation.

King. Also, that no advantage may be missed,
We've asked three potent fairies to assist
At the sponsalia.

Lord Fan. It is wisely done—
Your Majesty's a second Solomon.

Lady Chris. I hope that she will have a pretty name.

King. We mean to call her Fair Star, for she came
Like a fair star to us—a gem of light
To make our home more beautiful and bright.

Lord Fan. Fair Star! It is a charming appellation.

King. So let it be proclaimed throughout the nation,
That unto all men it may be made known
She is the rightful heiress to the throne.

Enter NURSE with the baby (a large doll in long clothes,) in her arms.

Lady Chris. Here is the princess.

[*She goes up to the nurse, and looks at the child.*]

What a lovely creature!
The picture of the queen in every feature.

Nurse. Oh, yes, my lady, but her eyes, you see,
Are like His Majesty's as they can be.

Lord Fan. (*touching the infant.*) Pray can she walk and
talk?

Nurse. Dear heart, my lord!
She is too young as yet to speak a word.

Lord Fan. She must be young, indeed, if that's the
case.

Lady Chris. (*aside.*) Now I call that impertinent.
Your Grace
Is never very complimentary.

Lord Fan. Because I always speak the truth, you see;
Ladies *do* talk we know, and few so well
Can use their tongues as Lady Christabel.

[*He bows very low, and she turns away angrily.*]

Enter THREE FAIRIES, [*KING and QUEEN rise.*]

1st. Fairy. Hail, mighty sovereigns of this golden land!
It seems you have invited us to stand
As sponsors for the royal babe, whose birth
Has brought much gladness to the sons of earth.
Behold us here, obedient to the call,
To lend our aid, and so we greet you all.

Queen. Kind fairies, we are proud of your attention,
And humbly thank you for your condescension.

King. This favour, which our gratitude doth claim,
Will give a lustre to our daughter's name;

She shall be taught to estimate the honour
Thus in her infancy conferred upon her.

2nd. Fairy. What is her name?

King. Fair Star is our selection,
If you, her Godmothers, have no objection.

2nd. Fairy. None in the least. Indeed, it is so pretty,
Methinks to alter it would be a pity.

King. All then is ready; everything unites
To bless our purpose. Now commence the rites.

[Slow, soft music is played, and the whole company walk in procession three times round the hearth in the following order:—The nurse with the child; the King and Queen; the three Fairies; Lord Fandango and Lady Christabel; the rest in couples. The King and Queen then take their seats, and the nurse gives the child to the Queen. The music ceases. The principal Fairy then advances towards the Queen, and waves her wand over the infant.]

1st. Fairy. Fair Star, I bestow on thee
Perfect beauty. Thou shalt be
Sweeter than the opening rose,
Fairer than the mountain snows.
Coral lips, and teeth like pearls,
Golden hair in waving curls,
Eyes of sapphire, cheeks more bright
Than Aurora's crimson light,
When she blushes in the sky
At morn, before the dew is dry;

Faultless form and face divine,
All these graces shall be thine.

[Some very soft and fairy-like music should be played as she retires, and second Fairy advances to bestow her gift in the like manner. Music ceases.]

2nd. Fairy. Princess, it shall be my part
To endow thy mind and heart
With talents great and virtues rare;
Be thou good, as well as fair.
Royal maid, I give to thee
Wit, with sense and modesty;
Brilliant as the stars above,
Gentle as the turtle dove,
Every mental charm possessing,
Thou shalt prove the nation's blessing.

[The same music repeated as she retires back, giving place to the third Fairy, who waves her wand two or three times over the child, until the music ceases, when she begins to speak. Then the old malignant Fairy, in a dark cloak and hood, and leaning on a staff, enters unobserved, and stands just within the door.]

3rd. Fairy. Princess of the Golden Isles
Bask in Fortune's sunny smiles;
Boundless riches, heaps of gold,
Jewels wondrous to behold,

All the treasures of the mine
Charming Fair Star, shall be thine.

[As she retires the old Fairy comes forward and looks first at the royal couple, then at the three beneficent Fairies, all seeming uneasy at her appearance.]

Old Fairy. Well, my fine ladies, now that you have
done,

It is my turn to gift this little one.

(*Turns to the King and Queen.*) Pray why was I not
asked to this grand feast?

You might have paid the compliment, at least.

I should be glad to know why I am slighted,
When any other fairies are invited?

King. Dear madam, pardon the mistake, I pray;
We are rejoiced to see you here to-day.
We did not know that you were near, or we
Should have requested your good company.

Old Fairy. That's not the truth. It is because I'm
old,

And do not flaunt in silver or in gold,
Like these vain gaudy things, whose gay attire
You simple mortals foolishly admire.
But I will not be treated thus, depend on't.
Without resenting it,—so there's an end on't.

Queen. Good madam Fairy, do not be offended;
You must be sure there was no slight intended.

I'm sorry you have taken it amiss,
And do entreat——

Old Fairy (interrupting her.) You should have thought
of this

Before. It is quite useless now to prate,
You'll find repentance sometimes comes too late.
Revenge is sweet, and I intend to taste it;
My spell is woven. Pity 't were to waste it.

