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BEAUTY AND THE BEAST.

BY ALBERT SMITH.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY ALFRED CROWQUILL friend.

Forrester, Alfred Henry

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1845.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST.

OF THE MERCHANT.—HIS FAMILY.—AND FAILURE.

Oh! a glorious epoch is "once on a time,"
And especially suited for legends in rhyme;
When, if the events with the dates do not chime,
Or we make a mistake in the season or clime,
We need not allow it our couplets to tease;
For if habit or costume don't fall in with ease,
We can dress up our heroes however we please;
And scorning the fashions of head, waist, or foot,
Can laugh at Strutt, Meyrick, and Planché, to boot.

Well, "once on a time," then,—a long while ago,—
There lived a great merchant. W'eve nothing to show
Whereabouts, when, or how; for, in fact, we don't know.

As regards him the chroniclers merit all blame,
For Froissart and Holinshed pass by his name;
Even Doomsday don't tell to what lands he laid claim,
Though Fairburn and Catnach both speak of his fame;
And through their traditions, from what we can glean,
A very great merchant he seems to have been.

The warehouse was built, where his commerce he
plied,
In some tall narrow lane leading out of Cheapside;
But to live there himself he had far too much pride,
And the smoke of the city he "couldn't abide."
So each day, at four, he laid traffic aside,
And his books to the care of a clerk did confide,
In a snug first-class seat on the railway to glide;
And then from the station a short pleasant ride
Through lanes fresh and green, in the sweet summer
tide,
Took him down his manor, and park fair and wide.

But, dearer than all his broad lands and domains,
He studied the markets and counted his gains
For a triad of daughters—three beautiful girls,
With gay smiling faces, and long sunny curls.
And when he arrived from the city at night,
As they kissed their dear father with guileless delight,

BEAUTY, THE MERCHANT'S DAUGHTER.

In a phrase which low people adopt when they speak,
We can say he'd three daughters all to his own cheek;
With bright beaming eyes,
Such as young lovers prize,
And gaze at with rapture, and think of with sighs,
And talk of the moon, and their hearts, and the skies,
As long as they're single; and wonder if ever
Such beauty could weary or tire—no, never!
But married, and put to the test, the same face
Appears to their sorrow "*un peu*" common-place.

We've seen he had three daughters fair,
Who did his love divide;
Who spread delight, and banished care
From his bright fireside.
But fairer than the other two,
The youngest was, I ween;
For mortals such rare charms to view,
The lot has seldom been.
Her smile was bright as morning's light,
Her eyes were dark as ebon night,
Her tresses were the same;
Lips, cherry red,—neck, snowy white,
And Beauty was her name.
Oh! had she lived in those fair times,
When gay gallants sang lovelorn rhymes

Unto their wild guitars;
They would have worn her scarf or glove,
As emblem of devoted love,
When, in their mimic wars,
They twined it gayly in their casque,—
A pleasing and romantic task;
And one that well became an age
Of spear and corslet, serf and page;
When a "fayre ladye's" beaming eyes
Did more for battle enterprise
Than clarion, pennon, lance, or shield,
Glitt'ring upon the bloody field.

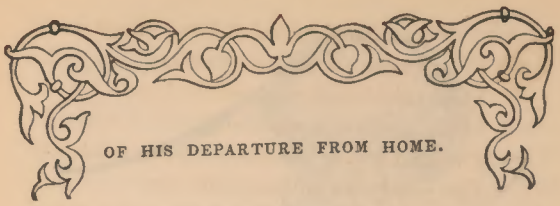
I am not a poet,—
I know it
(And show it);
If you twit me with thinking myself one,
Pray stow it.
Yet I think that these verses come out rather fine,
In the Annual, Album, or Fashion-book line;
But though armor and trappings and banners combine,
To look very grand should the sun chance to shine;
Yet, if the barometer sinks rather low,
The rain very soon puts an end to the show.
We saw it some two or three autumns ago,

When the look of his heroes made Eglinton fret,
All flabby and dabby, dull, draggled, and wet.

To return to the merchant. It happened one year
That a few speculations turned out "rather queer;"
Channel storms threw a cloud o'er his fortunate stars
And naught came to port but a few broken spars;
Besides which, a few of his trustworthy tars
Chose to smuggle some twelve dozen pounds of cigars;
Which being found out, stowed in tamarind jars,
The government, anxious to check the abuse,
Seized the vessel at once for its own private use.

The cloud of ill luck never rains but it pours,
And the same cruel chance now affected his stores;
Bold burglars broke in, and fierce fires broke out,
The report of his failure was bruited about;
E'en Lloyd's underwriters soon eyed him with doubt,
His creditors pressed him for each paltry debt,
And, to wind up the whole, he got in the Gazette.

THE MERCHANT BECOMES A BANKRUPT.



OF HIS DEPARTURE FROM HOME.

Of all his property bereft
By public sale and legal theft,
Ere long his country house he left.
His grooms and servants got the sack,
His ducks in alien ponds did quack,
His lands and gardens went to rack;
They would not spare a single stack
Of fodder for his old black hack.
So, with his daughters forced to pack,
He took a furnished two-pair back,
In which you could not swing a cat;
But there was no great harm in that,
For such was never his intent;
His only object was low rent,
And to swing cats he never meant.

