The Romantic Story of the Princess Rosetta.

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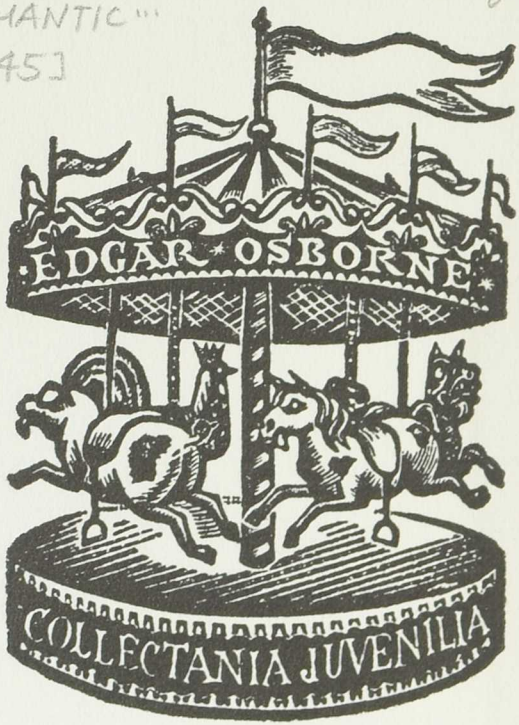

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THE ROMANTIC STORY OF THE PRINCESS ROSETTA.

ONCE upon a time there was a King and Queen, who had two fine boys. After awhile the Queen had a beautiful little girl, who was so pretty that it was impossible to see her without loving her. The Queen, having invited everyone of the fairies who dwelt in her realm to the christening, had to face a great difficulty, for she did not wish to offend any of the fairies, and yet the fairies were so numerous that it would take up all the time of the fairy godmother, and the fairy godmother was so much taken up with the care of the new princess that they had forgotten to invite the fairy godmother. Ah! and the Queen, in that surprised was good. You do not wish to affect me, by telling me has had fine thing, you are not conceal any thing from me; but tell me, ... They tried hard to excuse themselves, but the fairy godmother, the Queen more anxious to know what was to happen. At last, the chief fairy said to her, "Yes, madam, that Rosetta, and being great misery growing be them, that they may even be put to death on her account. This is all that we

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ONCE upon a time there was a King and Queen, who had two fine boys. After awhile the Queen had a beautiful little girl, who was so pretty that it was impossible to see her without loving her. The Queen, having royally entertained all the fairies who came to see her on the occasion, said to them at their departure, "Pray do not forget your usual custom, but tell me what will happen to Rosetta?" for such was the name of the little princess. The fairies told her that they had forgotten to bring their conjuring books. "Ah!" said the Queen, "that forebodes no good. You do not wish to afflict me, by telling me her bad fate. But, pray do not conceal any thing from me; but tell me all." They tried hard to excuse themselves; but this only made the Queen more anxious to know what was to happen. At last, the chief fairy said to her, "We fear, Madam, that Rosetta will bring great misery upon her brothers; that they may even be put to death on her account. This is all that we

can foretell of this beautiful little girl, and we are very sorry that we have not better news to offer you." They then left her; and the Queen became so sorrowful, that the King noticed it, and asked her what was the matter. She replied, "That she had gone too near the fire, and had burned all the flax off her distaff." "Is that all?" said the King; and thereupon went to his stores, and brought her more flax than she could have spun in a hundred years.

The Queen was still sad, and the King asked her again what was the matter? She told him, "That as she was walking by the river, she had let one of her green satin slippers fall therein." "Is that all?" said the King. He immediately summoned all the shoe-makers in his kingdom, who made the Queen ten thousand slippers of the same material. Still the Queen remained inconsolable, and the King asked her a third time what was the matter? She said, "that eating too fast, she had swallowed the ring he had given her on their marriage." The King knew that she was not telling him the truth, for he had the ring in his possession; so he said to her "My dear wife, you are telling an untruth, here is your ring, which I had in my purse." The lady was shocked at being thus detected telling falsehoods (which is the most wicked thing in the world), and seeing that the King was angry told him what the fairies had predicted of the little Rosetta; and begged, that if he knew any means of preventing it, he would tell her. The King, much grieved at this, replied, "My dear, I know of no other means of saving the lives of our two sons, than by putting Rosetta to death, while she is yet in her cradle." But the Queen

declared she would rather suffer death herself, than consent to such cruelty; and begged him to find out some other means. While the King and Queen were still meditating on this subject, the Queen was told, that in a large wood near the town, there lived an old hermit, in a hollow tree, who was consulted by people far and near. Then she said, "I too must go and consult him; the fairies warned me of the evil, but they forgot to tell me how to remedy it."