Lady Chris. But this sweet innocent has done no
wrong;
Surely you will not harm her?

Old Fairy (sharply.) Hold your tongue!

[*LADY CHRISTABEL turns away disdainfully, and the OLD FAIRY then addresses the KING and QUEEN, at the same time pointing to the three good FAIRIES.*]

The gifts these have bestowed she will possess;
I cannot take them back, or make them less:
But her good fortune never shall be won
Until at least a hundred years are gone.

Nurse. A hundred years! Oh, what a frightful doom;
She'll then be old, and hovering on the tomb.

Fairy. Peace, chattering fool! Now listen, every one:
I can't undo what is already done;
It is forbidden, or I surely would.
This princess will be fair, wise, rich, and good;
But not for you, proud sovereigns, shall be
The glory of your child's prosperity.

Though all these blessings on her head may fall,
I can bestow a gift will spoil them all.—
'T is curiosity.—Aye, you may stare;
The quality is not so very rare
As to be made a fairy gift, you'll say:
However, that's the tribute I shall pay.

Lady Chris. (aside.) Bless me! Is that all, after so much
fuss:

She wanted, I suppose, to frighten us.

King. We thank you, madam, for your generosity;
There cannot be much harm in curiosity:
It is a fault, no doubt,—but not so bad
As many others that she might have had.

Old Fairy. Short-sighted mortal! you may some day
know
The fault is quite enough to work your woe.
My power is great, either to bless or ban;
You're welcome to escape it, if you can.

King (defiantly.) Say on, then, madam; do your worst
endeavour:
You may fail yet, although you are so clever,
For we have fairy friends, as you may see,
As great and powerful as you can be.

Old Fairy. Aha! So you defy me,—very well,
We'll see if they have power to break my spell.

King. What should we fear? Speak, prophetess of evil!

Old Fairy. I warn you, king, 't were better to be civil.

Lady Chris. (*aside.*) Civil indeed! as if our king could be Civil to such an ugly thing as she.

Old Fairy. I'll tell you what it is you have to fear.
Before this child completes her sixteenth year,
I am mistaken if you do not see
The fatal fruits of curiosity.
Of this beware.—A simple spinning-wheel
May a great danger possibly conceal;
For it is written in the Book of Fate
That if a spindle's point should perforate
The finger of the princess, and it draws
A single drop of blood, that prick will cause
A sleep like death, which, at the least, will last
Until a hundred years are gone and past,
When some brave prince the magic spell may break,
And then the Sleeping Beauty will awake. [*Exit.*]

Queen (*speaking to the beneficent FAIRIES.*) Alas! dear ladies, what is to be done?
Can you not save our precious little one
From such a cruel fate? Is there no chance?
Will she indeed fall into such a trance?

1st. Fairy. Do not despair,—the danger may pass by
If she is guarded with a watchful eye
Till she is full sixteen, for then the charm
Will cease to have the power of doing her harm.

Queen. A thousand thanks. She shall not quit our sight;
We'll guard her carefully, both day and night:
And since we know in what the danger lies,
No spinning-wheel shall ever meet her eyes.

2nd. Fairy. 'T is wisely spoken.

1st. Fairy. Now our leave we take:
The moon is rising, and our queen doth wake,
So we must hasten to her fairy dell.

3rd. Fairy. May peace be on your dwelling!

All three Fairies.

Fare ye well!

[*Exeunt FAIRIES.*]

[*As the FAIRIES go off the stage the KING and QUEEN rise, and they and all the COURTIERs make their bows and curtseys with profound respect. The QUEEN then resumes her seat, while the KING comes forward.*]

King. My Lord Fandango, we depend on you
For aid and counsel.—Say,—what shall we do?

Lord Fan. Your Majesty may reckon on my zeal.
You must decree that every spinning-wheel
Throughout the kingdom be at once destroyed,
And not a single distaff be employed,
On pain of death, for sixteen years to come.
But, as there probably might be some
Who would the royal mandate disobey
In secret, it must be enforced this way:
I will appoint commissioners to go
Into all people's houses, high and low,
To make strict search, and see that it is done.

King. And let our treasurer for every one
Give a full ounce of gold. We ought to pay
For all the property we take away.

Lord Fan. Your Majesty is ever kind and just.

King. We always wish to be so, and we trust
Our subjects have no reason to complain:
We would that they should glorify our reign.
Now for the feast.—It is in vain to fret;
At any rate there is no danger yet:
So, for the present, let us banish sorrow,
And drive dull care away until to-morrow.

[*The NURSE takes the baby from the QUEEN, who then rises, and, taking the KING's arm, they go off, the company preparing to follow in couples.*]

Lady Chris. The wisest thing His Majesty has said.

Lord Fan. (*offering her his arm.*) Permit me.

Lady Chris. (*taking it.*) Thank you. (*Aside.*) He is not ill bred.

[*They follow the KING and QUEEN, and the rest walk after them two and two, when the scene closes.*]

[Between the first and second acts sixteen years are supposed to have elapsed, the PRINCESS FAIR STAR being now a beautiful girl of that age. The KING, QUEEN, and other most prominent characters should make some little alteration in their costume, to mark the difference of time, and give them the appearance of being somewhat older than before.]



