

VARIOUS

FOUR AND
TWENTY

FAIRY TALES

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«Public Domain»

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Various Four and Twenty Fairy Tales / Selected From Those of Perrault, and other Popular Writers

PREFACE

The success attending the publication of a new translation of the Fairy Tales of the Countess d'Aulnoy has justified the publishers in believing that an equally faithful version of some of the most popular stories of her contemporaries and immediate successors, similarly annotated, might meet with as favourable a reception. I have therefore selected twenty-four of the best Fairy Tales, according to my judgment, remaining in the *Cabinet des Fées*, commencing with those of Charles Perrault, the earliest, and terminating with some of Madame Leprince de Beaumont, the latest French writer of European celebrity in that particular class of literature. Independently of the fact that, with the exception of those of Madame de Beaumont, few if any in the present volume have ever been placed in their integrity before the English reader, I trust that the chronological order I have observed in their arrangement will give them a novel interest in the eyes of those "children of a larger growth," who are not ashamed to confess, with La Fontaine —

Si "*Peau d'ane*" m'étoit conté
J'y prendrais un plaisir extrême.

Or with the great Reformer, Martin Luther —

"I would not for any quantity of gold part with the wonderful tales which I have retained from my earliest childhood or have met with in my progress through life."

The reader will by this arrangement observe, in a clearer way than probably he has yet had an opportunity of doing, the rise, progress, and decline of the genuine Fairy Tale — so thoroughly French in its origin, so specially connected with the age of that "Grand Monarque" whose reign presents us, in the graphic pages of St. Simon and Dangeau, with innumerable pictures of manners and customs, dresses and entertainments, the singularity, magnificence, profusion, and extent of which scarcely require the fancy of a d'Aulnoy to render fabulous. In my introduction to the tales of that "lively and ingenious lady," I have already shown the progress of the popularity of this class of composition; but in the present volume it will be seen how, in the course of little more than half a century, the Fairy Tale, from a fresh, sparkling, simple yet arch version of a legend as old as the monuments of that Celtic race by whom they were introduced into Gaul, became first elaborated into a novel, comprising an ingenious plot, with an amusing exaggeration of the manners of the period; next, inflated into a preposterous and purposeless caricature of its own peculiarities; and finally, denuded of its sportive fancy, its latent humour, and its gorgeous extravagance, subsided into the dull common-place moral story, which, taking less hold of the youthful imagination, was, however laudable in its intention, a very ineffective substitute for the merry monitors it vainly endeavoured to supersede. Too much like a lesson for the child, it was too childish for the man. The Fairies were dismissed in consequence of the incapacity of the writers to employ them; but they were not to be annihilated. They still live in their own land, to laugh at those mortals who will not laugh with them and learn while they laugh. Modern art may vainly invoke them to perform fresh marvels, but enough power still exists in their old spells to enchant youth, amuse manhood, and resuscitate age; and, despite the hypercritic and the purist,

they will continue to exercise their magic influence over the human mind so long as it is capable of appreciating wit, fancy, and good feeling. As Mademoiselle Lheritier wrote two hundred years ago —

Ils ne sont pas aisées à croire,
Mais tant que dans le monde on verra des enfans,
Des mères et des mères-grands
On en gardera la memoire.

CHARLES PERRAULT

BLUE BEARD

Once on a time there was a man who had fine town and country houses, gold and silver plate, embroidered furniture, and coaches gilt all over; but unfortunately, this man had a blue beard, which made him look so ugly and terrible, that there was not a woman or girl who did not run away from him. One of his neighbours, a lady of quality, had two daughters, who were perfectly beautiful. He proposed to marry one of them, leaving her to choose which of the two she would give him. Neither of them would have him; and they sent him from one to the other, not being able to make up their minds to marry a man who had a blue beard. What increased their distaste to him was, that he had had several wives already, and nobody knew what had become of them.

Blue Beard, in order to cultivate their acquaintance, took them, with their mother, three or four of their most intimate friends, and some young persons who resided in the neighbourhood, to one of his country seats, where they passed an entire week. Nothing was thought of but excursions, hunting and fishing, parties, balls, entertainments, collations; nobody went to bed; the whole night was spent in merry games and gambols. In short, all went off so well, that the youngest daughter began to find out that the beard of the master of the house was not as blue as it used to be, and that he was a very worthy man. Immediately upon their return to town the marriage took place. At the end of a month Blue Beard told his wife that he was obliged to take a journey, which would occupy six weeks at least, on a matter of great consequence; that he entreated she would amuse herself as much as she could during his absence; that she would invite her best friends, take them into the country with her if she pleased, and keep an excellent table everywhere.

"Here," said he to her, "are the keys of my two great store-rooms; these are those of the chests in which the gold and silver plate is kept, that is only used on particular occasions; these are the keys of the strong boxes in which I keep my money; these open the caskets that contain my jewels; and this is the pass-key of all the apartments. As for this little key, it is that of the closet at the end of the long gallery, on the ground floor. Open everything, and go everywhere except into that little closet, which I forbid you to enter, and I forbid you so strictly, that if you should venture to open the door, there is nothing that you may not have to dread from my anger!" She promised to observe implicitly all his directions, and after he had embraced her, he got into his coach and set out on his journey.

The neighbours and friends of the young bride did not wait for her invitation, so eager were they to see all the treasures contained in the mansion, not having ventured to enter it while the husband was at home, so terrified were they at his blue beard. Behold them immediately running through all the rooms, closets, and wardrobes, each apartment exceeding the other in beauty and richness. They ascended afterwards to the store-rooms, where they could not sufficiently admire the number and elegance of the tapestries, the beds, the sofas, the cabinets, the stands,¹ the tables, and the mirrors in which they could see themselves from head to foot, and that had frames some of glass,² some of silver, and some of gilt metal, more beautiful and magnificent than had ever been seen. They never ceased enlarging upon and envying the good fortune of their friend, who in the meanwhile was not in the least entertained by the sight of all these treasures, in consequence of her impatience to open the closet on the ground floor.

¹ Gueridons, *i. e.*, stands to place lights or china upon. The word is now used to signify any small round table with one foot; but the old-fashioned stand, which was higher than a table, and its top not bigger than a dessert plate, is occasionally to be met with.

² Looking-glasses with frames of the same material were much in vogue at that period. Of silver-framed mirrors some magnificent specimens remain to us at Knowle Park, Kent.

Her curiosity increased to such a degree that, without reflecting how rude it was to leave her company, she ran down a back staircase in such haste that twice or thrice she narrowly escaped breaking her neck. Arrived at the door of the closet, she paused for a moment, bethinking herself of her husband's prohibition, and that some misfortune might befall her for her disobedience; but the temptation was so strong that she could not conquer it. She therefore took the little key and opened, tremblingly, the door of the closet. At first she could discern nothing, the windows being closed; after a short time she began to perceive that the floor was all covered with clotted blood, in which were reflected the dead bodies of several females suspended against the walls. These were all the wives of Blue Beard, who had cut their throats one after the other. She was ready to die with fright, and the key of the closet, which she had withdrawn from the lock, fell from her hand. After recovering her senses a little, she picked up the key, locked the door again, and went up to her chamber to compose herself; but she could not succeed, so greatly was she agitated. Having observed that the key of the closet was stained with blood, she wiped it two or three times, but the blood would not come off. In vain she washed it, and even scrubbed it with sand and free-stone, the blood was still there, for the key was enchanted, and there were no means of cleaning it completely: when the blood was washed off one side, it came back on the other.

Blue Beard returned that very evening, and said that he had received letters on the road informing him that the business on which he was going had been settled to his advantage. His wife did all she could to persuade him that she was delighted at his speedy return. The next morning he asked her for his keys again; she gave them to him; but her hand trembled so, that he had not much difficulty in guessing what had occurred. "How comes it," said he, "that the key of the closet is not with the others?" "I must have left it," she replied, "upstairs on my table." "Fail not," said Blue Beard, "to give it me presently." After several excuses, she was compelled to produce the key. Blue Beard having examined it, said to his wife, "Why is there some blood on this key?" "I don't know," answered the poor wife, paler than death. "You don't know?" rejoined Blue Beard. "I know well enough. You must needs enter the closet. Well, madam, you shall enter it, and go take your place amongst the ladies you saw there." She flung herself at her husband's feet, weeping and begging his pardon, with all the signs of true repentance for having disobeyed him. Her beauty and affliction might have melted a rock, but Blue Beard had a heart harder than a rock. "You must die, madam," said he, "and immediately." "If I must die," she replied, looking at him with streaming eyes, "give me a little time to say my prayers." "I give you half a quarter of an hour," answered Blue Beard, "but not a minute more." As soon as he had left her, she called her sister, and said to her, "Sister Anne" (for so she was named), "go up, I pray thee, to the top of the tower, and see if my brothers are not coming. They have promised me that they would come to see me to-day; and if you see them, sign to them to make haste." Sister Anne mounted to the top of the tower, and the poor distressed creature called to her every now and then, "Anne! sister Anne! dost thou not see anything coming?" And sister Anne answered her, "I see nothing but the sun making dust, and the grass growing green."

In the meanwhile Blue Beard, with a great cutlass in his hand, called out with all his might to his wife, "Come down quickly, or I will come up there." "One minute more, if you please," replied his wife; and immediately repeated in a low voice, "Anne! sister Anne! dost thou not see anything coming?" And sister Anne replied, "I see nothing but the sun making dust, and the grass growing green." "Come down quickly," roared Blue Beard, "or I will come up there." "I come," answered his wife, and then exclaimed, "Anne! sister Anne! dost thou not see anything coming?" "I see," said sister Anne, "a great cloud of dust moving this way." "Is it my brothers?" "Alas! no, sister, I see a flock of sheep." "Wilt thou not come down?" shouted Blue Beard. "One minute more," replied his wife, and then she cried, "Anne! sister Anne! dost thou not see anything coming?" "I see," she replied, "two horsemen coming this way; but they are still at a great distance." "Heaven be praised!" she exclaimed, a moment afterwards. "They are my brothers! I am making all the signs I can to hasten them." Blue

Beard began to roar so loudly that the whole house shook again. The poor wife descended, and went and threw herself, with streaming eyes and dishevelled tresses, at his feet.

"It is of no use," said Blue Beard. "You must die!" Then seizing her by the hair with one hand, and raising his cutlass with the other, he was about to cut off her head. The poor wife turned towards him, and fixing upon him her dying eyes, implored him to allow her one short moment to collect herself. "No, no," said he; "recommend thyself heartily to Heaven." And lifting his arm – At this moment there was so loud a knocking at the gate, that Blue Beard stopped short. It was opened, and two horsemen were immediately seen to enter, who, drawing their swords, ran straight at Blue Beard. He recognised them as the brothers of his wife – one a dragoon, the other a musqueteer, and, consequently, fled immediately, in hope to escape; but they pursued him so closely, that they overtook him before he could reach the step of his door, and, passing their swords through his body, left him dead on the spot. The poor wife was almost as dead as her husband, and had not strength to rise and embrace her brothers. It was found that Blue Beard had no heirs, and so his widow remained possessed of all his property. She employed part of it in marrying her sister Anne to a young gentleman who had long loved her; another part, in buying captains' commissions for her two brothers, and with the rest she married herself to a very worthy man, who made her forget the miserable time she had passed with Blue Beard.

Provided one has common sense,
And of the world but knows the ways,
This story bears the evidence
Of being one of bygone days.
No husband now is so terrific,
Impossibilities, expecting:
Though jealous, he is still pacific,
Indifference to his wife affecting.
And of his beard, whate'er the hue,
His spouse need fear no such disaster.
Indeed, 'twould often puzzle you
To say which of the twain is master.