So the next morning the Queen rose early, mounted a pretty white mule, whose shoes were of gold, and left the palace, accompanied by two of her maids of honour on beautiful steeds. When they reached the wood, the Queen and her maidens alighted, and sought the tree where the hermit lived. He did not like to see women; but when he perceived that it was the Queen, he said to her, "Madam, you are welcome; what do you wish to know?" She told him what the fairies had said about Rosetta, and asked his advice. He directed her to shut the princess in a tower, and never allow her to leave it. The Queen thanked him, rewarded him liberally, and rode home to tell the King.

The King upon hearing this, caused a large tower to be erected, and when it was finished, shut his daughter up in it; but, that she might not be lonely, he, the Queen, and the two young princes, Prince Royal and Prince Orlando, visited her every day. They both loved their sister passionately, for she was the fairest and the most sweet tempered girl, that ever was seen.

When she was fifteen years old, the King and Queen were taken very ill, and died nearly about the

same day. Everybody was full of grief, and went into mourning; and the bells were tolled throughout the kingdom. As for Rosetta, she was inconsolable at the death of her kind mamma.

After the King and Queen were buried, the nobles of the kingdom seated Prince Royal on the golden throne set with diamonds; placed a handsome crown upon his head; clothed him in violet-coloured velvet robes, spangled with suns and moons; and then all the court cried aloud, three times, "Long live the King." Nothing was thought of but rejoicing.

Then the King said to the prince, "Now that we are the masters, we may surely release our sister from the tower in which she has been so long confined." To reach the tower they had only to cross the garden, in one corner of which it was built.

Rosetta was busy embroidering when she saw her brothers, but she rose, and taking the King's hand, said, "Good morrow, Sire; now that you are King, and I am your little subject, I beseech your Majesty to remove me from this tower, where I am very, very solitary." And then she began to cry. The King embraced her, and told her to dry her tears, for he had come to take her to a fine castle. And the prince, who had his pockets full of sugar plums, gave them to Rosetta, and said to her, "Come, let us quit this ugly tower; the King will soon find a husband for you; so do not cry."

When Rosetta first saw the nice garden, filled with flowers, fruits, and fountains, she was so surprised that she could not say a word; for she had, till then, never seen any thing of the kind. She looked all

round, walked a little way, stopped, and then gathered fruit from the trees, and flowers from the borders. Her little dog, Fretillon, who had only one ear, was green like a parrot, and danced to admiration, ran capering before her; and his gambols very much amused the company. All at once he ran into a little thicket and the princess followed him, and never was any one more surprised than she was, at seeing there a large peacock, which, having its tail spread out, seemed to her so beautiful that she could not take her eyes off. The King and the prince, who soon came up to her, enquired what she was so much amazed at. She showed them the peacock, and asked them what it was? They told her that it was a bird, which was sometimes eaten. "What!" said she, "do they ever kill and eat so beautiful a bird? I declare to you that I will never marry any one but the King of the Peacocks; I shall then be Queen, and I will take care that no more peacocks are eaten."

It would be impossible to express the King's astonishment. "But, sister," said he to her, "where shall we find the King of the Peacocks?" "Wherever you please, Sire," said she; "but I will marry no one but him."

After she had come to this resolution, the two princes conducted her to their castle, and the peacock with her, for she was so fond of it, she would not leave it.

Now all the ladies of the court, having never seen Rosetta, hastened to pay their respects to her; some brought her sweet-meats, or sugar-plums, others rich gowns, ribbons, dolls, embroidered shoes,

pearls and diamonds; and she behaved so prettily, kissing her hand and curtsying whenever anything was presented to her, that all were delighted with her.

Meanwhile the King and the prince resolved to have a portrait taken of the Princess Rosetta. When they had had it painted, so beautifully that it only wanted speech, they said to her, "Rosetta, since you will only marry the King of the Peacocks, we are going to seek him for you, all over the world. We shall be very glad to find him; and in the mean time you must take care of our kingdom." Rosetta thanked them for the pains they were taking; assured them that she would govern the kingdom well, and that while they were gone her only pleasure would be looking at the beautiful peacock, and seeing Fretillon dance.

The two young princes then set forth on their journey; and at length reached the country they were in search of, and observed that all the trees were loaded with peacocks; the place being so full of them, that their voices might be heard six miles off.