Much did his lovely daughters grieve
The luxuries of home to leave,—

Those thousand much-loved things;
Their harps, pianos, and guitars;
Their inlaid desk, and Sévres jars
Of *pot pourri* and jasmine full;
The chairs they worked in Berlin wool;
The gimcracks on the cheffonier,
Gay screens, and Chinese monsters queer;
Stuffed birds, and crystal rings.
With feather tulips, wax Azaleas,
Green-worsted moss, and paper dahlias;
And silk for making chains and guards,
With groups of perforated cards,
Gummed, worked, and tacked a hundred ways
For netting-boxes, spills, and trays.

I would—and if I could, I should,—
A cruel fact pass by;
For, truth to tell,
It speaks not well
For woman's constancy;
But on the subject to be mute,
Candor forbids me, *coute qui coute.*

'Twas this, then,—that losing their traps in the rout,
The two eldest daughters were sadly put out;

And although their poor father, by grief broken down,
Required a kind look instead of a frown,
They grumbled and scowled,—called the beer weak
and flat,—
They couldn't eat this, and they didn't like that;
Their bed was too hard, and their chamber too cold;
The furniture, too, was atrociously old;
Six different bell-pulls adorned the street-door,
And some horrid low people lived on the ground-floor.

But Beauty never made complaint;
And though her cheek was pale,
Though from hard work depressed and faint,
With the submission of a saint,
From mug of pewter, cheap and quaint,
She sipped her table ale.
Fourpence a pot it was, I ween,
Although there has much better been;
Ashby's Australian, Bass's pale,
Burton or Scotch, or Kennet Vale,
But at a higher scale;
And seeing she was pale and weak,
She had far better 'dipped her beak'
In aught of those of which we speak.

BEAUTY'S TWO SISTERS.

Her active labors knew no bounds,
  She cooked the dinner, swept the room;
She washed the tea-things, saved the grounds
  To lay the dust before the broom.
She darned the stockings, fetched the beer,
Knew fish was cheap, or meat was dear,
  The beans and peas did shell;
Bargained for onions at the door,
All these things did, and many more,
  Which I've no time to tell.

With pain the merchant, day by day,
Saw Beauty's roses fade away,—
  Her cheeks were getting thin;
And to augment his keen distress,
Each day his slender purse grew less,
  With nothing coming in;
And yet he never would confess
  To be hard up for *tin;*
Although before his fevered eyes
Unpleasant visions would arise,
Of being made a counsel's sport
In clearing the Insolvent Court;
Of racket-playing in the Fleet;
Or fixing on a country seat
  The Bench's walls within.

At last, when all looked black and drear,
In the dull season of the year,
A letter came, the gloom to cheer,
  Which gladsome tidings bore ;
And told him how a barque of cost,
By many fearful tempests tossed,
Hemmed in by polar regions' frost,
Long given up as wrecked and lost,
  Had safely come to shore ;
And begging him, without digression,
To quickly go and take possession.

As when, at Tulley's Lounge, some daring elf,
  Invests his twelve pence in the wheel of fate ;
And all excitement, smiling at himself,
  First draws a prize,—then, with his luck elate,
Chooses a spoon from the five-shilling shelf,
  Making a pair—one flesh, the other plate :
So did a smile the merchant's face o'erspread,
When this bright piece of news fair Beauty read.

Alas ! the love of woman : it is known
  To be a weathercock—a changeful thing ;
Here, there, and everywhere, by fortune blown,—
  Not even purchased by a wedding-ring.
The eldest daughters hitherto had shown

THE MERCHANT RECEIVES A LETTER.

But small compassion for the cruel sting
Of helpless poverty and gnawing care
That did their father's breast to tatters tear.

But now they were all smiles—" so very glad
To find that things a better turn had taken;
Their prospects had indeed been very bad,
But their parental love was never shaken.
They joyed to see papa no longer sad,
Now that he could from ruin save his bacon;
And hoped he'd bring them back some ostrich plumes,
Point-lace and diamonds, satin and perfumes."

Beauty spoke not of treasure—asked no pearls;
But throwing back her long and clust'ring curls,
Whilst grateful feeling beamed from either eye,
Thus sang she to a negro melody:—

BEAUTY'S SONG

" Dearest father, I decline
Jewels, gold, and trinkets fine;
Bring not gems, nor costly clothes,
But if you love me, a red moss rose.
Rose! rose! one red rose!
I wish I may be smothered
If I shouldn't like a rose."

CHORUS OF SISTERS.

"Rose! rose! one red rose!
What a silly creature
Just to beg a stupid rose!"

The chorus concluded, and hushed was the strain,
While the old carpet bag, which a long time had lain
In ignoble disuse, being brought forth again,
Was made many stockings and shirts to contain,
And to cram in more boots they essayed not in vain;
Then the merchant, a little confused in his brain,
Took leave of his children, yet not without pain;
And buying a pea-coat to keep off the rain,
Started off in post haste by the very first train.