ACT SECOND.

SCENE I.—*A remote apartment in a castle.*

[*The room should have a dreary, deserted appearance, with no furniture but an old dingy couch, a large arm chair, and anything else that may look very antique. A recess at the back of the stage, with a curtain before it half drawn, and in the opening is discovered the OLD FAIRY sitting at a spinning-wheel. She rises and comes forward.*]

Old Fairy. So they are come; now I've my part to play.
The princess is sixteen this very day,

Enter RICK.

When Moonbeam and her sisters were invited
To name the precious bantling.

Rick. Yes, I know;
And how, without being asked, you chose to go.
I think you prophesied the babe would be
A sleeping beauty, for a century;
Yet she is still as wide awake as ever,
How's that, I pray you?

Old Fairy. Better late than never.
She has had so much care, that I, in vain,
Have watched for a fair chance my point to gain,
And now the time is running out so fast,
I am afraid of being foiled at last;
Another hour completes her sixteenth year.

Rick. Then you have not much time to lose, that's
clear;
For, if I comprehend aright, the charm
Has then no power to do the maiden harm.

Old Fairy. Harm! Why, 'tis nothing but a peaceful
sleep,
And she will still her youth and beauty keep
Until she wakes again.

Rick. Ah, yes! I see.
But what's the service you require of me?

Old Fairy. This.—If I should succeed, as yet I may,
For I expect she soon will come this way,
You must, at sunset, bring a car to bear
The sleeping damsel swiftly through the air,
Unto the dragon's castle in the wood;
There she will be well guarded.

Rick. Very good.

She will be safe enough when once she's there.

(*Aside.*) That dragon's an uncultivated bear.

Old Fairy. Take care that you are punctual.

Rick. Never fear;

At sunset I will certainly be here. [*Exit.*

Old Fairy. Hark! Sure I heard a footstep—yes, 'tis
she;

That's right, my beauty, you shall welcome be.

[*She sits down at the wheel.*]

Enter FAIR STAR, (she does not see the FAIRY.)

Fair Star. What a strange place is this. I should
delight

To ramble over it from morn till night.

Such antique furniture! such curious floors,

And painted walls, and long dark corridors!

I wonder where they lead to. I'd find out,

If they would only let me walk about

At liberty. How pleasant it would be

With nobody to interfere with me,

There are so many things I want to know,

So many places where I wish to go,

Within these castle walls, though rude and plain,

They may a number of fine sights contain.

I would see everything, were I but free.

Oh, why is such restraint imposed on me.

Even now I ought not to be here alone,
And it was very wrong to come, I own;
But when I saw that I should not be missed,
'T was a temptation I could not resist.

[*Sees the FAIRY.*]

Hah! who is this! Good dame, what are you doing?
What funny work! Is it some kind of sewing?

Old Fairy. No, pretty Miss. I'm spinning flax, you see.

Fair Star. You're spinning flax? Whatever can that
be?

[*She touches, and examines the wheel.*]

This is the oddest thing I ever saw;
Is it of any use? What is it for?

Old Fairy. It is the way that thread is made, my dear;
When I was young such work was common here;
Even the greatest ladies in the land
Would often sit with spinning-wheel in hand;
Ah! those were good old times; but, well-a-day!
Spinning is out of fashion now, they say.

Fair Star. I should so like to do it. Let me try.

Old Fairy. With all my heart. Nothing like industry,
Especially in one so young as you.
Sit you down here, and see what you can do.

[*The FAIRY gets up, and the PRINCESS takes her seat.*]

Fair Star. Now, you must shew me how to turn the
wheel.

Oh, dear! I've pricked my finger, and I feel

So faint (*rises.*) What can it be?—the room goes round.
My eyes grow dim—I cannot see the ground.
And oh! look—look—here's blood! What shall I do?
I'm dying—Father—Mother—Where are you?

[*Falls on the couch asleep.*]

Fairy. 'Tis done: now I must vanish for awhile;
The simple child! It almost makes me smile
To think how very easily I've caught her;
When, if her foolish parents had but taught her
To know a spinning-wheel by sight, and shun it
As dangerous, I never should have done it. [*Exit.*]

Enter QUEEN and LADY CHRISTABEL.

Queen. I wonder where the princess can be gone;
I wish she would not roam about alone,
It makes me tremble still, although no harm
Has ever come of that old fairy's charm;
And, thank the Fates, she is sixteen to-day,
Therefore the danger has now passed away;
Still I am anxious she with us should keep.
Oh, here she is, and fallen fast asleep.
Poor child! she is quite tired, I dare say,
So I will not disturb her. You can stay
And watch until she wakes.

Lady Chris. Dear madam, look;
Here is a spinning-wheel in this dark nook!

Queen. A spinning-wheel! No, no, it cannot be!

Lady Chris. It is indeed, dear lady.—Come and see.

[*The QUEEN goes towards the recess, sees the wheel, and rushes towards the couch.*]

Queen. There's blood upon her hand! I shall go wild!
She's lost for ever—oh, my child! my child!