When they arrived at the chief town, they observed that it was full of men and women, whose clothes were made of peacocks' feathers; and that peacocks' feathers were displayed every where, as very fine things. They met the King, who was taking an airing in a beautiful little carriage, made of gold, and set with diamonds, drawn by twelve peacocks; and who conjecturing that the two princes were foreigners, stopped his carriage and called them to him.

The King and the prince went up to him, and, having made an obeisance, said, "Sire, we have come

from afar to show you a portrait." They then took from their portmanteau the picture of Rosetta. When the King of the Peacocks had looked at it, "I cannot imagine," said he, "that there is in the world so beautiful a maiden." "The original is a hundred times more beautiful than the picture," said the King. "Ah! you are joking," said the King of the Peacocks. "Sire," said the prince, "here is my brother, who is a King like you: he is a King and I am a prince; our sister, whose portrait this is, is the Princess Rosetta: and we are come to ask you whether you are willing to marry her. She is very beautiful and very good, and we will give with her a bushel measure full of golden crowns." "Oh," said the King, "I will marry her with all my heart; and I will be fond of her, if she is as fair as her portrait; but if she be in the least degree less beautiful, I will put you to death." "Well, we consent," answered Rosetta's two brothers. "You consent?" said the King, "go then to prison, and remain there until the princess arrives." And the princes left him without a murmur, for they were convinced that Rosetta was far more handsome than her portrait. While they were in prison, the King often visited them, to see that they were well treated; while he kept in his room Rosetta's portrait, with which he was so infatuated, that he slept neither day nor night. Meanwhile the King and his brother wrote to the princess, desiring her to hasten to them with all speed, for they had found the King of the Peacocks.

When the Princess received the letter, she was delighted beyond measure; she told every body that the King of the Peacocks was found, and wished to

marry her. Bonfires were lighted, cannons fired, and sugar-plums and sweet-meats were universally eaten; and all who came to see the Princess during three days, were presented with bonbons, hypocras, and all sorts of nice things. Then leaving her prettiest dolls to her best friends, she placed the government in the hands of the wisest old men of the city; whom she recommended to take care of every thing, to spend nothing, and to collect plenty of money against the King's return. Lastly, she begged them to keep her peacock, and taking with her only her nurse and foster-sister, departed with her little green dog, Fretillon. They embarked on board a boat, taking with them a bushel of golden crowns, and clothes enough to last them ten years, if they changed them twice a day.

From time to time the nurse enquired of the captain, "Are we approaching the kingdom of the Peacocks?" And when at length he answered "Yes," the nurse came forward, seated herself by him, and said to him, "If you wish to make your fortune, to-night, while the Princess is asleep, you must help me to throw her overboard. When she is drowned I will dress my daughter in her fine clothes, and take her to the King of the Peacocks, who will be very glad to marry her; and for a reward, we will load you with diamonds." The sailor was very much surprised at the nurse's proposal, and told her that it would be a thousand pities to drown so beautiful a princess; but she gave him a bottle of wine, and made him drink so much, that he did not know how to refuse her.

When night came, the Princess went to bed as usual, and little Fretillon lay prettily at her feet,

without moving a paw. As soon as Rosetta was sound asleep, the wicked nurse brought the captain where the Princess was slumbering; and, without awakening her, they took and threw her, with her feather-bed, mattress, sheets, and counterpane, all into the sea; and the Princess was sleeping so soundly that she never woke. Fortunately her couch was made of phœnix-feathers, which have this property, that they cannot sink. This caused her to float in her bed, as though she had been in a boat. By degrees, however, the sea wetted her feather-bed, then the mattress, and at last Rosetta herself, who feeling the water, could not tell what it meant.

In the meanwhile the King of the Peacocks, whose country they were fast approaching, had sent to the sea-shore a hundred carriages, drawn by all manner of strange animals; such as lions, bears, stags, wolves, horses, oxen, asses, eagles, and peacocks; and the carriage intended for the Princess Rosetta, was drawn by six blue monkeys, who could dance on the tight rope, and play a thousand antics. Their harness was most superb, being made of crimson velvet, plated with gold. There were also sixty young ladies, whom the King had chosen to wait on her; their clothes were of all sorts of colours, and gold and silver were the least valuable of their ornaments.

The nurse had been at great trouble to decorate her daughter in Rosetta's finest gown, with a diamond head dress and lots of jewels. But in spite of her pains, her daughter was as ugly as an ape; her hair was black and woolly, and she was blear-eyed and bow-legged, and had a large hump between her

shoulders. She was ill-tempered, slovenly, and, what was worse, always grumbling.