THE SLEEPING BEAUTY IN THE WOOD

Once upon a time there was a King and a Queen, who were so vexed at not having any children – so vexed, that one cannot express it. They visited all the baths in the world. Vows, pilgrimages, everything was tried, and nothing succeeded. At length, however, the Queen was brought to bed of a daughter. There was a splendid christening. For godmothers they gave the young Princess all the Fairies they could find in the country (they found seven), in order that each making her a gift, according to the custom of Fairies in those days, the Princess would, by these means, become possessed of all imaginable perfections. After the baptismal ceremonies all the company returned to the King's palace, where a great banquet was set out for the Fairies. Covers were laid for each, consisting of a magnificent plate, with a massive gold case, containing a spoon, a fork, and a knife of fine gold, enriched with diamonds and rubies. But as they were all taking their places at the table, there was seen to enter an old Fairy, who had not been invited, because for upwards of fifty years she had never quitted the tower she resided in, and it was supposed she was either dead or enchanted.

The King ordered a cover to be laid for her; but there was no possibility of giving her a massive gold case such as the others had, because there had been only seven made expressly for the seven Fairies. The old lady thought she was treated with contempt, and muttered some threats between her teeth. One of the young Fairies, who chanced to be near her, overheard her, and imagining she might cast some misfortune on the little Princess, went, as soon as they rose from table, and hid herself behind the hangings, in order to have the last word, and be able to repair, as fast as possible, any mischief the old woman might do. In the meanwhile, the Fairies began to endow the Princess. The youngest, as her gift, decreed that she should be the most beautiful person in the world; the next Fairy, that she should have the mind of an angel; the third, that she should evince the most admirable grace in all she did; the fourth, that she should dance to perfection; the fifth, that she should sing like a nightingale; and the sixth, that she should play on every instrument in the most exquisite manner possible. The turn of the old Fairy having arrived, she declared, while her head shook more with malice than with age, that the Princess should pierce her hand with a spindle, and die of the wound. This terrible fate made all the company tremble, and there was not one of them who could refrain from tears. At this moment the young Fairy issued from behind the tapestry, and uttered aloud these words: "Comfort yourselves, King and Queen – your daughter shall not die of it. It is true that I have not sufficient power to undo entirely what my elder has done. The Princess will pierce her hand with a spindle; but, instead of dying, she will only fall into a deep slumber, which will last one hundred years, at the end of which a King's son will come to wake her."

The King, in hope of avoiding the misfortune predicted by the old Fairy, immediately caused an edict to be published, by which he forbade any one to spin with a spindle, or to have spindles in their possession, under pain of death.

At the end of fifteen or sixteen years, the King and Queen, being absent at one of their country residences, it happened that the Princess, while running one day about the castle, and from one chamber up to another, arrived at the top of a tower, and entered a little garret, where an honest old woman was sitting by herself, spinning with her distaff and spindle. This good woman had never heard of the King's prohibition with respect to spinning with a spindle. "What are you doing there?" asked the Princess. "I am spinning, my fair child," answered the old woman, who did not know her. "Oh, how pretty it is!" rejoined the Princess. "How do you do it? Give it to me, that I may see if I can do it as well." She had no sooner taken hold of the spindle, than, being very hasty, a little thoughtless, and, moreover, the sentence of the Fairies so ordaining it, she pierced her hand with the point of it, and fainted away. The good old woman, greatly embarrassed, called for help. People came from all quarters; they threw water in the Princess's face; they unlaced her stays; they slapped her hands; they

rubbed her temples with Queen of Hungary's water,³ but nothing could bring her to. The King, who had run upstairs at the noise, then remembered the prediction of the Fairies, and, wisely concluding that this must have occurred as the Fairies said it would, had the Princess conveyed into the finest apartment in the palace, and placed on a bed of gold and silver embroidery. One would have said she was an angel, so lovely did she appear – for her swoon had not deprived her of her rich complexion: her cheeks preserved their crimson, and her lips were like coral. Her eyes were closed, but they could hear her breathe softly, which showed that she was not dead. The King commanded them to let her repose in peace until the hour arrived for her waking. The good Fairy who had saved her life, by decreeing that she should sleep for an hundred years, was in the Kingdom of Mataquin, twelve thousand leagues off, when the Princess met with her accident; but she was informed of it instantly by a little dwarf, who had a pair of seven-league boots (that is, boots which enabled the wearer to take seven leagues at a stride⁴). The Fairy set out immediately and an hour afterwards they saw her arrive in a fiery chariot, drawn by dragons. The King advanced, to hand her out of the chariot. She approved of all he had done; but, as she had great foresight, she considered that, when the Princess awoke, she would feel considerably embarrassed at finding herself all alone in that old castle; so this is what the Fairy did. She touched with her wand everybody that was in the castle (except the King and Queen): governesses, maids of honour, women of the bed-chamber, gentlemen, officers, stewards, cooks, scullions, boys, guards, porters, pages, footmen; she touched also the horses that were in the stables, with their grooms, the great mastiffs in the court-yard, and little Pouste, the tiny dog of the Princess, that was on the bed, beside her. As soon as she had touched them, they all fell asleep, not to wake again until the time arrived for their mistress to do so, in order that they might be all ready to attend upon her when she should want them. Even the spits that had been put down to the fire, laden with partridges and pheasants, went to sleep, and the fire itself also.

All this was done in a moment; the fairies never lost much time over their work. After which, the King and Queen, having kissed their dear daughter without waking her, quitted the Castle, and issued a proclamation forbidding any person, whosoever, to approach it. These orders were unnecessary, for in a quarter of an hour there grew up around the Park so great a quantity of trees, large and small, of brambles and thorns, interlacing each other, that neither man nor beast could get through them, so that nothing more was to be seen than the tops of the Castle turrets, and they only at a considerable distance. Nobody doubted but that was also some of the Fairy's handiwork, in order that the Princess might have nothing to fear from the curiosity of strangers during her slumber.

At the expiration of an hundred years, the son of the King at that time upon the throne, and who was of a different family to that of the sleeping Princess, having been hunting in that neighbourhood, inquired what towers they were that he saw above the trees of a very thick wood. Each person answered him according to the story he had heard. Some said that it was an old castle, haunted by ghosts. Others, that all the witches of those parts held their Sabbath in it. The more general opinion was, that it was the abode of an ogre; and that he carried thither all the children he could catch, in order to eat them at his leisure, and without being pursued, having alone the power of making his way through the wood. The Prince did not know what to believe about it, when an old peasant spoke in his turn, and said to him, "Prince, it is more than fifty years ago since I heard my father say that there was in that Castle the most beautiful Princess that was ever seen. That she was to sleep for a hundred years, and would be awakened by a King's son for whom she was reserved." The young Prince, at these words, felt himself all on fire. He believed, without hesitation, that he was destined to accomplish this famous adventure; and, impelled by love and glory, resolved to see what would come of it, upon the spot. Scarcely had he approached the wood, when all those great trees, all those brambles and

³ A celebrated distillation of spirit of wine upon rosemary, so-called from the receipt, purporting to have been written by a Queen Elizabeth of Hungary, and first published at Frankfort in 1659.

⁴ From the explanation contained in this parenthesis, it is probable that we have here the earliest mention of these celebrated articles in a French story; *Jack the Giant-killer* and *Jack and the Bean-stalk* being of English origin.

thorns made way for him to pass of their own accord. He walked towards the Castle, which he saw at the end of a long avenue he had entered, and what rather surprised him was, that he found none of his people had been able to follow him, the trees having closed up again as soon as he had passed. He continued, nevertheless, to advance; a young and amorous prince is always courageous. He entered a large fore-court, where everything he saw was calculated to freeze his blood with terror. A frightful silence reigned around. Death seemed everywhere present. Nothing was to be seen but the bodies of men and animals stretched out apparently lifeless. He soon discovered, however, by the shining noses and red faces of the porters, that they were only asleep; and their goblets, in which still remained a few drops of wine, sufficiently proved that they had dosed off whilst drinking. He passed through a large court-yard paved with marble; he ascended the staircase. He entered the guard-room, where the guards stood drawn up in line, their carbines shouldered, and snoring their loudest. He traversed several apartments, with ladies and gentlemen all asleep; some standing, others seated. He entered a chamber covered with gold, and saw on a bed, the curtains of which were open on each side, the most lovely sight he had ever looked upon – a Princess, who seemed to be about fifteen or sixteen, the lustre of whose charms gave her an appearance that was luminous and supernatural. He approached, trembling and admiring, and knelt down beside her. At that moment, the enchantment being ended, the Princess awoke, and gazing upon the Prince with more tenderness than a first sight of him seemed to authorize, "Is it you, Prince?" said she; "you have been long awaited." The Prince, delighted at these words, and still more by the tone in which they were uttered, knew not how to express to her his joy and gratitude.

He assured her he loved her better than himself. His language was not very coherent, but it pleased the more. There was little eloquence, but a great deal of love. He was much more embarrassed than she was, and one ought not to be astonished at that. The Princess had had time enough to consider what she should say to him, for there is reason to believe (though history makes no mention of it) that, during her long nap, the good Fairy had procured her the pleasure of very agreeable dreams. In short, they talked for four hours without having said half what they had to say to each other.

In the meanwhile, all the Palace had been roused at the same time as the Princess. Everybody remembered their duty, and, as they were not all in love, they were dying with hunger. The lady-in-waiting, as hungry as any of them, became impatient, and announced loudly to the Princess that the meat was on the table. The Prince assisted the Princess to rise; she was full dressed, and most magnificently, but he took good care not to hint to her that she was attired like his grandmother, and wore a stand-up collar.⁵ She looked, however, not a morsel the less lovely in it. They passed into a hall of mirrors, in which they supped, attended by the officers of the Princess. The violins and hautbois played old but excellent pieces of music, notwithstanding it was a hundred years since they had been performed by anybody; and after supper, to lose no time, the grand Almoner married the royal lovers in the chapel of the Castle.

Early next morning the Prince returned to the city, where his father was in great anxiety about him. The Prince told him that he had lost himself in the forest whilst hunting, and that he had slept in a woodcutter's hut, who had given him some black bread and cheese for his supper. The King, his father, who was a simple man, believed him, but his mother was not so easily satisfied; and observing that he went hunting nearly every day, and had always some story ready as an excuse, when he had slept two or three nights away from home, she no longer doubted but that he had some mistress, for he lived with the Princess for upwards of two years, and had two children by her; the first, which was a girl, was named Aurora, and the second, a son, was called Day, because he was still more beautiful than his sister.

⁵ *Collet-monté*. The contemporary of the ruff. In the reign of Louis the Fourteenth it was succeeded by the *collet-rabattu*, and totally discarded before his decease.

The Queen often said to her son, in order to draw from him some avowal, that he ought to form some attachment; but he never ventured to trust her with his secret. He feared her, although he loved her, for she was of the race of Ogres, and the King had married her only on account of her great wealth. It was even whispered about the Court that she had the inclinations of an Ogress, and that when she saw little children passing, she had the greatest difficulty in restraining herself from pouncing upon them. The Prince, therefore, would never say one word about his adventure. On the death of the King, however, which happened two years afterwards, the Prince being his own master, he made a public declaration of his marriage, and went in great state to bring the Queen, his wife, to the palace. She made a magnificent entry into the capital with her two children, one on each side of her. Some time afterwards, the King went to war with his neighbour, the Emperor Cantalabute. He left the regency of the kingdom to the Queen, his mother, earnestly recommending to her care his wife and his children. He was likely to be all the summer in the field, and as soon as he was gone, the Queen-mother sent her daughter-in-law and the children to a country house in the wood, that she might more easily gratify her horrible longing. She followed them thither a few days after, and said one evening to her Maître d'Hôtel, "I will eat little Aurora for dinner to-morrow." "Ah, Madam!" exclaimed the Maître d'Hôtel. "I will," said the Queen (and she said it in the tone of an Ogress longing to eat fresh meat), "and I will have her served up with *sauce Robert*."⁶ The poor man seeing plainly an Ogress was not to be trifled with, took his great knife and went up to little Aurora's room. She was then about four years old, and came jumping and laughing to throw her arms about his neck, and ask him for sweetmeats. He burst into tears, the knife fell from his hands, and he went down again into the kitchen court and killed a little lamb, and served it up with so delicious a sauce, that his mistress assured him she had never eaten anything so excellent. In the meanwhile, he had carried off little Aurora, and given her to his wife, to conceal her in the lodging which she occupied at the further end of the kitchen court.