HE RESOLVES TO GO ON A JOURNEY.

HOW THE MERCHANT SPED ON HIS JOURNEY.

WHOE'ER has travelled on the rail,
  Must sigh to think,—whate'er his lot,
Whether in luggage train, or mail,—
  When to the station he has got,
What worries will his fates unravel,
Should he still further wish to travel.

For country flies are scarce and dear,
  Their drivers drunk, their horses lame ;
And the chief town is seldom near,
  From which the station takes its name.
The roads are bad, the commons wide,
Dykes deep, and no bright lamps to guide.

  Fearing his journey to retard,
  The merchant to the railway guard
  His ticket gave, and left the yard,
  Deeming his fortune rather hard ;

Not finding e'en a rustic drag,
Nor yet a spavined, kneeless nag,
To bear him and his carpet bag.
But business brooked no delay;
So, having asked the nearest way,
  He started off alone.
The night was not so very dark,
There were some rails the road to mark,
  And mile-posts eke of stone.

'Tis not essential here to say
How many times he lost his way;
Tumbling o'er hedges, holes, and ruts,
In trying to find out short cuts.
But we may not omit to tell,
That midnight from some distant bell
Was sounding, as the merchant stood
Right in the centre of a wood;
His garment muddy, torn his hood,
With "one shoe off, and t'other on,"
Like the inactive "my man John;"
Who (if you will the legend con,
By some old author called *Anon*)
Once went to bed with his breeches on.
And soon arose a cutting breeze,
That howled and whistled through the trees;

The merchant quailed, and ill at ease,
Began to freeze, and wheeze, and sneeze,
As cold and comfortless, I ween,
As if he had St. Bernard been.

And pray who doesn't St. Bernard know,
With his monks and dogs who live in the snow,
And the convent old where visiters go?
Where not even fir-trees or lichens grow,
And the ice-bound torrents can scarcely flow;
Where hurricanes wild never cease to blow;
Where the poor dead travellers stand in a row;
And the almoner's blood in his veins runs slow,
Till he reaches the Vallée d'Aoste below.

Circumslogdollagized with fright,
The merchant's dread was at its height,
The chimes he deemed his knell;
When, through the darkness of the night,
A beam of radiance, clear and bright,
Like Boccius, Bude, or Drummond light,
Across his pathway fell.
And midst the wint'ry foliage bare,
A costly palace (large and fair,

Like those grand halls beyond compeer,
Which Mr. Bradwell loves to rear
At Covent Garden, once a year)
  Rose, by some fairy spell.
The jewelled door was open set,
And the poor merchant, cold and wet,
  The golden threshold cleared,
Thinking, no doubt, 'twas all a dream;
For what did most eccentric seem,
Although he rang a silver bell,
And shouted, stamped, and knocked as well,
  No living soul appeared;
Though every portal gave a peep
Of downy beds which, wooing sleep,
  His weary spirit cheered.

I wish I could my lines indite,
Like that inventive eastern wight,
Who penned those dreams of wild delight,
The tale of each Arabian Night,
Which the Sultana did recite
(Scheherazade the dame was hight);
I mean not the translation trite,
Published whilome by Mr. Knight;
Because the new names came not pat,
The Djinnis, Wezeers, and all that;

We better loved the ancient style—
It might be incorrect and vile—
Which did our boyish days beguile.
We read the latter terms with pain,
And owed no thanks to Mr. Lane.

But to return ;—'tis past the ken
Of any but that author's pen
(Which every other pen outvies
In framing most tremendous lies),
To draw the scene, in colors true,
Which met the merchant's dazzled view ;
A scene which in the back-ground leaves,
Stanfield and Marshall, Phillips, Greives,
Pitt, Tomkins, Telbyn—names not new—
And Beverly, and Brunning too,
Who will one day some great things do ;
Judging from what their genius yields,
In Wych street and St. George's field's.

There was a scene of revelry by night,
But how engendered nobody could tell ;
The clink of glasses, and the burst of light,
And woman's joyous laugh, like some soft bell,
Which on the merchant's ear with rapture fell.

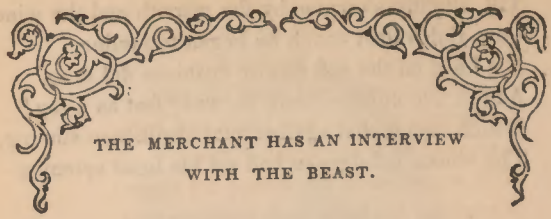
Anon arose a sweet entrancing strain,
Playing familiar airs he knew so well.
Which brought him to his Beauty's side again,
And joyous corks leapt forth from dozens of champagne.

And in the centre of the gorgeous hall
A banquet table stretched from side to side,
With costly viands spread, that might enthrall
A lord mayor's senses, e'en in all his pride,
With lords and envoys in his wake to ride
From old Blackfriars to Cateaton street;
And ancient knights on Batty's steeds astride,
Toward Guildhall bent, the civic powers to meet,
And show our foreign friends how London's sons can
eat.