When the King of the Peacocks' attendants saw her coming out of the vessel, they were so surprised that they could not speak. "What is the matter?" said she. "Are you all asleep? Make haste and bring me something to eat; you are a set of vulgar wretches, and I will have you all hanged." On hearing this, they said among themselves, "What an ugly creature! and she is as wicked as she is ugly. Our king will make a pretty match of it."

While all the peacocks, who were perched on the trees to salute her as she passed along, instead of crying, "Long live beautiful queen Rosetta!" when they saw her so ugly, cried, "Fie, fie, how ugly she is!" This put her into a violent passion, and she said to her guards, "Kill these saucy peacocks, who insult me so." But the peacocks quickly flew away, and laughed at her.

When they announced to the King that the Princess was drawing nigh, he said, "Did her brothers tell the truth? Is she more beautiful than her portrait?" "Sire," said a courtier, "it is enough if she is as good-looking." "Yes, indeed," said the King, "I shall be satisfied; let us go and see her:" for he guessed by the noise in the court-yard, that she was now very near, though he could not make out exactly what was said, excepting, "Dear me, how ugly she is!" He thought, however, that these observations applied to some dwarf or curious animal that she had brought with her; for it never once entered his head that they were spoken of the Princess herself.

The portrait of Rosetta was carried upon a long pole, so that every body might see it, and the King walked slowly after it, with all his barons, his peacocks, and the ambassadors from the neighbouring states. The King of the Peacocks was very impatient to see his dear Rosetta, but when he did see her, the sight nearly killed him. He tore his clothes, put himself into a most violent rage, and would not go near her ; she quite frightened him.

"What," said he, "have these two scoundrels that I have in prison, had the impudence to mock me, and to propose to marry me to such a baboon as that ? They shall be put to death. As for this silly woman and her nurse and all who brought them, away with them to the round tower."

In the meanwhile, the King and his brother, who knew that it was about the time that their sister should arrive, put on their gayest clothes to receive her. Instead, however, of finding themselves set at liberty, as they expected, the jailor came with a party of soldiers, and made them descend into a dismal dungeon, full of noxious reptiles, and where they were up to their necks in water.

At the end of three days, the King of the Peacocks came to an opening that was in the wall, to reproach them. "You have called yourselves King and prince," said he, "to entrap me into a marriage with your sister ; but the rope is twisting with which I will have you hanged." "King of the Peacocks," said our King, filled with indignation, "do nothing rashly in this affair, or you may repent it. I am, like you, a king, and will be revenged for this." When the King heard him speak so resolutely, he

began to think whether he should not spare their lives, and let them go with their sister; but his trusty friend, who was a thorough courtier, suggested that if he did not avenge the insult, all the world would laugh at him. So he vowed that he would not forgive them, and ordered them to be tried. Their trial did not last long, as to condemn them it was merely necessary to compare the portrait of Rosetta with the pretended Princess. They were, therefore, sentenced to be beheaded, for having promised the King in marriage a beautiful princess, and then giving him an ugly country girl.

This decree was read to them in due form; when they still protested, that their sister was a princess, more beautiful than the day, and demanded a respite of seven days, stating that in that time something might occur to establish their innocence. The King of the Peacocks, who was very angry, would hardly grant them this favour, but at last consented.

While all this was passing at the court, poor Princess Rosetta, who when it was daylight, had been very much surprised, as was Fretillon also, to find herself out at sea without a boat or any assistance, cried so pitifully, that all the fish were sorry for her. "Certainly," said she, "the King of the Peacocks must have condemned me to be thrown into the sea; he has repented of his bargain, and to get rid of me decently, ordered me to be drowned." Then she cried still more, for in spite of his supposed cruelty, she could not help loving him.

She remained two days floating in this manner, drenched to the skin, and nearly frozen with cold; indeed, had it not been for little Fretillon, who nest-

ling in her bosom, kept up a little warmth near her heart, she would have died a hundred times. She was dreadfully hungry too; when seeing some oysters in their shells, she took as many as she liked and ate them. Fretillon was not fond of oysters, however he was obliged to eat some, in order to keep himself alive. When night came on, Rosetta was very much alarmed, and said to her dog, "Dear Fretillon! pray keep barking, for fear the fishes should eat us up." So he barked all night long; and when morning broke, the princess' bed was not very far from the shore. Now there happened to dwell thereabouts a good old man, who lived by himself in a little cottage. He was very poor, and did not care for the things of this world. When he heard Fretillon bark, there being no dogs in those parts, he thought that some travellers had lost their way, and went out kindly to direct them. Suddenly he perceived the Princess floating on the sea, who, stretching her arms towards him, cried, "Good old man, save me, I pray you, or I shall perish." When he heard her speak so sadly, he pitied her misfortune, and fetching a long boat-hook, succeeded in dragging the bed to land. Rosetta and Fretillon were very glad to be once more on dry ground; the Princess was very thankful to the good man, and wrapping herself in a blanket, barefooted as she was, she entered his cottage, where he lighted a little fire of dry straw, and took out of his chest a woman's gown, with shoes and stockings, in which Rosetta dressed herself; clad thus, as a poor peasant girl, she was as beautiful as the day, and Fretillon danced round her for her amusement.