A week afterwards, the wicked Queen said to her Maître d'Hôtel, "I will eat little Day for supper." He made no reply, being determined to deceive her as before. He went in search of little Day, and found him with a tiny foil in his hand, fencing with a great monkey, though he was only three years old. He carried him to his wife, who hid him where she had hidden his sister, and then cooked a very tender little kid in the place of little Day, and which the Ogress thought wonderfully good. All went well enough so far, but one evening this wicked Queen said to the Maître d'Hôtel, "I would eat the Queen with the same sauce that I had with her children." Then, indeed, did the poor Maître d'Hôtel despair of being again able to deceive her. The young Queen was turned of twenty, without counting the hundred years she had slept; her skin was a little tough, though it was white and beautiful, and where was he to find in the menagerie an animal that would pass for her.

He resolved that, to save his own life, he would cut the Queen's throat, and went up to her apartment with the determination to execute his purpose at once. He worked himself up into a passion, and entered the young Queen's chamber poniard in hand. He would not, however, take her by surprise, but repeated, very respectfully, the order he had received from the Queen-mother. "Do it! do it!" said she, stretching out her neck to him. "Obey the order that has been given to you. I shall again behold my children, my poor children, that I loved so dearly." She had imagined them to be dead ever since they had been carried off without explanation. "No, no, Madam!" replied the poor Maître d'Hôtel, touched to the quick, "you shall not die, and you shall see your children again, but it shall be in my own house, where I have hidden them; and I will again deceive the Queen-mother by serving up to her a young hind in your stead." He led her forthwith to his own apartments, where leaving her to embrace her children and weep with them, he went and cooked a hind, of which the Queen ate at her supper, with as much appetite as if it had been the young Queen. She exulted in her cruelty,

⁶ A sauce piquante, as ancient as the fifteenth century, being one of the seventeen sauces named by Taillevent, chief cook to Charles VII. of France, in 1456.

and intended to tell the King, on his return, that some ferocious wolves had devoured the Queen his wife, and her two children.

One evening that she was prowling, as usual, round the courts and poultry yards of the Castle, to inhale the smell of raw flesh, she overheard little Day crying in a lower room, because the Queen, his mother, was about to whip him for having been naughty, and she also heard little Aurora begging forgiveness for her brother. The Ogress recognised the voices of the Queen and her children, and, furious at having been cheated, she gave orders, in a tone that made everybody tremble, that the next morning early there should be brought into the middle of the court a large copper, which she had filled with toads, vipers, adders, and serpents, in order to fling into it the Queen, her children, the Maître d'Hôtel, his wife, and his maid servant. She had commanded that they should be brought thither with hands tied behind them. There they stood, and the executioners were preparing to fling them into the copper, when the King, who was not expected so early, entered the court-yard on horseback. He had ridden post, and in great astonishment inquired what was the meaning of that horrible spectacle? Nobody dared to tell him, when the Ogress, enraged at the sight of the King's return, flung herself head foremost into the copper, and was devoured in an instant by the horrid reptiles she had caused it to be filled with. The King could not help being sorry for it; she was his mother, but he speedily consoled himself in the society of his beautiful wife and children.

Some time for a husband to wait
Who is young, handsome, wealthy, and tender,
May not be a hardship too great
For a maid whom love happy would render.
But to be for a century bound
To live single, I fancy the number
Of Beauties but small would be found
So long who could patiently slumber.
To lovers who hate time to waste,
And minutes as centuries measure,
I would hint, Those who marry in haste
May live to repent it at leisure.
Yet so ardently onwards they press,
And on prudence so gallantly trample,
That I haven't the heart, I confess,
To urge on them Beauty's example.

MASTER CAT; OR, PUSS IN BOOTS

A Miller bequeathed to his three sons all his worldly goods, which consisted only of his mill, his ass, and his cat. The division was speedily made. Neither notary nor attorney were called in; they would soon have eaten up all the little patrimony. The eldest had the mill; the second son, the ass; and the youngest had nothing but the cat. The latter was disconsolate at inheriting so poor a portion. "My brothers," said he, "may earn an honest livelihood by entering into partnership; but, as for me, when I have eaten my Cat, and made a muff of his skin, I must die of hunger." The Cat, who had heard this speech, but without appearing to do so, said to him, with a sedate and serious air, "Do not afflict yourself, master; you have only to give me a bag and get a pair of boots made for me, to go amongst the bushes in, and you will see that you are not so badly left as you believe." Though the Cat's master did not place much confidence in this assertion, he had seen him play such cunning tricks in catching rats and mice, when he would hang himself up by the heels, or lie in the flour as if he were dead, that he was not altogether hopeless of being assisted by him in his distress.

As soon as the Cat had what he asked for, he pulled on his boots boldly, and hanging the bag round his neck, he took the strings of it in his fore paws, and went into a warren where there were a great number of rabbits. He put some bran and some sow-thistles in his bag, and stretching himself out as if he were dead, he waited till some young rabbit, little versed in the wiles of the world, should come and ensconce himself in the bag, in order to eat what he had put into it. He had hardly laid down before he was gratified. A young scatterbrain of a rabbit entered the bag, and Master Cat instantly pulling the strings, caught it and killed it without mercy. Proud of his prey, he went to the King's Palace, and demanded an audience. He was ushered up to his Majesty's apartment, into which having entered, he made a low bow to the King, and said to him, "Sire, here is a wild rabbit, which my Lord the Marquis de Carabas (such was the name he took a fancy to give to his master) has ordered me to present, with his duty, to your Majesty." "Tell your master," replied the King, "that I thank him, and that he has given me great pleasure." Another day he went and hid himself in the wheat, holding the mouth of his bag open, as usual, and as soon as a brace of partridges entered it, he pulled the strings, and took them both. He went immediately and presented them to the King, in the same way that he had the wild rabbit. The King received with equal gratification the brace of partridges, and gave him something to drink his health. The Cat continued in this manner during two or three months to carry to the King, every now and then, presents of game from his master. One day when he knew the King was going to drive on the banks of the river, with his daughter, the most beautiful Princess in the world, he said to his master, "If you will follow my advice, your fortune is made; you have only to go and bathe in a part of the river I will point out to you, and leave the rest to me." The Marquis de Carabas did as his cat advised him, without knowing what good would come of it. While he was bathing, the King passed by, and the Cat began to shout with all his might, "Help! help! My Lord the Marquis de Carabas is drowning!" At this cry, the King looked out of the coach window, and recognising the cat who had so often brought game to him, ordered his guards to fly to the help of my Lord the Marquis de Carabas. Whilst they were getting the poor Marquis out of the river, the Cat approaching the royal coach, told the King that during the time his master was bathing, some robbers had come and carried off his clothes, although he had called "Thieves!" as loud as he could. The rogue had hidden them himself under a great stone. The King immediately ordered the officers of his wardrobe to go and fetch one of his handsomest suits for my Lord the Marquis de Carabas. The King embraced him a thousand times, and as the fine clothes they dressed him in set off his good looks (for he was handsome and well made), the King's daughter found him much to her taste;

and the Marquis de Carabas had no sooner cast upon her two or three respectful and rather tender glances, than she fell desperately in love with him. The King insisted upon his getting into the coach, and accompanying them in their drive. The Cat, enchanted to see that his scheme began to succeed, ran on before, and having met with some peasants who were mowing a meadow, said to them, "You, good people, who are mowing here, if you do not tell the King that the meadow you are mowing belongs to my Lord the Marquis de Carabas, you shall be all cut into pieces as small as minced meat!" The King failed not to ask the mowers whose meadow it was they were mowing? "It belongs to my Lord the Marquis de Carabas," said they altogether, for the Cat's threat had frightened them. "You perceive, Sire," rejoined the Marquis, "it is a meadow which yields an abundant crop every year." Master Cat, who kept in advance of the party, came up to some reapers, and said to them, "You, good people, who are reaping, if you do not say that all this corn belongs to my Lord the Marquis de Carabas, you shall be all cut into pieces as small as minced meat!" The King, who passed by a minute afterwards, wished to know to whom all those cornfields belonged that he saw there. "To my Lord the Marquis de Carabas," repeated the reapers, and the King again wished the Marquis joy of his property. The Cat, who ran before the coach, uttered the same threat to all he met with, and the King was astonished at the great wealth of my Lord the Marquis de Carabas. Master Cat at length arrived at a fine Château, the owner of which was an Ogre, the richest that was ever known, for all the lands through which the King had driven were held of the Lord of this Château. The Cat took care to inquire who the Ogre was, and what he was able to do; and then requested to speak with him, saying that he would not pass so near his Château without doing himself the honour of paying his respects to him. The Ogre received him as civilly as an Ogre could, and made him sit down. "They assure me," said the Cat, "that you possess the power of changing yourself into all sorts of animals; that you could, for instance, transform yourself into a lion, or an elephant." "'Tis true," said the Ogre, brusquely, "and to prove it to you, you shall see me become a lion." The Cat was so frightened at seeing a lion before him, that he immediately scampered up into the gutter, not without trouble and danger, on account of his boots, which were not fit to walk on the tiles with. A short time afterwards, the Cat having perceived that the Ogre had resumed his previous form, descended, and admitted that he had been terribly frightened. "They assure me, besides," said the Cat, "but I cannot believe it, that you have also the power to assume the form of the smallest animal; for instance, to change yourself into a rat or a mouse. I confess to you I hold that to be utterly impossible." "Impossible!" replied the Ogre; "you shall see!" and immediately changed himself into a mouse, which began to run about the floor. The Cat no sooner caught sight of it than he pounced upon and devoured it. In the meanwhile, the King, who saw from the road the fine Château of the Ogre, desired to enter it. The Cat, who heard the noise of the coach rolling over the drawbridge, ran to meet it, and said to the King, "Your Majesty is welcome to the Château of my Lord the Marquis de Carabas." "How, my Lord Marquis," exclaimed the King, "this Château also belongs to you? Nothing can be finer than this court-yard, and all these buildings that surround it. Let us see the inside of it, if you please." The Marquis handed out the young Princess, and following the King, who led the way upstairs, entered a grand hall, where they found a magnificent collation, which the Ogre had ordered to be prepared for some friends who were to have visited him that very day, but who did not presume to enter when they found the King was there. The King, as much enchanted by the accomplishments of my Lord the Marquis de Carabas as his daughter, who doted upon him, and seeing the great wealth he possessed, said to him, after having drunk five or six bumpers, "It depends entirely on yourself, my Lord Marquis, whether or not you become my son-in-law." The Marquis, making several profound bows, accepted the honour the King offered him; and on the same day was united to the Princess. The Cat became a great lord, and never again ran after mice, except for his amusement.

Be the advantage ne'er so great
Of owning a superb estate,

From sire to son descended.
Young men oft find, on industry,
Combined with ingenuity,
They'd better have depended.

Also

If the son of a Miller so quickly could gain
The heart of a Princess, it seems pretty plain,
With good looks and good manners, and some aid from dress,
The humblest need not quite despair of success.