Cold, tired, and hungry—wet through to the skin,
Since no one came forward to welcome him in.
He entered alone the magnificent hall;
And finding no footman to answer his call,
He sat down to table,—first eating by stealth,—
And next, bolder grown, he proposed his own health;
Then drank it, and finding the wine to his taste,
Which far from his bosom all sorrowing chased,
He tapped a fresh bottle and drew near the fire,
To pull off his gaiters and dry his attire;

THE MERCHANT STOPS AT THE PALACE OF THE BEAST.

Till, slightly o'ercome by the warmth and the wine,
On a rich velvet couch he began to recline,
His head on the soft downy cushions did drop,
And in five minutes more he was 'fast as a top!'
Which means that against total abstinence sinning,
The vinous indulgence had set his head spinning.



THE MERCHANT HAS AN INTERVIEW WITH THE BEAST.

WHAT dreams the merchant's sleep befell,
'Tis not our purpose here to tell;
We only know, that ere he woke,
The daylight through the forest broke.
The early village cock had thrice
  Crowed salutation to the morn;
The window-pane's thin coat of ice,
  Was melting in the genial dawn.
The sun was up—and washed and dressed
For aught we know—but balmy rest
Still on the merchant's peepers pressed.

At length he rose from soft repose,
First rubbed his eyes, then donned his clothes;
And feeling—just, in fact, what rude
And common persons mean by 'screwed!'

(To which no cause he could assign
(Of course it could not be the wine).
He wandered in the garden fair,
To cool his brow, and snuff the air;
For though all else was bleak and bare,
It seemed as if the summer there,
With winter stern his throne did share;
Wreathing his brow with chaplets rare,
And flowers sweet beyond compare.

Calling dear Beauty's wish to mind,
He sought a bower with roses twined
("Oh, twine a bower!" the poets sing,
As if it were a piece of string);
And choosing one, a floral gem,
Bearing a dewdrop diadem,
He plucked it quickly from the stem,
When a most awful, savage "*Hem!*"
Which almost seemed to say, in brief,
"I'm looking at you, scurvy thief!"
Fell on his heart with deadly chill;
And, sick with fright, a shivering thrill
Of terrors most intense came o'er him,
As a huge monster stood before him.

You've witnessed O. Smith in his terrible gear,
As a bottle-imp, spirit, or devil, appear;

You have seen his large wings, and have quailed with
affright,
As you thought of his face, when you got home at
night;
You've heard his deep voice, and demoniac laugh,
But it was not so shocking as this one, by half;
Or perhaps, in your time, you have seen T. P. Cooke
(By his friends christened *Tippy*) assume a wild look,
As the monster in Frankenstein, stalking about,
And putting girls, gipsies, and babes, to the rout;
Besides this, his dread Vanderdecken, you know
('Twas at the Adelphi some ten years ago);
Or perhaps you have seen, at the gay Christmas time,
Messrs. Wieland and Payne, in some wild panto-
mime;
Where they rise up aloft in a cloud of red fire,
While the pit cries "*bravo!*" and the gallery "*higher!*"
With heads big as bushels, and great glaring eyes,
Pulled up by some ropes from the stage to the flies.

Or you've seen Mr. Harrison look like "the Beast,"
Though his voice wasn't that of a monster, at least;
Who, fearing his looks might the lady appall,
Exclaimed in his song, "I am no beast at all!"
Perchance all these wonderful sights you have seen,
And others beside, so you'll know what I mean,

HE HAS AN INTERVIEW WITH THE BEAST

When I state that their forms to *this* lusus naturæ,
Who drew near the merchant, were fays to a fury;
More like Polyphemus as seen at old Drury,
Where frightfully masked Mr. Phillips's face is,
To shock Galatea, and smash her dear Acis.

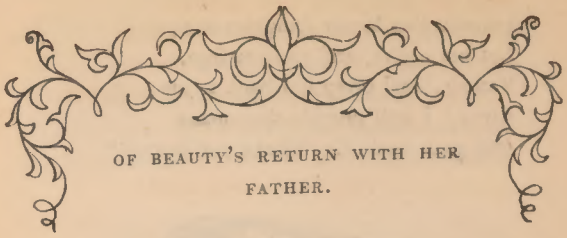
"Ungrateful man!" roared out the beast,
"You might have spared that rose at least;
For after being lodged and fed,
Furnished with supper, grog, and bed,
You steal the only things I prize,
And that before my very eyes!
But now I have you in my power—
You die!—in less than half an hour."

"Great sir," the trembling merchant cried,
"'Twas for my girl, my heart's chief pride--
I stole the rose;
And goodness knows,
She asked not for a rap beside.
The entire truth I lay before you;
Oh, mercy, mercy, I implore you!"

Replied the Beast, "To save your head
'Tis not too late; but in your stead,

I would this lovely daughter see;
Let her arrive, and you are free,
Vanish—and bring her back to me:
Away! I will provide the means,
And go it home like bricks and beans!"

HOMEWARD BOUND.



OF BEAUTY'S RETURN WITH HER FATHER.