[*Throws herself on her knees by the side of the PRINCESS.*]

Enter KING.

King. What is the matter? Sure, I heard a cry,—
Where is my daughter?

Lady Chris. Ah! Your Majesty,
A shocking thing has happened; I'm afraid
Some fiend has been at work.—You are betrayed.

King. How say you, lady,—What is it you mean?
Has any accident befallen the queen?

Lady Chris. No, sire—not her; it is our sweet princess.
If you just cast your eyes on that recess
You will perceive how much we have to fear.

King (going to the recess.) Ah! what is this? Who
dared to bring it here?

Lady Chris. Some wicked wretch, whose aim it was,
no doubt,
The fatal augury should be made out.
The princess hath her finger pricked, that's plain,—
Upon her hand there is the crimson stain;
And there lies, in such a death-like trance,
She does not seem to breathe.

King (approaching the couch.) Oh, sad mischance!
Had we but watched her closely till to-morrow,
We should have all been spared this bitter sorrow.

[*He stands with his hands clasped together, looking mournfully at the inanimate form of the PRINCESS, whilst LADY CHRISTABEL comes to the front of the stage.*]

Lady Chris. It is indeed a lamentable case,
Would we had never come to this old place.
To think that malice has prevailed at last,
After so many years in safety passed!
That horrid witch! Of course her hand is in it.—
Who could have dreamed, that at the latest minute,
She would have found, with so much cunning skill,
The means of working out her wicked will?

King. Rise up, dear wife,—it is in vain to weep;
Perhaps she may be wakened from her sleep.
All the physicians in the realm shall be
Summoned to give their aid immediately:
In their great learning let us put our trust
To give her back to us,—they will—they must.

Queen (eagerly.) Let us depart, then, hence, without
delay.

A litter must be ready to convey
The princess to the palace: I will tell
Our people this. You, Lady Christabel,
Stay here and watch, whilst we go and prepare
All for departure.—We must not despair.

[*Exeunt KING and QUEEN.*]

Lady Chris. Perhaps, now, after all, there's no great harm;

It may be nothing but a false alarm:
Yet it seems strange that she should sleep like this,
Unless there's something very much amiss.
I've a great mind to try if I can wake her—
And yet it might not be quite right to shake her.
I'll see if speaking very loud will do.—
Princess! princess! the queen has sent for you!

Enter the OLD FAIRY.

Old Fairy. Aye, you may try—but it is all in vain.
Know that the girl will never wake again,
Until some prince, renowned as brave and good,
Shall slay the fiery dragon of the wood,
Whose dwelling is a thousand miles away,
In an enchanted land, where she must stay
Till the time comes. It is a safe retreat,
That never yet was trod by mortal feet.
So take your leave of Fair Star, pretty dear!
After the sun sets she will not be here.

Lady Chris. You are a wicked creature—that you are.
I don't believe you—

Old Fairy. Do n't you? Ha! ha! ha!
Well, we shall see; perhaps you'll change your tone
When you wake up, and find that she is gone.

[*She raises her staff and touches LADY CHRISTABEL, who instantly sinks into the great arm chair, and falls asleep.*]

The FAIRY then goes to the recess where the wheel stands, and, holding aside the curtain, appears to look through a window.]

The sun is setting, my brave sprite must haste
To do his mission,—there's no time to waste.
So, here he comes,—the shadow of the car
Falls on the tree tops. Now, good-bye, Fair Star.

The scene closes.

SCENE II.—*Another room in the castle.*

[The KING and QUEEN are sitting down, apparently absorbed in grief. LORD FANDANGO and two or three gentlemen in waiting are standing about.]

Lord Fan. (to a gentleman.) This is a sad misfortune.

Gent.

Very true;

I don't know what to think of it—do you?

Lord Fan. I think that ugly witch has kept her word,
And what she threatened has at length occurred.

Gent. I fear, indeed, that such may be the case,
For she is one of the malignant race,
That always bear an enmity to man,
And will do all the mischief that they can.

[A MESSENGER rushes in with affrighted looks, and kneels before the KING and QUEEN, who rise in alarm.]

King. What is all this?

Queen. Where's Lady Christabel?

King. What new misfortune have you come to tell?

Mes. Your Majesty, I scarce know how to speak.
You sent me to the northern tower, to seek
The princess, and to have her brought away
Directly; so I hastened to obey,
Taking the litter that had been made ready,
With two strong men to bring it safe and steady;
But when we got there, the princess was gone,
And Lady Christabel was all alone,
Lying upon the floor quite motionless.
But what can have become of the princess,
I cannot say.

King. I'll go myself and see;
My lord, I beg that you will come with me;
It may be we shall find our daughter dear
Awake again, and coming to us here.

Lord Fan. Or, perhaps, she's gone to seek, if all is
well,
Assistance for the Lady Christabel.

King. True, true, my lord; we trust that it is so.

Enter the OLD FAIRY.

Old Fairy. You are all wrong, therefore you need
not go.

Queen. That cruel fairy here! Then all is o'er,
And I shall never see my darling more.