CINDERELLA; OR, THE LITTLE GLASS SLIPPER

Once on a time there was a gentleman who took for a second wife the haughtiest and proudest woman that had ever been seen. She had two daughters of the same temper, and who resembled her in everything. The husband, on his side, had a daughter, but whose gentleness and goodness were without parallel. She inherited them from her mother, who was the best creature in the world. The wedding was hardly over before the stepmother's ill-humour broke out. She could not abide the young girl, whose good qualities made her own daughters appear more detestable. She employed her in all the meanest work of the house. It was she who cleaned the plate, and the stairs, who scrubbed Madame's chamber, and those of Mesdemoiselles, her daughters. She slept at the top of the house, in a loft, on a wretched straw mattress, while her sisters occupied rooms, beautifully floored, in which were the most fashionable beds, and mirrors wherein they could see themselves from head to foot. The poor girl bore everything with patience, and did not dare complain to her father, who would only have scolded her, as his wife governed him entirely. When she had done her work, she went and placed herself in the chimney-corner, and sat down amongst the cinders, which caused her to be called by the household in general Cindertail. The second daughter, however, who was not so rude as her elder sister, called her Cinderella. Notwithstanding, Cinderella, in her shabby clothes, looked a thousand times handsomer than her sisters, however magnificently attired.

It happened that the King's son gave a ball, and invited to it all persons of quality. Our two young ladies were included in the invitation, for they cut a great figure in the neighbourhood. Behold them in great delight, and very busy choosing the most becoming gowns and head-dresses. A new mortification for Cinderella, for it was she who ironed her sisters' linen, and set their ruffles. Nothing was talked of but the style in which they were to be dressed. "I," said the eldest, "will wear my red velvet dress and my English point-lace trimmings." "I," said the youngest, "shall only wear my usual petticoat; but to make up for that, I shall put on my gold-flowered mantua, and my necklace of diamonds, which are none of the poorest." They sent for a good milliner to make up their double-frilled caps, and bought their patches of the best maker. They called Cinderella to give them her opinion, for she had excellent taste. Cinderella gave them the best advice in the world, and even offered to dress their heads for them, which they were very willing she should do; and whilst she was about it, they said to her, "Cinderella, shouldst thou like to go to the ball?" "Alas! Mesdemoiselles, you make game of me; that would not befit me at all." "Thou art right, they would laugh immensely to see a Cindertail at a ball!" Any other but Cinderella would have dressed their heads awry, but she was good natured, and dressed them to perfection. They could eat nothing for nearly two days, so transported were they with joy. More than a dozen laces were broken in making their waists as small as possible, and they were always before their looking-glasses. At last the happy day arrived. They set off, and Cinderella followed them with her eyes as long as she could. When they were out of sight, she began to cry. Her godmother, who saw her all in tears, inquired what ailed her. "I should so like – I should so like –" she sobbed so much that she could not finish the sentence. "Thou wouldst so like to go to the ball – Is not that it?" "Alas! yes," said Cinderella, sighing. "Well, if thou wilt be a good girl, I will take care thou shalt go." She led her into her chamber, and said to her, "Go into the garden and bring me a pumpkin." Cinderella went immediately, gathered the finest she could find, and brought it to her godmother, unable to guess how the pumpkin could enable her to go to the ball. Her godmother scooped it out; and, having left nothing but the rind, struck it with her wand, and the pumpkin was immediately changed into a beautiful coach gilt all over. She then went and looked into the mouse-trap, where she found six mice, all alive. She told Cinderella to lift the door of the

mouse-trap a little, and to each mouse, as it ran out, she gave a tap with her wand, and the mouse was immediately changed into a fine horse, thereby producing a handsome team of six horses, of a beautiful dappled mouse-grey colour. As she was in some difficulty as to what she should make a coachman of, Cinderella said, "I will go and see if there be not a rat in the rat-trap; we will make a coachman of him." "Thou art right," said her godmother. "Go and see." Cinderella brought her the rat-trap, in which there were three great rats. The Fairy selected one from the three, on account of its ample beard, and having touched it, it was changed into a fat coachman, who had the finest moustaches that ever were seen. She then said, "Go into the garden, thou wilt find there, behind the watering-pot, six lizards, bring them to me." She had no sooner brought them than the godmother transformed them into six footmen, who immediately jumped up behind the coach, with their liveries all covered with lace, and hung on to it as if they had done nothing else all their lives. The Fairy then said to Cinderella, "Well, there is something to go to the ball in. Art thou not well pleased?" "Yes; but am I to go in these dirty clothes?" Her godmother only touched her with her wand, and in the same instant her dress was changed to cloth of gold and silver, covered with jewels. She then gave her a pair of glass slippers, the prettiest in the world. When she was thus attired, she got into the coach; but her godmother advised her, above all things, not to stay out past midnight – warning her, that if she remained at the ball one minute longer, her coach would again become a pumpkin; her horses, mice; her footmen, lizards; and her clothes resume their old appearance. She promised her godmother she would not fail to leave the ball before midnight, and departed, out of her senses with joy.

The King's son, who was informed that a grand Princess had arrived whom nobody knew, ran to receive her. He handed her out of the coach and led her into the hall, where the company was assembled. There was immediately a dead silence; they stopped dancing, and the fiddlers ceased to play, so engrossed was every one in the contemplation of the great attractions of the unknown lady. Nothing was heard but a low murmur of "Oh! how lovely she is!" The King himself, old as he was, could not take his eyes from her, and observed to the Queen, that it was a long time since he had seen so beautiful and so amiable a person. All the ladies were intently occupied in examining her head-dress and her clothes, that they might have some like them the very next day, provided they could find materials as beautiful, and workpeople sufficiently clever to make them up.

The King's son conducted her to the most honourable seat, and then led her out to dance. She danced with so much grace that their admiration of her was increased. A very grand supper was served, of which the Prince ate not a morsel, so absorbed was he in contemplation of her. She seated herself beside her sisters, and showed them a thousand civilities. She shared with them the oranges and citrons which the Prince had given to her; at which they were much surprised, for she appeared a perfect stranger to them. Whilst they were in conversation together, Cinderella heard the clock strike three-quarters past eleven. She immediately made a profound curtsy to the company, and departed as quickly as she could. As soon as she had reached home, she went to find her godmother; and after having thanked her, said she much wished to go to the ball again the next day, because the King's son had invited her. While she was occupied in telling her godmother all that had passed at the ball, the two sisters knocked at the door. Cinderella went and opened it – "How late you are!" said she to them, yawning, rubbing her eyes, and stretching herself as if she had but just awoke. She had not, however, been inclined to sleep since she had left them. "Hadst thou been at the ball," said one of her sisters to her, "thou wouldst not have been weary of it. There came to it the most beautiful Princess – the most beautiful that ever was seen. She paid us a thousand attentions. She gave us oranges and citrons." Cinderella was beside herself with delight. She asked them the name of the Princess; but they replied that nobody knew her; that the King's son was much puzzled about it, and that he would give everything in the world to know who she was. Cinderella smiled and said, "She was very handsome, then? Heavens! how fortunate you are! – Could not I get a sight of her? Alas! Mademoiselle Javotte, lend me the yellow gown you wear every day?" "Truly," said Mademoiselle Javotte, "I like that! Lend one's gown to a dirty Cindertail like you! – I must be very mad indeed!" Cinderella fully expected

this refusal, and was delighted at it, for she would have been greatly embarrassed if her sister had lent her her gown.

The next day the two sisters went to the ball, and Cinderella also, but still more splendidly dressed than before. The King's son never left her side, or ceased saying tender things to her. The young lady was much amused, and forgot what her godmother had advised her, so that she heard the clock begin to strike twelve when she did not even think it was eleven. She rose and fled as lightly as a fawn. The Prince followed her, but could not overtake her. She dropped one of her glass slippers, which the Prince carefully picked up. Cinderella reached home almost breathless, without coach or footmen, and in her shabby clothes, nothing having remained of all her finery, except one of her little slippers, the fellow of that she had let fall. The guards at the palace gate were asked if they had not seen a Princess go out; they answered that they had seen no one pass but a poorly-dressed girl, who had more the air of a peasant than of a lady. When the two sisters returned from the ball, Cinderella asked them if they had been as much entertained as before, and if the beautiful lady had been present. They said yes, but that she had fled as soon as it had struck twelve, and so precipitately that she had let fall one of her little glass slippers, the prettiest in the world; that the King's son had picked it up; that he had done nothing but gaze upon it during the remainder of the evening; and that, undoubtedly, he was very much in love with the beautiful person to whom the little slipper belonged. They spoke the truth; for a few days afterwards the King's son caused it to be proclaimed by sound of trumpet that he would marry her whose foot would exactly match with the slipper. They began by trying it on the Princesses, then on the Duchesses, and so on throughout all the Court; but in vain. It was taken to the two sisters, who did their utmost to force one of their feet into the slipper, but they could not manage to do so. Cinderella, who witnessed their efforts and recognised the slipper, said, laughingly, "Let me see if it will not fit me." Her sisters began to laugh and ridicule her. The gentleman who had been entrusted to try the slipper, having attentively looked at Cinderella and found her to be very handsome, said that it was a very proper request, and that he had been ordered to try the slipper on all girls without exception. He made Cinderella sit down, and putting the slipper to her little foot, he saw it go on easily and fit like wax. Great was the astonishment of the two sisters, but it was still greater when Cinderella took the other little slipper out of her pocket and put it on her other foot. At that moment the godmother arrived, who having given a tap with her wand to Cinderella's clothes, they became still more magnificent than all the others she had appeared in. The two sisters then recognised in her the beautiful person they had seen at the ball. They threw themselves at her feet to crave her forgiveness for all the ill-treatment she had suffered from them. Cinderella raised and embracing them, said that she forgave them with all her heart, and begged them to love her dearly for the future. They conducted her to the young Prince, dressed just as she was. He found her handsomer than ever, and a few days afterwards he married her. Cinderella, who was as kind as she was beautiful, gave her sisters apartments in the palace, and married them the very same day to two great lords of the court.

Beauty in woman is a treasure rare
Which we are never weary of admiring;
But a sweet temper is a gift more fair
And better worth the youthful maid's desiring.
That was the boon bestowed on Cinderella
By her wise Godmother – her truest glory.
The rest was "nought but leather and prunella."
Such is the moral of this little story —
Beauties, that charm becomes you more than dress,
And wins a heart with far greater facility.
In short, in all things to ensure success,
The real Fairy gift is Amiability!

Also

Talent, courage, wit, and worth
Are rare gifts to own on earth.
But if you want to thrive at court —
So, at least, the wise report —
You will find you need some others,
Such as god-fathers or mothers.

RIQUET WITH THE TUFT

Once upon a time there was a Queen, who was brought to bed of a son so ugly and so ill-shaped that it was for a long time doubtful if he possessed a human form. A Fairy, who was present at his birth, affirmed that he would not fail to be amiable, as he would have much good-sense. She added, even, that he would be able, in consequence of the gift she had endowed him with, to impart equal intelligence to the person he should love best. All this consoled the poor Queen a little, who was much distressed at having brought into the world so hideous a little monkey. It is true that the child was no sooner able to speak than he said a thousand pretty things, and that there was in all his actions an indescribable air of intelligence which charmed one. I had forgotten to say that he was born with a little tuft of hair on his head, which occasioned him to be named Riquet with the Tuft; for Riquet was the family name.

At the end of seven or eight years, the Queen of a neighbouring kingdom was brought to bed of two daughters. The first that came into the world was fairer than day. The Queen was so delighted, that it was feared her great joy would prove hurtful to her. The same Fairy who had assisted at the birth of little Riquet with the Tuft was present upon this occasion, and to moderate the joy of the Queen, she declared to her that this little Princess would have no mental capacity, and that she would be as stupid as she was beautiful. This mortified the Queen exceedingly; but a few minutes afterwards she experienced a very much greater annoyance, for the second girl she gave birth to, proved to be extremely ugly. "Do not distress yourself so much, Madam," said the Fairy to her. "Your daughter will find compensation; she will have so much sense that her lack of beauty will scarcely be perceived." "Heaven send it may be so," replied the Queen; "but are there no means of giving a little sense to the eldest, who is so lovely?" "I can do nothing for her, Madam, in the way of wit," said the Fairy, "but everything in that of beauty; and as there is nothing in my power that I would not do to gratify you, I will endow her with the ability to render beautiful the person who shall please her."