WITH railway speed the merchant flew;
But as he near his lodging drew,
He fondly murmured, "As I view
These scenes so charming, oh, my breast
Is filled with pain!"—you know the rest:
And then reflecting on his case,
He broke out in another place,
Crying, "To what a pitch I've brought her,
Beauty, my daughter—oh, my daughter!"
He reached his humble home at last,
And when the first salutes had past,
He gave his darling child the rose,—
The cause of all their present woes.
Then, mustering courage for a scene,
Began to tell where he had been;
What had occurred, and how the Beast,
A monster eight feet high, at least,

Had told him not to lose an hour,
But seek his lovely daughter's bower,
And forthwith place her in his power ;
For though she brought no marriage dower,
He felt inclined the girl to wed,
If she could overcome her dread,
And thereby save her father's head.

I wish you could have heard the riot,
  Which both the elder sisters made ;
Though Beauty begged them to be quiet,
  And said, " She was not much afraid,
Only a little ;—if 'twas true
This only sacrifice would do,
She would not give her father pain,
Perchance allow him to be slain,
      Because her swain
      Was rather plain,
But from all murmurs would abstain."

The merchant, when he heard her speak
In these kind accents, mild and meek,
Kissed the bright tear-drops from her cheek.
The sisters merely whispered, " Fie on't!
She's made her bed, and she must lie on't."

The plan was arranged, and no time did elapse,
Ere Beauty in silence had packed up her traps;
Her father bespoke the best horse he could find,
And put his dear child on a pillion behind:—
Gee ho, Dobbin,
Hey ho, Dobbin,
Gee ho, Dobbin, gee up and gee ho!

On, Hesperus! thou bringest all good things
Home to the hungry—to the thirsty beer,
And goes of grog, or devilled legs and wings
Of poultry, left from tavern-dinner's cheer,
Where Boai chops, and Herr Von Joel sings,
In snug tobacco-clouded atmosphere.
At that still hour, teeming with Beauty's fate,
The merchant's horse stopped at the monster's gate.
As heretofore, a sumptuous feast
Was on the table spread;
From which they argued that the Beast
Was wealthy and well-bred;
And every rare delicious thing,
Which fairy hands or taste could bring,
Was placed upon the board.
Canary patties, lark's-tongue pies,
Grilled humming birds, and woodcock's thighs;

Besides gold fish, a goodly stew;
With copious jugs of mountain dew,—
A costly liquid, known to few,
In crystal vessels stored.
It was, in sooth, a gorgeous treat,
But Beauty did not care to eat;
The dread of the approaching night
Had banished all her appetite;
And trembling at the slightest sound,
She started, sighed, and looked around.

One! oh!
Two!! no!
Three!!! yes!
Four!!!! 'tis!
Can nothing stay the flight of time?
The turret-bells for midnight chime!
And at the hour's latest stroke
Thus Beauty to her father spoke:—
"The coming day
Brooks no delay;
Father, you may
No longer stay;
Away! away!
Think of your child, and for her pray,
Adieu! dear father! *je m'en vais*."

"Fare thee well, and if for ever,
Still for ever, fare thee well;"
Sobbed the merchant, loth to sever,
Weeping more than words can tell;
And, giving her his benediction,
Took himself off in deep affliction.
Whilst Beauty to her chamber hied,
The locks and bolts with caution tried;
Opened her *sac de nuit* with care,
Looked out her night-things, brushed her hair;
Got into bed, began to weep,
And, lastly, cried herself to sleep.

There were seven pillows, free from mould,
On that rich bedstead, carved and scrolled,
Slumber to woo, or keep off cold;
And Beauty slept away the night,
Until the earliest morning light
(A sunbeam that had lost its way)
Fell on her eyelids as she lay.
The breakfast was laid out with care,
Though no one came the meal to share;
And when 'twas o'er, her fear appeased,
And courage gained, the keys she seized,
Resolved to wander where she pleased;

Meaning to traverse at her leisure,
The palace, and inspect its treasure
(Bad rhyme, I grant; but never mind,
It is the best that I can find
To suit the purpose; neither "measure"
Falls in the sense so well, nor "pleasure").

At the end of the corridor, on the first floor,
All jaspar and agate, she came to a door
With sandal-wood panels of value untold,—
More precious in Wardour street never were sold,—
And on them was painted, in letters of gold,
"THE BOUDOIR OF BEAUTY—its riches behold!"

The treasure here that met her sight,
George Robins only could indite;
And so we will not waste our time
To chronicle the gems in rhyme;
But leave it to the matchless skill
That raised the temporary splash
Concerning Horace Walpole's trash,
Last year sold off at Strawb'ry hill;—
The clocks that could no hours tell,
The Bellows, and Cellini's Bell,

Which in the catalogues were seen,
As well as Ainsworth's Magazine.