Old Fairy. No, lady, never. I have taken care
Of that. To-night she travels through the air,
O'er seas and deserts, plains of burning sand,
Rocks, mountains, wilds, to an enchanted land,
Ere break of day, a thousand miles will part
You from the petted darling of your heart.
But never fret.—She'll sleep more safely there
Than if she rested in your palace fair.
The dragon's castle is both high and strong;
She will be quite secure, however long
Her slumbers last: it is a fine stronghold,
And guarded well from all of mortal mould.
Now call your flaunting fairies, if you will,
And see if they can help you with their skill.
Why, all their strength combined would not suffice
To rouse the maiden, or unclothe her eyes;
Sealed by the Fates, they cannot opened be,
Until she has fulfilled her destiny.
Fair Star will wake again, but not till you
Shall long have been forgotten.—So adieu. [Exit.

Queen. Ah, woe is me! My heart will surely break;
It is so sad.

Lord Fan. Dear Madam, comfort take.

Queen. Speak not of comfort. There is nothing left
For me but sorrow, since I am bereft
Of my sweet child. There never more can be
Another hour of happiness for me.

King. Nor yet for me. We both shall be forlorn.
Better for us she never had been born;
And yet when childless, we were discontent;
Alas! this is perhaps a punishment
For daring to repine at Fate's decree.
Henceforth the world to us will joyless be.
This regal state is worthless to me now;
My crown sits heavily upon my brow;
I shall resign the throne.

Lord Fan. Oh, say not so,
Your Majesty. What will your people do?
Should you indeed resolve to abdicate,
Where will they find a king so good and great?
No, no, your words can never be intended.

King. The die is cast, my lord, our reign is ended.
Greatness would only sad remembrance bring,—
My brother will henceforward be your king.

Lord Fan. The Prince Abdallah is both good and wise;
His rare endowments every one must prize;
And if we lose Your Majesty, I own
None is more worthy to ascend the throne.

Queen (coming forward to the front of the stage.)
Then farewell pomp and splendour, farewell all
That would past days of happiness recal.
In some secluded spot we'll hide our grief,
And wait till death shall come to our relief.

King. Our glorious reign thus terminates in sorrow—
Let King Abdallah be proclaimed to-morrow.

The scene closes.



ACT THIRD.

SCENE I.—*An apartment in the Palace of the Golden Isles.*
[*A full length picture of the PRINCESS FAIR STAR hangs on the wall. The time is supposed to be one hundred years later than the last act.*]

PRINCE PHARAMOND *is discovered, gazing intently on the picture.*

Phar. (dreamily.) How beautiful it is.—They say that
she

Was once a princess of this dynasty,
And heiress to the throne. If it be so,
It must have been a hundred years ago;
For no princess is mentioned of our race
With such pretensions since Abdallah's days.
There is a very wild and wondrous tale
Which here among the peasants doth prevail,
That she is living yet, in sleep spell-bound,
Insensible alike to sight or sound,
Still young and beautiful, as on the day
She from the outer world was snatched away,
And that in some enchanted tower she lies,
Till Fate permits her to unclothe her eyes.
I've often heard the legend when a boy,
And used to think how great would be the joy
To find her out, and bring her back to life,
And then, perhaps, to win her for my wife.
It haunts me still, that fancy of my youth:
Can it be possible there's any truth
In the strange story? No,—it cannot be.
Why do I let it take such hold of me?
I'll try to sleep awhile; and if I dream,
Fair Star, sweet Fair Star! may'st thou be my theme!

[*He throws himself on a couch and goes to sleep.*]

Enter the three beneficent FAIRIES.

1st. *Fairy*. He sleeps,—the dream must come upon him now.

I'll pass my fingers softly o'er his brow;
And in his vision he will then behold
All that it is our mission to unfold.

[*She advances towards the PRINCE, and passes her hand across his forehead, then holds her wand over him and speaks.*]

Prince Pharamond, if you would hope to wake
The Sleeping Beauty, and the spell to break
That holds her bound in slumber to this hour,
Within the fiery dragon's lofty tower,
You will have need to be as brave and bold
As was Saint George, the champion of old.
The time is come when all this may be done—
The dragon may be slain—the maiden won.
Ride forth, then, noble Pharamond, with speed;
Take courage, and you surely will succeed.

[*She retires.* 2ND. FAIRY *approaches the couch, and waves her wand over the PRINCE.*]

2nd. *Fairy*. In a dense forest the Black Castle stands;
Its walls were never built by mortal hands.
There, in the eastern turret, may be found
The princess, buried in a sleep profound;
Still young and beautiful as when she fell
A victim to the fairy Mildew's spell;

For though a hundred years and more she numbers,
Time has no power to change her whilst she slumbers.
Full fifty knights, hoping the prize to gain,
In combat with the dragon have been slain:
It is a bold adventure,—they who try
Must be resolved to conquer or to die.

[2ND. FAIRY *retires*, and 3RD. FAIRY *advances*.]