As these two Princesses grew up, their endowments increased in the same proportion, and nothing was talked of anywhere but the beauty of the eldest and the intelligence of the youngest. It is true that their defects also greatly increased with their years. The youngest became uglier every instant, and the eldest more stupid every day. She either made no answer when she was spoken to, or she said something foolish. With this she was so awkward, that she could not place four pieces of china on a mantel-shelf without breaking one of them, nor drink a glass of water without spilling half of it on her dress. Notwithstanding the great advantage of beauty to a girl, the youngest bore away the palm from her sister nearly always, in every society. At first they gathered round the handsomest, to gaze at and admire her; but they soon left her for the wittiest, to listen to a thousand agreeable things; and people were astonished to find that, in less than a quarter of an hour, the eldest had not a soul near her, and that all the company had formed a circle round the youngest. The former, though very stupid, noticed this, and would have given, without regret, all her beauty for half the sense of her sister. The Queen, discreet as she was, could not help reproaching her frequently with her folly, which made the poor Princess ready to die of grief. One day that she had withdrawn into a wood to bewail her misfortune, she saw a little man approach her, of most disagreeable appearance, but dressed very magnificently. It was the young Prince Riquet with the Tuft, who, having fallen in love with her from seeing her portraits, which were sent all round the world, had quitted his father's kingdom to have the pleasure of beholding and speaking to her. Enchanted to meet her thus alone, he accosted her with all the respect and politeness imaginable. Having remarked, after paying the usual compliments, that she was very melancholy, he said to her, "I cannot comprehend, Madam, how a person so beautiful as you are can be so sad as you appear; for though I may boast of having seen an infinity of lovely women, I can avouch that I have never beheld one whose beauty could be compared to yours." "You are pleased to say so, Sir," replied the Princess; and there she stopped. "Beauty," continued Riquet,

"is so great an advantage, that it ought to surpass all others; and when one possesses it, I do not see anything that could very much distress you." "I had rather," said the Princess, "be as ugly as you, and have good sense, than possess the beauty I do, and be as stupid as I am." "There is no greater proof of good sense, Madam, than the belief that we have it not; it is the nature of that gift, that the more we have, the more we believe we are deficient of it." "I do not know how that may be," said the Princess, "but I know well enough that I am very stupid, and that is the cause of the grief which is killing me." "If that is all that afflicts you, Madam, I can easily put an end to your sorrow." "And how would you do that?" said the Princess. "I have the power, Madam," said Riquet with the Tuft, "to give as much wit as any one can possess to the person I love the most; and as you, Madam, are that person, it will depend entirely upon yourself whether or not you will have so much wit, provided that you are willing to marry me." The Princess was thunderstruck, and replied not a word. "I see," said Riquet with the Tuft, "that this proposal pains you; and I am not surprised at it; but I give you a full year to consider of it." The Princess had so little sense, and at the same time was so anxious to have a great deal, that she thought the end of that year would never come; so she accepted at once the offer that was made her. She had no sooner promised Riquet with the Tuft that she would marry him that day twelve months, than she felt herself to be quite another person to what she was previously. She found she possessed an incredible facility of saying anything she wished, and of saying it in a shrewd, yet easy and natural manner. She commenced on the instant, and kept up a sprightly conversation with Riquet with the Tuft, during which she chatted away at such a rate, that Riquet with the Tuft began to believe he had given her more wit than he had kept for himself. When she returned to the Palace, the whole Court was puzzled to account for a change so sudden and extraordinary, for in proportion to the number of foolish things they had heard her say formerly, were the sensible and exceedingly clever observations she now gave utterance to. All the Court was in a state of joy which is not to be conceived. The younger sister alone was not very much pleased, as no longer possessing over her elder sister the advantage of wit, she now only appeared, by her side, as a very disagreeable-looking person. The King was now led by his eldest daughter's advice, and sometimes even held his Council in her apartment. The news of this alteration having spread abroad, all the young Princes of the neighbouring kingdoms exerted themselves to obtain her affection, and nearly all of them asked her hand in marriage; but she found none of them sufficiently intelligent, and she listened to all of them without engaging herself to any one.

At length arrived a Prince so rich, so witty, and so handsome, that she could not help feeling an inclination for him. Her father, having perceived it, told her that he left her at perfect liberty to choose a husband for herself, and that she had only to make known her decision. As the more sense we possess, the more difficulty we find in making up one's mind positively on such a matter, she requested, after having thanked her father, that he would allow her some time to think of it. She went, by chance, to walk in the same wood where she had met with Riquet with the Tuft, in order to ponder with greater freedom on what she had to do. While she was walking, deep in thought, she heard a dull sound beneath her feet, as of many persons running to and fro, and busily occupied. Having listened more attentively, she heard one say, "Bring me that saucepan;" another, "Give me that kettle;" another, "Put some wood on the fire." At the same moment the ground opened, and she saw beneath her what appeared to be a large kitchen, full of cooks, scullions, and all sorts of servants necessary for the preparation of a magnificent banquet. There came forth a band of from twenty to thirty cooks, who went and established themselves in an avenue of the wood at a very long table, and who, each with larding-pin in hand and *the queue de renard*⁷ behind the ear, set to work, keeping time to a melodious song.

The Princess, astonished at this sight, inquired for whom they were working. "Madam," replied the most prominent of the troop, "for Prince Riquet with the Tuft, whose marriage will take place

⁷ See Appendix.

to-morrow." The Princess, still more surprised than she was before, and suddenly recollecting that it was just a twelvemonth from the day on which she had promised to marry Prince Riquet with the Tuft, was lost in amazement. The cause of her not having remembered her promise was, that when she made it she was a fool, and on receiving her new mind, she forgot all her follies. She had not taken thirty steps in continuation of her walk, when Riquet with the Tuft presented himself before her, gaily and magnificently attired, like a Prince about to be married. "You see, Madam," said he, "I keep my word punctually, and I doubt not but that you have come hither to keep yours, and to make me, by the gift of your hand, the happiest of men." "I confess to you, frankly," replied the Princess, "that I have not yet made up my mind on that matter, and that I do not think I shall ever be able to do so to your satisfaction." "You astonish me, Madam," said Riquet with the Tuft. "I have no doubt I do," said the Princess; "and assuredly, had I to deal with a stupid person – a man without mind, – I should feel greatly embarrassed. 'A Princess is bound by her word,' he would say to me, 'and you must marry me, as you have promised to do so.' But as the person to whom I speak is the most sensible man in all the world, I am certain he will listen to reason. You know that, when I was no better than a fool, I nevertheless could not resolve to marry you – how can you expect, now that I have the sense which you have given me, and which renders me much more difficult to please than before, that I should take a resolution to-day which I could not do then? If you seriously thought of marrying me, you did very wrong to take away my stupidity, and enable me to see clearer than I saw then." "If a man without sense," replied Riquet with the Tuft, "should meet with some indulgence, as you have just intimated, had he to reproach you with your breach of promise, why would you, Madam, that I should not be equally so in a matter which affects the entire happiness of my life? Is it reasonable that persons of intellect should be in a worse condition than those that have none? Can you assert this – you who have so much and have so earnestly desired to possess it? But let us come to the point, if you please. With the exception of my ugliness, is there anything in me that displeases you? Are you dissatisfied with my birth, my understanding, my temper, or my manners?"

"Not in the least," replied the Princess; "I admire in you everything you have mentioned." "If so," rejoined Riquet with the Tuft, "I shall be happy, as you have it in your power to make me the most agreeable of men." "How can that be done?" said the Princess. "It can be done," said Riquet with the Tuft, "if you love me sufficiently to wish that it should be. And in order, Madam, that you should have no doubt about it, know that the same fairy, who, on the day I was born, endowed me with the power to give understanding to the person I chose, gave you also the power to render handsome the man you should love, and on whom you were desirous to bestow that favour." "If such be the fact," said the Princess, "I wish, with all my heart, that you should become the handsomest Prince in the world, and I bestow the gift on you to the fullest extent in my power."

The Princess had no sooner pronounced these words, than Riquet with the Tuft appeared to her eyes, of all men in the world, the handsomest, the best made, and most amiable she had ever seen. There are some who assert that it was not the spell of the Fairy, but love alone that caused this metamorphosis. They say that the Princess, having reflected on the perseverance of her lover – on his prudence, and all the good qualities of his heart and mind, no longer saw the deformity of his body nor the ugliness of his features – that his hunch appeared to her nothing more than the effect of a man shrugging his shoulders, and that instead of observing, as she had done, that he limped horribly, she saw in him no more than a certain lounging air, which charmed her. They say also that his eyes, which squinted, seemed to her only more brilliant from that defect, which passed in her mind for a proof of the intensity of his love, and, in fine, that his great red nose had in it something martial and heroic. However this may be, the Princess promised on the spot to marry him, provided he obtained the consent of the King, her Father. The King, having learned that his daughter entertained a great regard for Riquet with the Tuft, whom he knew also to be a very clever and wise prince, accepted him with pleasure for a son-in-law. The wedding took place the next morning, as Riquet with the Tuft had foreseen, and, according to the instructions which he had given a long time before.

No beauty, no talent, has power above
Some indefinite charm discern'd only by love.

LITTLE THUMBLING

Once upon a time there was a Woodcutter and his wife who had seven children, all boys; the eldest was but ten years old, and the youngest only seven. People wondered that the Woodcutter had had so many children in so short a time; but the fact is, that his wife not only had them very fast, but seldom presented him with less than two at a birth. They were very poor, and their seven children troubled them greatly, as not one of them was yet able to gain his livelihood. What grieved them still more was that the youngest was very delicate, and seldom spoke, which they considered a proof of stupidity instead of good sense. He was very diminutive, and, when first born, scarcely bigger than one's thumb, which caused them to call him Little Thumbling.

This poor child was the scapegoat of the house, and was blamed for everything that happened. Nevertheless he was the shrewdest and most sensible of all his brothers, and if he spoke little, he listened a great deal. There came a very bad harvest, and the famine was so severe that these poor people determined to get rid of their children. One evening, when they were all in bed, and the Woodman was sitting over the fire with his wife, he said to her, with an aching heart, "Thou seest clearly that we can no longer find food for our children. I cannot let them die of hunger before my eyes, and I am resolved to lose them to-morrow in the wood, which will be easily done, for whilst they are occupied in tying up the faggots, we have but to make off unobserved by them." "Ah!" exclaimed the Woodcutter's wife, "Canst thou have the heart to lose thine own children?" Her husband in vain represented to her their exceeding poverty; she could not consent to the deed. She was poor, but she was their mother. Having, however, reflected on the misery it would occasion her to see them die of hunger, she at length assented, and went to bed weeping.

Little Thumbling heard everything they had said, for having ascertained, as he lay in his bed, that they were talking of their affairs, he got up quietly, and slipped under his father's stool to listen, without being seen. He went to bed again, and slept not a wink the rest of the night, thinking what he should do. He rose early and repaired to the banks of a rivulet, where he filled his pockets with small white pebbles, and then returned home. They set out all together, and Little Thumbling said nothing of what he had heard to his brothers. They entered a very thick forest, wherein, at ten paces distant, they could not see one another. The Woodcutter began to cut wood, and his children to pick up sticks to make faggots with. The father and mother, seeing them occupied with their work, stole away gradually, and then fled suddenly by a small winding path. When the children found themselves all alone, they began to scream and cry with all their might. Little Thumbling let them scream, well knowing how he could get home again, for as he came he had dropped all along the road the little white pebbles he had in his pockets. He said to them then, "Fear nothing, brothers, my father and mother have left us here, but I will take you safely home, only follow me." They followed him, and he led them back to the house by the same road that they had taken into the forest. They feared to enter immediately, but placed themselves close to the door to listen to the conversation of their father and mother.