But some few things we may produce,
Solely designed for Beauty's use.
The table was with books o'erspread,
As lively ones as e'er were read,—
The Comic Album's prose and rhymes,
Punch, Bentley, The Pictorial Times.
Boz, Cruikshank, Hood, and Lover, too;
Leech, Crowquill, Phiz,—a merry crew;
And Ingoldsby, with legends new,
To drive away the devils blue.
Music in heaps on inlaid stands,
With one of Zeitter's patent grands,
A gothic harp of purest tone,
Of which, had Parish Alvars known,
He would have bought it for his own.
There was an album, too, as well,
On opening which her bright eyes fell
Upon these lines (by kind permission
We quote the only true edition,
"Published by J. L. Marks, Long lane,
With pictures, price one penny, plain"):—

"Beauteous lady, dry your tears,
There's no cause for sighs or fears:
Command as freely as you may,
Compliance still attends your way.'

She scarcely had finished inspecting the room,
When a strange awful sound from her cheek took the
bloom;
Her senses swam round, and she trembled with dread,
As she heard in the passage a loud heavy tread,—
Like the ghost in Giovanni approaching to sup,
Whom the don, without dying, would gladly give up;
And nearer and nearer appears the intruder,
With footsteps like thunder, much louder and ruder
Than ever was heard in the stormy Barbuda.
In three seconds more
It was close to the door,
Announcing itself by a horrible roar!
Whilst Beauty sank down in a large easy chair,
Her limbs giving way with affright and despair,
Concealing her face with her long flowing hair,—
Like the ostrich, who hides but his head in the sand,
To escape (as he thinks) from the hunters at hand,—
Each moment expecting to meet her dark doom,
As the Beast, without asking, stamped into the room;
And Beauty, with terror already half dead,
Expected each instant he'd snap off her head.

BEAUTY VISITS THE BEAST'S PALACE.

But what was her surprise to hear,
In silvery accents soft and clear,
The Beast assume an altered tone,
Which scarcely she believed his own;
  And kneeling at her feet,
With one paw placed upon his heart,
Whilst from his eye a tear did start,
  Her kindness did entreat;
Hoping she would not angry feel,
Although his form was not genteel,
If he presumed, at her next meal,
  To wait and see her eat
(Such a proceeding would be thought,
At present, bearish and untaught;
But at the epoch 'twas not so,
So says the book by which we go,
'Twas "once upon a time," you know).

Beauty, not liking to refuse,
Although her heart was in her shoes,
Faltered, "Pray do, sir, as you choose."
On which the Beast spoke out again,
And "Feared she thought him very plain,"
When Beauty said—Lord Allcash mocking,—
"Yes, shocking, positively shocking;

But that he could not help his looks"
(We quote again the penny books).

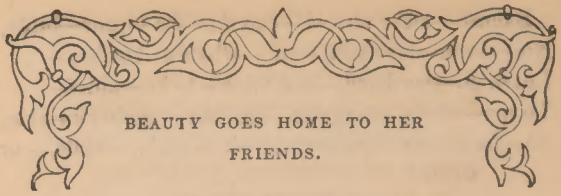
" Then I am not so *very* bad ?
Although in such coarse vesture clad,
  I wear the best I'm able ;
My bear-skin is a fright, I know,
While your bare skin is white as snow,
  And smooth as a slate table ;
Yet, like my heart, my own is warm,
A perfect 'comfort in a storm.'"

Beauty began to feel perplexed,
And looked as if she thought—" What next ?"
When, gently falling on all-fours,
With one of his most winning roars,
The Beast, afraid to own his flame
In English, murmured—" *Je vous aime ;*
And never from your side would be :
Tell me, fair girl, could you love *me ?*"

Forgetting all things but her wounded pride
At such an offer, straightway she replied,
While every single word she did divide,
Taking Miss Helen Faucit for her guide :

"Excuse—me,—sir,—I—can not—be—your—bride,
Nor—even—love you,—sir,—whate'er betide;—
Leave go—my hand,—nor think—to be—allied—
To my—sire's—daughter—on—my—mother's—side,
So—from—my—presence,—sir,—glide,—slide,—or
stride."

Flatly rejected, all hope crushed,
The poor Beast sighed "Farewell!"
And from the chamber quickly rushed
To the lone silence of his cell.
Shut himself in with bolt and lock,
And pondered on the cruel shock
That gave his senses such a knock,
Till "feeding-time at six o'clock."



BEAUTY GOES HOME TO HER FRIENDS.

He who hath bent him o'er the bed
On which some dreamer rests his head,
Before the housemaid's tapping fingers
Disturb the room where slumber lingers,
May possibly have pondered o'er
The fitful start and vacant snore ;
And wondered, as his vision caught
The working of the slumberer's thought,
How different a turn 'twould take
When he should be once more awake.

And so with Beauty—though at first
Lulled into silence by the burst
Of treasures which, on every side,
The monster for her did provide,
  Yet, e'er a month passed by,
She wearied of the costly things,
And wished she had a pair of wings,
  That homeward she might fly ;

But wings are things that ne'er have been,
From Rasselas to Mr. Green;
So giving way to deep dejection,
She nursed in grief her heart's affection.

Against her boudoir's gorgeous wall,
  In frame of sculptured gold,
Was fixed a mirror, broad and tall,
  In which, she had been told,
Did she but choose to cast her eyes,
She might behold without disguise,
Whatever things she wished to see,
Wherever they by chance might be;
And one day, while her tears did flow,
She murmured, feeling rather low,
"Than all this splendor, I would rather
Look on my sisters and my father."
When o'er the plain of silvered glass,
She saw their lifelike shadows pass.