3rd. *Fairy*. The journey is a thousand miles at least,
Through dreary, trackless deserts, in the east,
And fearful dangers will beset the way
To daunt the traveller, by night and day.
Fearless must be the heart, and strong the arm
Of him who would dissolve the magic charm;
But richly will his labours be repaid,
Whose valour brings to life the royal maid.

[1ST. FAIRY *goes to the side of the PRINCE, and raises the
point of his sword*.]

1st. *Fairy*. Thy sword I charm. May it be firm
and good,
To cut thy passage through th' enchanted wood.
And now, Prince Pharamond, awake! arise!
Be thine the venture, and be thine the prize.

[*Exeunt FAIRIES*.]

[*The PRINCE awakes, rises, and looks round him as if in
wonder*.]

Phar. 'T was but a dream—there are no fairies here,
Yet every word still dwells upon my ear.
A thousand miles towards the east, they said,
In a black castle I should find the maid.
It is well worth the trial. I will go.
The king, my father, will consent I know
To let me travel for a year or two.
I need not tell him what I mean to do,
For he would be alarmed, and might refuse
To give permission, so that I should lose
The promised blessing, if indeed it be
No fiction, but a sweet reality.
It would be madness, now I have the clue,
This wonderful adventure to pursue,
To slight the happy fortune that doth seem
To be revealed by this prophetic dream.
And so, the fiery dragon I defy.
Fair Star shall be released, or I will die. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*A forest with the gate of the Black Castle.*

Enter DRAGON.

Dragon. The forest echoes to the sound of feet,
Some mortal is approaching my retreat;
For such presumption he must dearly pay—
Another victim will be mine to-day.

Already fifty knights of high renown
I have in single combat overthrown,
And he who comes here now shall meet the fate
Of all who try to pass my castle gate.
(Calls) Ho! Rick!

Enter RICK.

Rick. I'm here, my lord; what would you have?

Dragon. Go quickly and discover what vile slave
Dares to be coming hither, and for what.
Haste, and bring me the tidings—loiter not. [*Exit RICK.*
I'll teach him what it is for mortal bold
To come unbidden to the dragon's hold.

[*He stretches himself on the ground before the gate, and in
a few minutes the sprite returns.*]

Dragon. Well, what news have you brought? Who is
so rude
As on my privacy thus to intrude?

Rick. 'Tis Pharamond, Prince of the Golden Isles,
Come from his father's court, a thousand miles
Away, the Princess Fair Star to awaken.

Dragon. Ha! say you so? He'll find himself mistaken.

Rick (*comes to the front of the stage and speaks to
himself.*) I don't know that, for if I reckon
right,
It will be just a hundred years to-night

Since I conveyed her to this dismal place,
Where she was to abide for just that space
Of time, without being roused out of her trance;
But, after that, she was to get a chance;
So, Master Dragon, have a care, for you
Can hardly tell what this bold prince may do?

Dragon. How near doth he approach?

Rick. My lord, he is,
I fancy now, within a mile of this.

Dragon. Poor fool! He rushes madly on his fate,
And will repent it when it is too late.
Watch for his coming, and due notice give,
The caitiff has not many hours to live.

[*Exit into the castle.*]

Rick. That's as it may be. It would be rare fun,
If, after all, the dragon should be done.
Five hundred years this castle he has held,
And whilst he holds it I shall be compelled
To serve him. But he may be conquered yet,
And I, perchance, a better master get.
Hark! 'tis the footfall of a man I hear;
Now then, my master, Pharamond is near.

[*Exit into the castle.*]

Enter PRINCE PHARAMOND.

Phar. Yes, this must be the place—these dismal
towers
May well be the abode of evil powers.

I heard strange sounds as through the wood I passed.
Unearthly voices mingled with the blast,
And frightful forms seemed from the earth to rise
With fiery tongues, huge mouths, and threatening eyes;
But when I drew my sword they disappeared
As if before some object that they feared.
I think the weapon must enchanted be;
How easily it cut down every tree
That blocked my path. Now, if it should be so,
It might destroy the dragon at a blow,
If such a being exists, and is the keeper
Of her I've loved so long—the beauteous sleeper,
Who may perhaps be but a myth at last.
Yet surely all my toils and dangers past
Must lead to some good end.

[*A loud roar is heard within the gate.*]

Hah! what is that?

[*He retires out of sight, and the DRAGON appears.*]

Dragon. Who comes this way? Methinks I smell a
rat!

Advance, bold mortal, let me see your face—
What do you want in this my dwelling-place?

Phar. I seek a princess who is here confined
A captive, whom your arts in slumber bind.
It is my mission, as you soon will see,
To break the spell, and set the maiden free.

Dragon. Ho! ho! vain boaster, I shall quickly teach
You how to curb your tongue, and mend your speech.

[*Brandishes his flame-coloured sword.*]

Phar. Come on, then, monster, I despise your words,
And care not, though a host of fiery swords
Came in array against my single arm,
I am determined to dissolve the charm.

[*He draws his sword, and rushes upon the DRAGON, who
retreats through the gate, PHARAMOND closely following.
The gate is shut with violence, and a noise as of the
clashing of swords is heard, then a heavy fall, and a
deep groan.*]

*Enter RICK, who dances about the stage in a variety of
fantastic gestures.*

Rick. The dragon's killed, oh, what a lucky chance!
Now Rick, my beauty, you may sing and dance,
And, like a merry bird, your life enjoy,
For you have got no master now, my boy. [Exit.