The old man saw plainly that Rosetta was a lady

of distinction; for her bed-clothes were embroidered with gold and silver, and her mattress was covered with satin; and he begged her to tell him her story, So she told him all, from beginning to end, crying bitterly all the while; for she still thought that the King of the Peacocks had ordered her to be drowned. "How shall we act, my child?" said the old man to her. "You are a noble Princess, used to good living, while I have only black bread and radishes: permit me to go and tell the King of the Peacocks that you are here; for were he once to see you, he would certainly be but too happy to marry you." "Alas! he is a wicked man," said Rosetta, "and would put me to death; but if you have a little basket, tie it round my dog's neck, and it is hard but he will bring us back something to eat."

The old man gave the Princess a basket, which she tied round Fretillon's neck, and said to him, "Go to the best saucepan in the city, and bring back whatever you find in it." Fretillon ran to the city, and there being no better kitchen than the king's, he went there, found out the best saucepan, and cleverly contrived to bring away its contents. Rosetta then said to him, "Go back to the pantry and fetch me the best you can find in it." Fretillon did so, and soon returned laden with as much white bread, wine, fruits, and sweet-meats, as he could carry.

When it was the King of the Peacocks' dinner-time, there was nothing in his saucepan, nothing in his pantry; the servants looked aghast, and the King got in a violent rage. "What," said he, "am I to have no dinner? let the spit be put to the fire, and let me have some nice roast meat this evening."

When evening came, the Princess said to Fretillon, "Go to the best kitchen in the city and fetch me a nice piece of roast meat." Fretillon did as he was bid; and thinking that the King's was the best kitchen, crept in very softly, and brought away all that was on the spit. He then returned with his basket full to the Princess, who sent him back again to the pantry; whence he brought all the King's stewed fruit and sugar-plums. The King, having had no dinner, wanted his supper early; but as there was nothing for him, he again put himself into a terrible passion, and went to bed supperless. The next day at dinner, and supper-time it was just the same; so that the King was three whole days without eating or drinking any thing. At last his trusty friend, who was afraid the King would die, hid himself in a corner of the kitchen, keeping his eyes fixed on the saucepan, which was boiling on the fire. How great was his surprise, when a little green dog, having only one ear, crept into the kitchen, went to the saucepan, took the meat out of it, and put it into his basket. Having followed the dog out of the town, right up to the old man's door, he returned and revealed all to the King, who was very much astonished, and ordered the dog to be sent for. His attendants went accordingly, and finding the old man and the Princess dining on the King's boiled meat, bound them with large ropes, and poor Fretillon also and brought them to the court.

When the King was informed of their arrival, he said, "To-morrow is the last day I granted to those insulting pretenders, and they shall die with the thieves who have stolen my dinner;" and then went into

his justice-hall. The old man threw himself on his knees, and said that he would tell the whole truth; and while he was speaking, the King looked at the beautiful Princess, and was moved by seeing her in tears. And when the good old man declared, that she was the real Princess Rosetta, who had been thrown into the sea, in spite of his weakness from having been so long without food, the King rushed to embrace her, and untying the ropes with which she was bound, told her that he loved her with all his heart. Her brothers, who were immediately sent for, thought that they were about to be put to death; they came very sorrowfully, hanging down their heads. At the same time the nurse and her daughter were sent for. When they met, they all recognised each other; Rosetta threw herself into her brothers' arms: the nurse, her daughter, and the skipper, knelt and asked for pardon. The joy was so great that they were forgiven by the King and the Princess; while the good old man was handsomely rewarded.

Moreover, the King of the Peacocks made every apology to Rosetta's brothers for his treatment of them. The nurse restored to Rosetta her fine clothes and the bushel of golden crowns, and the wedding-feast lasted a fortnight. Every body rejoiced, even little Fretillon, who never afterwards was fed on anything less dainty than partridge wings.

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