She remembered, she remembered,
  How her father flitted by;
In his hand some gin-and-water,
  And a tear-drop in his eye;
For with grief his heart was sinking,
  He got sadder, day by day;

SHE SEES A VERY EXTRAORDINARY MIRROR.

And ere long he took to drinking,
  To his daughters' great dismay.
And though the ladies, both still single,
Oft said, "Dear father! do not mingle
Another glass;" he took no note,
But more "warm with" poured down his throat,
  Till the dear things of the season
    He'd small money left to buy;
  The coals of its December,
    Or pale ale of its July.

Meanwhiles, the princely Beast each day,
Did to his guest a visit pay;
And though his form was not refined,
He ever was so mild and kind,
That Beauty pitied his dejection,
The *suite* of unreturned affection;
And one day said:—

"I must confess
I keenly feel for your distress;
But rest assured that you possess
My best prayers for your happiness;
And, in return for this address,
There is a suit I wish to press,
In which, I hope, you'll acquiesce."

Replied the Beast, "Your will is law,
Although you spurn my heart and paw;
What is it you desire?"
"In one word, then, I wish to see,
Once more my home and family,
My sisters and my sire.
If you deny me this relief,
I fear that I shall die—of grief."
Then getting in her cause much warmer,
She warbled to him, *à la Norma*:—
"For the sake of these, I pray thee,
In aught else I will obey thee;
But my riches and this splendor,
For a week at home I render."

What living creature can withstand
A pretty woman bathed in tears?
The Beast, with kindness, took her hand,
And whispered, "Beauty, cease your fears;
If only for a week you'd roam,
To-morrow you shall be at home.
Your pleasure is to me more dear
Than aught else in the hemisphere;
Around—about—no tongue can tell,
Above—below—good night—all's well."

Next day, how brightly, brightly broke the morning,
When Beauty woke, at home once more;
And soon herself in trembling haste adorning,
She sought her father's second floor;
Forgetting all her past alarms,
In the dear haven of his arms;
And the remainder of the day,
In joyous welcomes passed away.

We might have mentioned, when she rose,
She found a chest of costly clothes
That by her bedside stood;
Which, when the sisters had perceived,
They nettled felt, and sorely grieved
That theirs were not as good.
And though dear Beauty, had she dared,
Would all the Beast's great wealth have shared
Between them; still they grumbled,
And said, "A pretty thing that she—
The youngest, *ugliest* of the three,
Should live in such prosperity,
While we are poor and humbled!
The monster must be deaf and blind,
Or what attractions could he find
In such a chit, to be thus kind.
A week her furlough is to last,
Let's keep her till the time has past;

And then the Beast may find pretence
To eat her for her negligence."

The time flew quickly: day by day,
Unknown to Beauty, slipped away,
And the week passed in pure delight;
When from a fearful dream one night
She woke up in a dreadful fright;
And sitting bolt upright in bed,
Cried out, "Alas! the Beast is dead,
And I have killed him! Fairy powers,
Oh, quickly bear me to the bowers
That bloom around his palace towers!"

No sooner was the wish expressed
Than Beauty sank once more to rest;
And when she woke, to her amazement,
She sat beside her boudoir casement.
But just as she reached it, a low wailing sound
Broke the stillness of night that was reigning around;
And frightened to death, with a start and a shiver,
To discover the cause—or, *vulgo* 'diskiver,'
She drew the rich curtain, and gazed on the river.

The moon was high
In the clear blue sky,

And her soft beams quivered joyfully
On the rippling waves that murmured by;
And the bending trees on the river's side,
Their branches laved in the silver tide,
Which toyed with their leaflets in eddies free,
To the soft tones of nature's minstrelsey;
As gasping and dried,
By the hot noontide,
They kissed up its moisture with feverish glee.
Here's another attempt at fine writing, I see,
To which the high critics will never agree;
I know that pure poetry's not in my range,
But anything does for the sake of a change;
And variety's pleasing, when sameness oft fails,
At least with the readers of Nursery Tales.

Where was the Beast? He did not come
To welcome his fair Beauty home;
He usually was so polite
That clearly something was not right,
And Beauty trembled with affright.
She left in haste the palace halls,
And searched the gardens o'er and o'er;
The inner paths and outer walls,
Each part in turns she did explore.
The moon her softened radiance threw
Along the centre avenue,

A fair and leafy glade ;
Where orange and syringa trees
Loaded with scent the midnight breeze
That o'er their branches played.
At last, to her dismay, she found
The poor Beast lying on the ground,
One paw within the other clasped,
In anguish, as for breath he gasped ;
And sighing forth such bitter moans
That moved the very turf and stones.
In haste, away fair Beauty hied
And reached the river's daisied side ;
Then, filling a small water-pot,
Returned toward the velvet plot,
Still quivering with fear ;
When, having drenched him through and through
With the contents, to bring him too,
She warbled in his ear :

"Monster, mavourneen ; the gray dawn is peeping,
The lark, for a lark, doth his dewy wing shake ;
I've good news a store ; betwixt waking and sleeping
No longer attend ; but arise wide awake."