SCENE III.—*A room in the Black Castle.*

[FAIR STAR *asleep on a couch.*]

Enter PHARAMOND. He approaches the PRINCESS, and kneels.

Phar. Can this be real. Am I then so blest?
Sweet Fair Star, thus I wake thee from thy rest.

[*He kisses her hand. She moves, opens her eyes, then raises herself on her elbow.*]

Fair Star. Where am I? What has happened?
Surely I
Have been asleep. How was it? Let me try
To recollect.—Oh, yes—the spinning-wheel—
I hurt my finger, and it made me feel
So strangely. I believe I fainted. Where
Is the old woman who was spinning there?

[*She comes off the couch, and looks round wonderingly.*]

But this is not the room; who brought me here?
And who are you, sir? It is wrong, I fear,
To stay alone with one I've never seen
Before. Pray take me to the king and queen.

Phar. Dear princess Fair Star, calm yourself, I pray;
The king and queen are very far away.

Fair Star. That cannot be, sir; they would never go
And leave me here, oh, no! you do not know

How much they love me, or you would not say,
To frighten me, that they are gone away.
Besides, it can be scarcely half an hour
Since I came from them, just to see this tower,
And I must now return, or they will be
Afraid I'm lost. Will you go back with me?

Phar. Lady, I'll go wherever you desire,
Though it should be through water and through fire!

Fair Star (aside.) How kind he is, and, oh, how
handsome too;
(*To him.*) Thank you, fair gentleman, if I but knew
Where I could find my mother and my father,
Or Lady Christabel, for I would rather
She led me back, as they perhaps might be
Displeased to see a stranger come with me.
I dare say you can find her. If you do,
I shall be very much obliged to you.

[*She walks about, looking at and touching everything in the
room, while the PRINCE comes forward and speaks in
soliloquy.*]

Phar. Most wonderful, that a whole century
To her should as a single moment be!
How is it possible to let her know
She went to sleep a hundred years ago?
That all the friends she loved are long since dead?
It must be told—and yet, the task I dread.

Enter the three good FAIRIES.

1st. Fairy. Prince Pharamond, your work is nobly done;
You well deserve the prize that you have won.
Princess, you have a wondrous tale to hear,
But, happily, you've nothing more to fear;
All danger now is past, and you are free
From a long period of captivity.

Fair Star. What mean you, madam? Everything doth
seem
So strange around me. Am I in a dream?

1st. Fairy. It is no dream. By a most happy chance
You have been wakened from a long, deep trance.
A hundred years, dear child, have passed away
Since last your eyes beheld the light of day,
And all the people who were living then
Have long been dead.

Fair Star. Shall I not see again
My father, and my gentle mother? Oh,
Lady, dear lady, do not tell me so!

2nd. Fairy. Grieve not, sweet Fair Star, fourscore years
they numbered
Upon the earth, before in death they slumbered.

Fair Star (*pressing her hand on her brow as if
bewildered.*) I cannot understand it. Why
should I
Remain so young, whilst all grow old and die?

1st. Fairy. This you shall soon be shewn, then you
will know
How great the debt of gratitude you owe

To this right noble prince, whose valiant arm
Hath just released you from a cruel charm.

Fair Star. How shall I thank you, prince?

Phar. Nay, thank me not,
Sweet Fair Star, it has been my happy lot
From the enchanter's power to set you free:
And now, I hope, you will return with me
To your own kingdom, where my father reigns;
Its sunny hills, and verdant, flowery plains
You must have trodden, long ere I was born,
And still your youth is only in its dawn.

Fair Star. The Golden Islands! Ah, yes, I should say
It was but yesterday I came away
With my dear parents, from that lovely land
To the old castle where I pricked my hand.

3rd. Fairy. It was that prick which made you go to
sleep;
The spindle was enchanted.

1st. Fairy. Do not weep:
Your days of childhood you must now forget,
Like a past dream; and let no vain regret
Disturb the happiness you may enjoy
If you but wisely your new life employ.

Fair Star. Tell me, kind ladies, what I ought to do:
I will be guided, if you please, by you.

1st. Fairy. First, then, this noble prince you must reward,
For liberating you with his good sword.

Fair Star. Indeed I would most gladly do so now,

If he would condescend to tell me how.

[*The PRINCE takes her hand, and kneels gracefully on one knee at her feet.*]

Phar. Ah, charming princess! if I may decide,
'Tis thus.—I ask you to become my bride.
I offer you my heart's devoted love,
And hope these gentle fairies will approve.

Fair Star. Fairies!

2nd. Fairy. Yes, princess; and, moreover, know,
We are your godmothers.

Fair Star. Ah! is it so?
Then I shall willingly bestow my hand
On this brave prince, if such be your command.

1st. Fairy. 'Tis well,—The prince deserves to gain your
heart.