Just at the moment that the Woodcutter and his wife arrived at home, the lord of the manor sent them ten crowns which he had owed them a long time, and which they had given up all hope of receiving. This was new life to them, for these poor people were actually starving. The Woodcutter sent his wife to the butcher's immediately. As it was many a day since they had tasted meat, she bought three times as much as was necessary for the supper of two persons. When they had satisfied their hunger, the Woodcutter's wife said, "Alas! where now are our poor children; they would fare merrily on what we have left. But it was thou, Guillaume, who wouldst lose them. Truly did I say we should repent it. What are they now doing in the forest! Alas! Heaven help me! the wolves have, perhaps, already devoured them! Inhuman that thou art, thus to have destroyed thy children!" The Woodcutter began to lose his temper, for she repeated more than twenty times that they should repent

it, and that she had said they would. He threatened to beat her if she did not hold her tongue. It was not that the Woodcutter was not, perhaps, even more sorry than his wife, but that she made such a noise about it, and that he was like many other men who are very fond of women who can talk well, but are exceedingly annoyed by those whose words always come true. The wife was all in tears. "Alas! where are now my children, my poor children?" She uttered this, at length, so loudly, that the children, who were at the door, heard her, and began to cry altogether, "We are here! we are here!" She ran quickly to open the door to them, and, embracing them, exclaimed, "How happy I am to see you again, my dear children; you are very tired and hungry. And how dirty thou art, Pierrot; come here and let me wash thee." Pierrot was her eldest son, and she loved him better than all the rest because he was rather red-headed, and she was slightly so herself. They sat down to supper, and ate with an appetite that delighted their father and mother, to whom they related how frightened they were in the forest, speaking almost always all together. The good folks were enchanted to see their children once more around them, and their joy lasted as long as the ten crowns; but when the money was spent they relapsed into their former misery, and resolved to lose the children again, and to do so effectually they determined to lead them much further from home than they had done the first time.

They could not talk of this so privately, but that they were overheard by Little Thumbling, who reckoned upon getting out of the scrape by the same means as before; but though he got up very early to collect the little pebbles, he could not succeed in his object, for he found the house door double locked. He knew not what to do, when the Woodcutter's wife, having given them each a piece of bread for their breakfast, it occurred to him that he might make the bread supply the place of the pebbles by strewing crumbs of it along the path as they went, and so he put his piece in his pocket. The father and mother led them into the thickest and darkest part of the forest; and as soon as they had done so, they gained a by-path, and left them there. Little Thumbling did not trouble himself much, for he believed he should easily find his way back by means of the bread which he had scattered wherever he had passed; but he was greatly surprised at not being able to find a single crumb. The birds had eaten it all up! Behold the poor children then, in great distress, for the further they wandered the deeper they plunged into the forest. Night came on, and a great wind arose, which terrified them horribly. They fancied they heard on every side nothing but the howling of wolves, hastening to devour them. They scarcely dared to speak or look behind them. It then began to rain so heavily that they were soon drenched to the skin; they slipped at every step, tumbling into the mud, out of which they scrambled in a filthy state, not knowing what to do with their hands. Little Thumbling climbed up a tree to try if he could see anything from the top of it. Having looked all about him, he saw a little light like that of a candle, but it was a long way on the other side of the forest. He came down again, and when he had reached the ground he could see the light no longer. This distressed him greatly; but having walked on with his brothers for some time in the direction of the light, he saw it again on emerging from the wood. At length they reached the house where the light was, not without many alarms, for they often lost sight of it, and always when they descended into the valleys. They knocked loudly at the door, and a good woman came to open it. She asked them what they wanted. Little Thumbling told her they were poor children who had lost their way in the forest, and who begged a night's lodging for charity. The woman, seeing they were all so pretty, began to weep, and said to them, "Alas! my poor children, whither have you come? Know that this is the dwelling of an Ogre who eats little boys!" "Alas, Madam!" replied Little Thumbling, who trembled from head to foot, as did all his brothers; "what shall we do? – It is certain that the wolves of the forest will not fail to devour us to-night, if you refuse to receive us under your roof, and that being the case, we had rather be eaten by the gentleman; perhaps he may have pity upon us, if you are kind enough to ask him." The Ogre's wife, who fancied she could contrive to hide them from her husband till the next morning, allowed them to come in, and led them where they could warm themselves by a good fire, for there was a whole sheep on the spit roasting for the Ogre's supper. Just as they were beginning to get warm, they heard two or three loud knocks at the door. It was the Ogre who had come home. His wife immediately

made the children hide under the bed, and went to open the door. The Ogre first asked if his supper was ready and if she had drawn the wine, and with that he sat down to his meal. The mutton was all but raw, but he liked it all the better for that. He sniffed right and left, saying that he smelt fresh meat. "It must be the calf I have just skinned that you smell," said his wife. "I smell fresh meat, I tell you once more," replied the Ogre, looking askance at his wife; "there is something here that I don't understand." In saying these words, he rose from the table and went straight to the bed – "Ah!" he exclaimed, "it is thus, then, thou wouldst deceive me, cursed woman! I know not what hinders me from eating thee also! It is well for thee that thou art an old beast! Here is some game, which comes in good time for me to entertain three Ogres of my acquaintance who are coming to see me in a day or two." He dragged them from under the bed one after the other. The poor children fell on their knees, begging mercy; but they had to deal with the most cruel of all the Ogres, and who, far from feeling pity for them, devoured them already with his eyes, and said to his wife they would be dainty bits, when she had made a good sauce for them. He went to fetch a great knife, and as he returned to the poor children, he whetted it on a long stone that he held in his left hand. He had already seized one, when his wife said to him, "What would you do at this hour of the night? will it not be time enough to-morrow?" "Hold thy peace," replied the Ogre, "they will be the more tender." "But you have already so much meat," returned his wife; "Here is a calf, two sheep, and half a pig." "Thou art right," said the Ogre; "give them a good supper, that they may not fall away, and then put them to bed." The good woman was enchanted, and brought them plenty for supper, but they couldn't eat, they were so paralysed with fright. As for the Ogre, he seated himself to drink again, delighted to think he had such a treat in store for his friends. He drained a dozen goblets more than usual, which affected his head a little, and obliged him to go to bed.

The Ogre had seven daughters who were still in their infancy. These little Ogresses had the most beautiful complexions, in consequence of their eating raw flesh like their father; but they had very small, round, grey eyes, hooked noses, and very large mouths, with long teeth, exceedingly sharp, and wide apart. They were not very vicious as yet; but they promised fairly to be so, for they already began to bite little children, in order to suck their blood. They had been sent to bed early, and were all seven in a large bed, having each a crown of gold on her head. In the same room was another bed of the same size. It was in this bed that the Ogre's wife put the seven little boys to sleep, after which she went to sleep with her husband.

Little Thumbling, who had remarked that the Ogre's daughters had golden crowns on their heads, and who feared that the Ogre might regret that he had not killed him and his brothers that evening, got up in the middle of the night, and, taking off his own nightcap and those of his brothers, went very softly and placed them on the heads of the Ogre's seven daughters, after having taken off their golden crowns, which he put on his brothers and himself, in order that the Ogre might mistake them for his daughters, and his daughters for the boys whose throats he longed to cut.

Matters turned out exactly as he anticipated, for the Ogre awaking at midnight, regretted having deferred till the morning what he might have done the evening before. He therefore jumped suddenly out of bed, and seizing his great knife, "Let us go," said he, "and see how our young rogues are by this time; we won't make two bites at a cherry." Therewith he stole on tiptoes up to his daughters' bedroom, and approached the bed in which lay the little boys, who were all asleep except Thumbling, who was dreadfully frightened when the Ogre placed his hand upon his head to feel it, as he had in turn felt those of all his brothers.

The Ogre, who felt the golden crowns, said, "Truly, I was about to do a pretty job! It's clear I must have drunk too much last night." He then went to the bed where his daughters slept, and having felt the little nightcaps that belonged to the boys. "Aha!" cried he. "Here are our young wags! Let us to work boldly!" So saying, he cut without hesitation the throats of his seven daughters. Well satisfied with this exploit, he returned and stretched himself beside his wife. As soon as Little Thumbling heard the Ogre snoring, he woke his brothers, and bade them dress themselves quickly and follow

him. They went down softly into the garden and jumped over the wall. They ran nearly all night long, trembling all the way, and not knowing whither they were going.

The Ogre, awaking in the morning, said to his wife, "Get thee up stairs and dress the little rogues you took in last night." The Ogress was astonished at the kindness of her husband, never suspecting the sort of dressing he meant her to give them, and fancying he ordered her to go and put on their clothes; she went up stairs, where she was greatly surprised to find her daughters murdered and swimming in their blood. The first thing she did was to faint (for it is the first thing that almost all women do in similar circumstances). The Ogre, fearing that his wife would be too long about the job he had given her to do, went upstairs to help her. He was not less surprised than his wife, when he beheld this frightful spectacle. "Hah! what have I done?" he exclaimed. "The wretches shall pay for it, and instantly!" He then threw a jugfull of water in his wife's face, and having brought her to, said, "Quick! give me my seven-league boots, that I may go and catch them." He set out, and after running in every direction, came at last upon the track of the poor children, who were not more than a hundred yards from their father's house. They saw the Ogre striding from hill to hill, and who stepped over rivers as easily as if they were the smallest brooks. Little Thumbling, who perceived a hollow rock close by where they were, hid his brothers in it, and crept in after them, watching all the while the progress of the Ogre. The Ogre, feeling very tired with his long journey to no purpose (for seven-league boots are very fatiguing to the wearer), was inclined to rest, and by chance sat down on the very rock in which the little boys had concealed themselves. As he was quite worn out, he had not rested long before he fell asleep, and began to snore so dreadfully that the poor children were not less frightened than they were when he took up the great knife to cut their throats.

Little Thumbling was not so much alarmed, and told his brothers to run quickly into the house while the Ogre was sound asleep, and not to be uneasy about him. They took his advice and speedily reached home. Little Thumbling having approached the Ogre, gently pulled off his boots, and put them on directly. The boots were very large and very long; but as they were fairy boots, they possessed the quality of increasing or diminishing in size according to the leg of the person who wore them, so that they fitted him as perfectly as if they had been made for him. He went straight to the Ogre's house, where he found his wife weeping over her murdered daughters. "Your husband," said Little Thumbling to her, "is in great danger, for he has been seized by a band of robbers, who have sworn to kill him if he does not give them all his gold and silver. At the moment they had their daggers at his throat he perceived me, and entreated me to come and tell you the situation he was in, and bid you give me all his ready cash, without keeping back any of it, as otherwise they will kill him without mercy. As time pressed, he insisted I should take his seven-league boots, which you see I have on, in order that I might make haste, and also that you might be sure I was not imposing upon you."

The good woman, very much alarmed, immediately gave him all the money she could find, for the Ogre was not a bad husband to her, although he ate little children. Little Thumbling, thus laden with all the wealth of the Ogre, hastened back to his father's house, where he was received with great joy.

There are many persons who differ in their account of this part of the story, and who pretend that Little Thumbling never committed this robbery, and that he only considered himself justified in taking the Ogre's seven-league boots, because he used them expressly to run after little children. These people assert that they have heard it from good authority, and that they have even eaten and drunk in the Woodcutter's house. They assure us that when Little Thumbling had put on the Ogre's boots, he went to Court, where he knew they were in much trouble about an army which was within two hundred leagues of them, and anxious to learn the success of a battle that had been fought. They say he went to seek the King, and told him that if he desired it, he would bring him back news of the army before the end of the day. The King promised him a large sum of money if he did so. Little Thumbling brought news that very evening, and this first journey having made him known, he got whatever he chose to ask; for the King paid most liberally for taking his orders to the army,

and numberless ladies gave him anything he chose for news of their lovers, and they were his best customers. He occasionally met with some wives who entrusted him with letters for their husbands, but they paid him so poorly, and the amount was altogether so trifling, that he did not condescend to put down amongst his receipts what he got for that service. After he had been a courier for some time, and saved a great deal of money, he returned to his father, where it is impossible to imagine the joy of his family at seeing him again. He made them all comfortable. He bought newly-made offices for his father and his brothers, and by these means established them all, making his own way at Court at the same time.