Hurrah for Preissnitz ! physic pure !
Brought round by the cold-water cure,
As well as Beauty's vocal lure,

BEAUTY FINDS THE BEAST NEARLY DEAD FOR LOVE, AND AGREES TO MARRY HIM.

The Beast, five minutes back just dead,
Slowly upraised his heavy head,
And thus to trembling Beauty said:
"You might have saved me all this pain
Had you, in time, come back again.
For when I saw my wish you spurned,
And at the day had not returned,
While my poor brain with fever burned,
I had resolved to make all quiet,
And starve myself on workhouse diet.
E'en now, I do not wish to live,
If you no hope of love can give,
Cruel, too lovely *belle*."
Cried Beauty, "O'er me stealing
Something will bring back the feeling,
Spite of all your looks revealing,
That I have not used you well;
But on my promise now rely,
On *my* account you shall not die;
Awake, arise, to joy and life,
I will—I will become your wife!"

Scarcely these words had Beauty spoken,
When it appeared some spell was broken.
Music of most delicious sound,
From fairy minstrels, floated round;

The palace windows brightly gleamed,
A million lights within them beamed;
And from each casement radiance streamed,
Resembling, in an instant's time,
The last scene of a pantomime,
Made up of bright and dazzling things,
With colored fires at the wings,
Before the dull-green curtain falls,
And ladies seek their boas and shawls.
By magic fresh wonders began to unfold,
But little of any did Beauty behold;
For just at this moment the monster arose,
His bear-skin threw off like a mere suit of clothes,
And pitching away both his ears and his claws,
He cast off his grim-looking jaws and his paws,
And assumed, the next instant, the features and mien
Of the handsomest prince that had ever been seen,
Excepting Prince Albert, who, all must confess,
Is a prince of most elegant looks and address.

"The toil is past, the task is done,
Broken the spell, the prize is won.
My darling Beauty! you alone
Shall share my pleasures and my throne!
By magic arts I was condemned
To wear that form, by all contemned,

THE MYSTERY SOLVED.

Till some fair girl, discreet and wise,
With faultless form, and sparkling eyes,
And cherry lips, should sympathise
With my affliction, nor despise
To wed me in the monster's guise,
But here our nuptials solemnise."
'Tis done ; and as stage fairies say,
In every magic Christmas play,
" Unto my palace now repair,
For every blessing waits you there."
(Wish you to know when this is done,
'Tis always the last scene but one.)

As they approached, on every side
The palace portals opened wide ;
And endless rows of flambeaux bright
Bewildered Beauty with their light;
Ten thousand fairies came to meet her,
From every point fresh crowds did greet her;
And when she reached the palace hall,
What raptures did her sense enthrall
To meet her father once again,
And eke her wicked sisters twain ;
Who looked as foolish as might be,
Reflecting on their perfidy.

"Now, welcome, welcome, father, dear!
What thrilling joy to see you here.
Nay, shrink not, sisters—I forgive;
And for the future let us live
A life of happiness and peace:
Henceforward shall all discord cease.
Kiss me—again—and all the past
Forget; we'll love while life shall last."

And now a peal of fairy bells,
And joyous blasts, from goblin shells,
Struck up; while through the ebon night,
A million rockets took their flight;
Stars, wheels, and serpents, blazed around,
And crackers bounced about the ground,
Exploding with a joyous sound;
Whish-ish! whish! bang! bang!—up they go,
And break in stars—a goodly show;
It could not have been better done
At famed Vauxhall by Mr. Bunn,
Who has declared, for four years past,
It positively is—the last!

Our tale is o'er. We would narrate
The nuptials and their gorgeous state,
But that the work we named before,
Says precious little on this score.

However, these few facts are clear,
The Prince and Beauty, many a year,
Lived happily beyond compeer,
With their relations ever dear,
In rare prosperity;
And when stern winter broached his ire,
They gathered round the hall's bright fire
Their goodly family;
And watched them with parental pride,
In beauteous order, side by side,
Until the night drew nigh;

And then the youngest ones were fed
On something nice, and put to bed;
While all above fourteen sat up
With their progenitors to sup,
And gladly flew the hours along
In jocund mirth and festive song,
A ceaseless round of fun;
And thus away their years did glide,
No care or sorrow did betide,
And "all lived happy till they died."
Gentles, our tale is done.

Young ladies, attend! for your service alone
The moral borne out in this tale we make known:
If an offer you e'er have the luck to obtain
From any true-hearted, but odd-looking swain,
Whose air may not please upon hasty inspection,
Think twice, ere you give a too-rapid rejection.
Although rather plain the mere surface you find,
A thousand good points may exist in the mind.
Who bow, scrape, and caper, like puppets on strings
Who flit in society, saying soft things—
Like so many puppets, all tinsel and strings.
Remember that lovers get scarcer each day,
And ne'er throw an honest man's offer away!

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