3rd. Fairy. Now it is time I should perform my part.
It was my province riches to bestow
On the princess. Down in the vaults below,
Of this dark castle, is concealed a treasure
In silver, gold, and jewels, without measure:
And, as the dragon has been overthrown,
These treasures, Fair Star, now are all your own.

Fair Star. Thanks, generous fairy,—not alone to me
Should this magnificent donation be.
He who destroyed the dragon with his spear
Has the best right to all the treasures here.

Phar. The greatest treasure is yourself, dear maid;
Give me your hand, and I am well repaid.

Riches and power we must henceforth share:
I am my father's only son and heir;
He will receive us both with welcome smiles,
And you shall be the queen of Golden Isles.

Fair Star. How shall I get there? is it very far?

Phar. Let not the distance fright you, dear Fair Star;
Trust to my arm and to my gallant steed—
Neither have ever failed me at my need.

1st. Fairy. The journey will both safe and easy be;
The way is now from dark enchantments free:
No longer will you find a thousand miles
Between this castle and the Golden Isles;
The road is clear—the distance is so short,
One hour will bring you to your father's court.

3rd. Fairy. And all the riches I have promised, too,
Shall be transported there, along with you.

2nd. Fairy. A carriage and full twenty horsemen wait
For your commands, down at the castle gate,
A proper escort for your bride, and we
Will meet you at the palace presently.

Phar. Kind friends, you are so generous, and so good,
I know not how to speak my gratitude.

[*Exeunt Fairies.*]

Fair Star. I'm lost in wonder!

Phar. Come, dear Fair Star, come;
Let me conduct you to your rightful home.

[*He leads her off, and the scene closes.*]

SCENE IV.—*The State Room in the Palace of the Golden Isles.*

[KING, QUEEN, and Attendants.]

Enter a MESSENGER.

Mes. My royal liege, Prince Pharamond, in state,
Has just arrived before the palace gate,
Bringing with him a princess, and a score
Of mounted knights, followed by many more
Of less degree, in charge of some great treasure.
The prince desires to know your will and pleasure.

King. Him and the lady to our presence shew;
The knights to the reception hall may go,
There to await our summons: for the rest,
You can dispose of them as may seem best.

[*Exit Messenger.*]

Queen. If Pharamond has brought him home a bride,
I trust she's one we may receive with pride.
He surely might have given me a voice
Before he actually fixed his choice.

King. There is not much to fear. I'd stake my life
Our noble son will choose a fitting wife.
You may be sure he never will disgrace,
By any act of his, our royal race.

Enter PHARAMOND, leading FAIR STAR by the hand.[*The KING and QUEEN rise from their seats.*]

Queen (aside.) How like the picture of the doomed princess!

[*PHARAMOND and the PRINCESS approach, and kneel gracefully.*]

Pha. Dear father—dearest mother—deign to bless
Your son and daughter.

King. Rise, my children, rise;
You both are welcome.

Queen. This is a surprise,
My son. Who is this maiden you have brought,
Without an introduction, to the court?

Enter three FAIRIES.

1st. Fairy. Content you, lady, you have nought to fear,
Fair Star should need no introduction here:
Her story to you all must be well known,
For she is the true heiress to the throne.

Queen. Is that mysterious tale then really true?

King. And you, most charming ladies, who are you?

2nd. Fairy. We are three sister fairies, and we come
To welcome Fair Star to her childhood's home.

3rd. Fairy. 'Tis upwards of a century since we
Stood last within these regal halls, to see
The princess named, and then we did confer
Some of our richest, choicest gifts on her.
But there was an old envious fairy, who
Bent upon mischief, came there to undo

All we had done, as far as she was able,
And caused the trance which you have deemed a fable.

1st. Fairy. To Pharamond was in a dream revealed
The place where the young princess was concealed;
And then he bravely ventured, for her sake,
A daring enterprise to undertake.
He journeyed far over enchanted ground,
Until her dreary prison-house was found;
To break the spell a monster dread he slew,
Severed her bonds, and brought her here to you.

Queen. This is in truth a wonderful romance;
I am rejoiced at her deliverance.
Fair Star, dear child, you shall my daughter be.

[*Embraces the PRINCESS.*]

Fair Star. Oh, this is too much happiness for me!

King. Give me your hand, my brave, my noble son,
I glory in the deed that you have done.

[*He gives his other hand to FAIR STAR.*]

This lovely maiden's right I freely own
To share in your succession to the throne;
Thus then I join your hands; and may you be
Ever surrounded by prosperity.

3rd. Fairy. Great Sovereign, it is most nobly said;
But you must know that Pharamond doth wed
No dowerless maiden; she brings wealth untold;
Your coffers will soon be well filled with gold.

1st. *Fairy*. Let every one rejoice. No cause of dread
Remains; the spiteful fairy now is dead.
Proclaim the feast, and it shall be our care
To bless the nuptials of the royal pair.

[The arrangement of the characters as the curtain falls must be left to the good taste of the actors; but it may be suggested that the PRINCE and PRINCESS should be the centre of a semicircle, the QUEEN and KING on the right and left of them, and the FAIRIES a little in advance of the rest, but taking care not to hide the royal personages.]



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