Often is the handsome boy
Made, alone, his father's joy;
While the tiny, timid child
Is neglected or reviled.
Notwithstanding, sometimes he
Lives, of all, the prop to be.

THE COUNTESS DE MURAT

PERFECT LOVE

In one of those agreeable countries subject to the Empire of the Fairies, reigned the redoubtable Danamo. She was learned in her art, cruel in her deeds, and proud of the honour of being descended from the celebrated Calypso, whose charms had the glory and the power, by detaining the famous Ulysses, to triumph over the prudence of the conquerors of Troy.

She was tall, fierce-looking, and her haughty spirit had with much difficulty been subjected to the rigid laws of Hymen. Love had never been able to reach her heart, but the idea of uniting a flourishing kingdom to that of which she was Queen, and another which she had usurped, had induced her to marry an old monarch, who was one of her neighbours.

He died a few years after his marriage, and left the Queen with one daughter, named Azire. She was exceedingly ugly, but did not appear so in the eyes of Danamo, who thought her charming, perhaps because she was the very image of herself. She was heiress also to three kingdoms, a circumstance which softened down many defects, and her hand was sought in marriage by all the most powerful princes of the adjacent provinces. Their eagerness, joined to the blind affection of Danamo, rendered her vanity insupportable. She was ardently besought – she must, therefore, be worthy of such solicitation. It was thus that the Fairy and the Princess reasoned in their own minds, and enjoyed the pleasure of deceiving themselves. Meanwhile, Danamo thought only of rendering the happiness of the Princess as perfect as she considered was her due, and, with this object, brought up in her palace a young Prince, the son of her brother.

His name was Parcine Parcinet. He had a noble bearing, a graceful figure, a profusion of beautiful fair hair. Love might have been jealous of his power, for that deity had never, amongst his golden-pointed arrows, any so certain to triumph irresistibly over hearts as the fine eyes of Parcine Parcinet. He could do everything well that he chose to undertake – danced and sang to perfection, and bore off all the prizes in the tournament whenever he took the trouble to contend for them.

This young Prince was the delight of the Court, and Danamo, who had her motives for it, made no objection to the homage and admiration which he received.

The King who was the father of Parcine Parcinet was the Fairy's brother. She declared war against him without even seeking for a reason. The King fought valiantly, at the head of his troops; but what could any army effect against the power of so skilful a Fairy as Danamo? She allowed the victory to remain in doubt only long enough for her unfortunate brother to fall in the combat. As soon as he was dead, she dispersed all her enemies with one stroke of her wand, and made herself mistress of the kingdom.

Parcine Parcinet was at that time still in his cradle. They brought him to Danamo. It would have been in vain to attempt hiding him from a Fairy. He already displayed those seductive graces which win the heart. Danamo caressed him, and a few days afterwards took him with her to her own dominions.

The Prince had attained the age of eighteen, when the Fairy, desirous at length of executing the designs which she had so many years contemplated, resolved to marry Parcine Parcinet to the Princess, her daughter. She never for a moment doubted the infinite delight which that young Prince, born to a throne, and condemned by misfortune to remain a subject, would feel at becoming in one day the sovereign of three kingdoms. She sent for the Princess, and revealed to her the choice she had made of a husband for her. The Princess listened to this disclosure with an emotion which caused the Fairy to believe that this resolution in favour of Parcine Parcinet was not agreeable to her daughter. "I see clearly," she said to her, as she perceived her agitation increasing, "that thou hast much more ambition, and wouldst unite with thine own empire that of one of those kings who have so often proposed for

thee; but where is the King whom Parcin Parcinet cannot conquer? In courage he surpasses them all. The subjects of so perfect a prince might one day rebel in his favour. In giving thee to him I secure to thee the possession of his kingdom. As to his person, it is unnecessary to speak – thou knowest that the proudest beauties have not been able to resist his charms." The Princess, suddenly flinging herself at the feet of the Fairy, interrupted her discourse, and confessed to her that her heart had not been able to defy the young victor, famous for so many conquests. "But," added she, blushing, "I have given a thousand proofs of my affection to the insensible Parcin Parcinet, and he has received them with a coldness which distracts me." "'Tis because he dares not raise his thoughts so high as thee," replied the haughty Fairy. "He fears, no doubt, to offend me, and I appreciate his respect."

This flattering idea was too agreeable to the inclination and the vanity of the Princess for her not to be persuaded of its truth. The Fairy ended by sending for Parcin Parcinet. He came, and found her in a magnificent cabinet, where she awaited him with the Princess, her daughter. "Call all thy courage to thy assistance," said she to him as soon as he appeared – "not to support affliction, but to prevent being overcome by thy good fortune. Thou art called to a throne, Parcin Parcinet, and to crown thy happiness, thou wilt mount that throne by espousing my daughter." "I, Madam!" exclaimed the young Prince, with an astonishment in which it was easy to perceive that joy had no share, "I espouse the Princess," continued he, retreating a few paces. "Hah! what deity is meddling with my fate? Why does he not leave the care of it to the only one from whom I implore assistance?"

These words were uttered by the Prince with a vehemence in which his heart took too much part to allow it to be controlled by his prudence. The Fairy imagined that the unhopèd-for happiness had driven Parcin Parcinet out of his wits; but the Princess loved him, and love sometimes renders lovers more keen sighted than even wisdom. "From what deity, Parcin Parcinet," said she to him with emotion, "do you implore assistance so fondly? I feel too deeply that I have no share in the prayers you address to him." The young Prince, who had had time to recover from his first surprise, and who was conscious of the imprudence he had committed, summoned his brain to the assistance of his heart. He answered the Princess with more gallantry than she had hoped for, and thanked the Fairy with an air of dignity that sufficiently proved him to be worthy not only of the empire that was offered him, but of that of the whole world.

Danamo and her proud daughter were satisfied with his expressions, and they settled everything before they left the apartment, the Fairy deferring the wedding-day a short time, only to give opportunity to all her Court to prepare for this grand solemnity.

The news of the marriage of Parcin Parcinet and Azire was spread throughout the Palace the moment they had quitted the Queen's cabinet. Crowds came to congratulate the Prince. However unamiable the Princess, it was to high fortune she conducted him. Parcin Parcinet received all these honours with an air of indifference, which surprised his new subjects the more, for that they detected beneath it extreme affliction and anxiety. He was compelled, however, to endure for the rest of the day the eager homage of the whole Court, and the ceaseless demonstrations of affection lavished upon him by Azire.

What a situation for a young Prince, a prey to the keenest anguish. Night seemed to him to have delayed its return a thousand times longer than usual. The impatient Parcin Parcinet prayed for its arrival. It came at length. He quitted precipitately the place in which he had suffered so much. He retired to his own apartments, and, having dismissed his attendants, opened a door which led into the Palace Gardens, and hurried through them, followed only by a young slave.

A beautiful, but not very extensive, river ran at the end of the gardens, and separated from the magnificent Palace of the Fairy a little Chateau, flanked by four towers, and surrounded by a tolerably deep moat, which was filled by the river aforesaid. It was to this fatal spot that the vows and sighs of Parcin Parcinet were incessantly wafted.

What a miracle was confined in it! Danamo had the treasure carefully guarded within it. It was a young Princess, the daughter of her sister, who, dying, had confided her to the charge of the Fairy.

Her beauty, worthy the admiration of the universe, appeared too dangerous to Danamo to allow her to be seen by the side of Azire. Permission was occasionally accorded to the charming Irolite (so was she named), to come to the Palace, to visit the Fairy and the Princess her daughter, but she had never been allowed to appear in public. Her dawning beauties were unknown to the world, but there was one who was not ignorant of them. They had met the eyes of Parcin Parcinet one day at the apartments of the Princess Azire, and he had adored Irolite from the moment that he had seen her. Their near relationship afforded no privilege to that young Prince; from the time Irolite ceased to be an infant the pitiless Danamo suffered no one to behold her.

Nevertheless Parcin Parcinet burned with a flame as ardent as such charms as Irolite's could not fail to kindle. She was just fourteen. Her beauty was perfect. Her hair was of a charming colour. Without being decidedly dark or fair, her complexion had all the freshness of spring. Her mouth was lovely, her teeth admirable, her smile fascinating. She had large hazel eyes, sparkling and tender, and her glances appeared to say a thousand things which her young heart was ignorant of.

She had been brought up in complete solitude. Near as was the Palace of the Fairy to the Château in which she dwelt, she saw no more persons than she might have seen in the midst of deserts. Danamo's orders to this effect were strictly followed. The lovely Irolite passed her days amongst the women appointed to attend her. They were few in number, but little as were the advantages to be gained in so solitary and circumscribed a Court, Fame, which feared not Danamo, published such wonders of this young Princess, that ladies of the highest rank were eager to share the seclusion of the youthful Irolite. Her appearance confirmed all that Fame had reported. They were always finding some new charm to admire in her.

A governess of great intelligence and prudence, formerly attached to the Princess who was the mother of Irolite, had been allowed to remain with her, and frequently bewailed the rigorous conduct of Danamo towards her young mistress. Her name was Mana. Her desire to restore the Princess to the liberty she was entitled to enjoy, and the position she was born to occupy, had induced her to favour the love of Parcin Parcinet. It was now three years since he had contrived to introduce himself one evening into the Château in the dress of a slave. He found Irolite in the garden, and declared his passion for her. She was then but a charming child. She loved Parcin Parcinet as if he had been her brother, and could not then comprehend the existence of any warmer attachment. Mana, who was rarely absent from the side of Irolite, surprised the young Prince in the garden; he avowed to her his love for the Princess, and the determination he had formed to perish, or to restore her one day to liberty, and then to seek, by a personal appeal to his former subjects, a glorious means of revenging himself on Danamo, and of placing Irolite upon the throne.

The noble qualities which were daily developed in the nature of Parcin Parcinet, might have rendered probable his success in still more difficult undertakings, and it was also the only hope of rescue which offered itself to Irolite. Mana allowed him to visit the Château occasionally after nightfall. He saw Irolite only in her presence, but he spoke to her of his love, and never ceased endeavouring, by tender words and devoted attentions, to inspire her with a passion as ardent as his own. For three years Parcin Parcinet had been occupied solely with this passion. Nearly every night he visited the Château of his Princess, and all his days he passed in thinking of her. We left him on his road through Danamo's gardens, followed by a slave, and absorbed in the despair to which the determination of the Fairy had reduced him. He reached the river's bank: a little gilded boat, moored to the shore, in which Azire sometimes enjoyed an excursion on the water, enabled the enamoured Prince to cross the stream. The slave rowed him over, and as soon as Parcin Parcinet had ascended the silken ladder which was thrown to him from a little terrace that extended along the entire front of the Château, the faithful servant rowed the boat back to its mooring-place, and remained with it there until a signal was made to him by his master. This was the waving, for a few minutes, of a lighted flambeau on the terrace.

This evening the Prince took his usual route, the silken ladder was thrown to him, and he reached, without any obstacle, the apartment of the youthful Irolite. He found her stretched on a couch, and bathed in tears. How beautiful did she appear to him in her affliction. Her charms had never before affected the young Prince so deeply.

"What is the matter, my Princess?" asked he, flinging himself on his knees before the couch on which she lay. "What can have caused these precious tears to flow? Alas!" he continued, sighing, "have I still more misfortunes to learn here?" The young lovers mingled their tears and sighs, and were forced to give full vent to their sorrow before they could find words to declare its cause. At length the young Prince entreated Irolite to tell him what new severity the Fairy had treated her with. "She would compel you to marry Azire," replied the beautiful Irolite, blushing; "which of all her cruelties could cause me so much agony?" "Ah! my dear Princess," exclaimed the Prince, "you fear I shall marry Azire! My lot is a thousand times more happy than I could have imagined it!" "Can you exult in your destiny," sadly rejoined the Princess, "when it threatens to separate us? I cannot express to you the tortures that I suffer from this fear! Ah, Parcin Parcinet, you were right! The love I bear to you is far different from that I should feel for a brother!" The enamoured Prince blessed Fortune for her severities; never before had the young heart of Irolite appeared to him truly touched by love, and now he could no longer doubt having inspired her with a passion as tender as his own. This unlooked-for happiness renewed all his hopes. "No!" he exclaimed with rapture; "I no longer despair of overcoming our difficulties, since I am convinced of your affection. Let us fly, my Princess. Let us escape from the fury of Danamo and her hateful daughter. Let us seek a home more favourable to the indulgence of that love, in which alone consists our happiness!" "How!" rejoined the young Princess with astonishment. "Depart with you! And what would all the kingdom say of my flight?" "Away with such idle fears, beautiful Irolite," interrupted the impatient Parcin Parcinet, "everything urges us to quit this spot. Let us hasten –" "But whither?" asked the prudent Mana, who had been present during the entire interview, and who, less pre-occupied than these young lovers, foresaw all the difficulties in the way of their flight. "I have plans which I will lay before you," answered Parcin Parcinet; "but how did you become so soon acquainted here with the news of the Fairy's Court?" "One of my relatives," replied Mana, "wrote to me the instant that the rumour was circulated through the Palace, and I thought it my duty to inform the Princess." "What have I not suffered since that moment!" said the lovely Irolite. "No, Parcin Parcinet, I cannot live without you!" The young Prince, in a transport of love, and enchanted by these words, imprinted on the beautiful hand of Irolite a passionate and tender kiss, which had all the charms of a first and precious favour. The day began to dawn, and warned Parcin Parcinet, too soon, that it was time for him to retire. He promised the Princess he would return the following night to reveal his plans for their escape. He found his faithful slave in waiting with the boat, and returned to his apartments. He was enraptured with the delight of being beloved by the fair Irolite, and agitated by the obstacles which he clearly perceived would have to be surmounted, sleep could neither calm his anxiety, nor make him for one moment forget his happiness.

The morning sun had scarcely lighted his chamber, when a dwarf presented him with a magnificent scarf from the Princess Azire, who in a note, more tender than Parcin Parcinet would have desired, entreated him to wear it constantly from that moment. He returned an answer which it embarrassed him much to compose; but Irolite was to be rescued, and what constraint would he not have himself endured to restore her to liberty. He had no sooner dismissed the dwarf than a giant arrived to present him, from Danamo, with a sabre of extraordinary beauty. The hilt was formed by a single stone, more brilliant than a diamond, and which emitted so dazzling a lustre that it would light the way by night. Upon its blade were engraven these words —

"For the hand of a conqueror."

Parcin Parcinet was pleased with this present. He went to thank the Fairy for it, and entered her apartment, wearing the marvellous sabre she had sent him, and the beautiful scarf he had received from Azire. The assurance of Irolite's affection for him had relieved him from all anxiety, and filled his bosom with that gentle and perfect happiness which is born of mutual love. An air of joy was apparent in all his actions. Azire attributed it to the effect of her own charms, and the Fairy to satisfied ambition. The day passed in entertainments which could not diminish the insupportable length of it to Parcin Parcinet. In the evening they walked in the Palace gardens, and were rowed on that very river with which the Prince was so well acquainted. His heart beat quickly as he stepped into that little boat. What a difference between the pleasure to which it was accustomed to bear him, and the dreary dulness of his present position. Parcin Parcinet could not help casting frequent glances towards the dwelling of the charming Irolite. She did not make her appearance upon the terrace of the Château, for there was an express order that she was not to be permitted to leave her chamber, whenever the Fairy or Azire was on the water. The latter, who narrowly watched all the Prince's actions, observed that he often looked in that direction. "What are you gazing at, Prince?" said she. "Amidst all the honours that surround you, is the prison of Irolite deserving so much attention?" "Yes, Madam," replied the Prince, very imprudently, "I feel for those who have not drawn on themselves by their own misconduct the misfortunes they endure." "You are too compassionate," replied Azire, contemptuously; "but to relieve your anxiety," added she, lowering her voice, "I can inform you that Irolite will not long continue a prisoner." "And what is to become of her, then?" hastily inquired the young Prince. "The Queen will marry her in a few days to Prince Ormond," answered Azire. "He is, as you know, a kinsman of ours; and, agreeable to the Queen's intentions, the day after the nuptials he will conduct Irolite to one of his fortresses, from whence she will never return to the Court." "How!" exclaimed Parcin Parcinet, with extraordinary emotion; "will the Queen bestow that beautiful Princess on so frightful a Prince, and whose vices exceed even his ugliness? What cruelty!" – The latter word escaped his lips despite himself: but he could no longer be false to his courage and his heart. "Methinks it is not for you, Parcin Parcinet," retorted Azire, haughtily, "to complain of the cruelties of Danamo."

This conversation would, no doubt, have been carried too far for the young Prince, whose safety lay in dissimulation; when, fortunately for Parcin Parcinet, some of the ladies in waiting on Azire approached her, and a moment afterwards the Fairy having appeared on the bank of the river, Azire signified her desire to rejoin her. On landing, Parcin Parcinet pretended indisposition in order to obtain at least the liberty of lamenting alone his new misfortunes.

The Fairy, and more particularly Azire, testified great anxiety respecting his illness. He returned to his own apartments. There he indulged in a thousand complaints against destiny for the ills it threatened to inflict on the charming Irolite, abandoned himself to all his grief and all his passion, and beginning at length to seek consolation for sufferings so agonizing to a faithful lover, wrote a letter full of the most moving phrases that his affection could dictate, to one of his Aunts, who was a Fairy as well as Danamo, but who found as much pleasure in befriending the unfortunate as Danamo did in making them miserable. Her name was Favourable. The Prince explained to her the cruel situation to which love and fate had reduced him, and not being able to absent himself from the Court of Danamo without betraying the design he had formed, he sent his faithful slave with the letter to Favourable. When every one had retired to rest, he left his apartment as usual, crossed the gardens alone, and stepping into the little boat, took up one of the oars without knowing whether or not he could manage to use it: but what cannot love teach his votaries? He can instruct them in much more difficult matters. He enabled Parcin Parcinet to row with as much skill and rapidity as the most expert waterman. He entered the Château, and was much surprised to find no one but the prudent Mana, weeping bitterly in the Princess's chamber. "What afflicts you, Mana?" asked the Prince, eagerly; "and where is my dear Irolite?" "Alas! my Lord," replied Mana, "she is no longer here. A troop of

the Queen's Guards, and some women, in whom she apparently confides, removed the Princess from the Castle about three or four hours ago."

Parcin Parcinet heard not the last of these sad words. He had sunk insensible on the ground the instant he learned the departure of the Princess. Mana, with great difficulty, restored him to consciousness. He recovered from his swoon only to give way to a sudden paroxysm of fury. He drew a small dagger from his girdle, and had pierced his heart, if the prudent Mana, dragging back his arm as best she could, and falling at the same time on her knees, had not exclaimed – "How, my Lord! would you abandon Irolite? Live to save her from the wrath of Danamo. Alas! without you, how will she find protection from the Fairy's cruelty?" These words suspended for a moment the despair of the wretched Prince. "Alas!" replied he, shedding tears, which all his courage could not restrain, "whither have they borne my Princess? Yes, Mana! I will live to enjoy at least the sad satisfaction of dying in her defence, and in avenging her on her enemies!" After these words, Mana conjured him to quit the fatal building to avoid fresh misfortunes. "Hasten, Prince," said she to him; "how know we that the Fairy has not here some spy ready to acquaint her with everything that passes within these walls? Be careful of a life so dear to the Princess whom you adore. I will let you know all that I can contrive to learn respecting her."

The Prince departed after this promise, and regained his chamber, oppressed with all the grief which so tender and so luckless a passion could inspire. He passed the night on a couch on which he had thrown himself on entering the room. Daybreak surprised him there: and the morning was advanced some hours, when he heard a noise at his chamber door. He ran to it with the eager impatience which we feel when we await tidings in which the heart is deeply interested. He found his people conducting to him, a man who desired to speak with him instantly. He recognised the messenger as one of Mana's relations, who placed in the hand of Parcin Parcinet a letter which he took with him into his cabinet to read, in order to conceal the emotion its receipt excited in him. He opened it hastily, having observed it was in Mana's handwriting, and found these words: —

"Mana, to the greatest Prince in the world. Be comforted, my Lord; our Princess is in safety, if such an expression be allowable, so long as she is subjected to the power of her enemy. She requested Danamo to permit my attendance on her, and the Fairy consented that I should rejoin her. She is confined in the Palace. Yesterday evening the Queen caused her to be brought into her cabinet, ordered her to look upon Prince Ormond as one who would be in a few days her husband, and presented to her that Prince so unworthy of being your rival. The Princess was so distressed that she could answer the Queen only by tears. They have not yet ceased to flow. It is for you, my Lord, to find, if possible, some means of escape from the impending calamity."

At the foot of the letter were the following lines, written with a trembling hand, and some of the words being nearly effaced. "How I pity you, my dear Prince; your sufferings are more terrible to me than my own. I spare your feelings the recital of what I have endured since yesterday. Why was I born to disturb your peace? Alas! had you never known me, perhaps you might have been happy."

What mingled emotions of joy and grief agitated the heart of the young Prince in reading this postscript. What kisses did he not imprint on this precious token of the love of the divine Irolite! He was so excited that it was with the greatest difficulty in the world that he succeeded in writing a coherent answer. He thanked the prudent Mana; he informed the Princess of the assistance he expected from the Fairy Favourable; and what did he not say to her of his grief or his love! He then took the letter to Mana's kinsman, and presented him with a clasp set with jewels of inestimable beauty and value, as an earnest of the reward he had deserved, for the pleasure he had given him. Mana's kinsman had scarcely departed, when the Queen and Princess Azire sent to enquire how the Prince had passed the night. It was easily seen by his countenance that he was not well. He was entreated to return to his bed, and as he felt he should be under less restraint there than in the company of the Fairy, he consented to do so.

After dinner, the Queen came to see him, and spoke to him of the marriage of Irolite and Prince Ormond as of a matter she had decided upon. Parcín Parcínét, who had at length made up his mind to control himself, so as not to awaken suspicions which might frustrate his designs, pretended to approve of the Fairy's intentions, and only requested her to await his perfect recovery, as it was his wish to be present at the festivities which would take place on the occasion of these grand nuptials. The Fairy and Azire, who were in despair about his illness, promised him everything he desired; and Parcín Parcínét thus retarded, for some days at least, the threatened marriage of Irolite. His conversation with Azire, when on the water with her, had hastened the approach of that misfortune to the beautiful Princess he loved so tenderly. Azire had related to the Queen the words of Parcín Parcínét, and the pity he had expressed for Irolite. The Queen, who never paused in the execution of what she had determined on, sent that very evening for Irolite, and decided, in conjunction with Azire, that the marriage of the former should immediately take place, and that her departure should be expedited before Parcín Parcínét was established in the higher authority his match with Azire would invest him with. Before ten days had expired, however, the Prince's faithful slave returned from his mission. With what delight did the Prince discover in the letter Favourable had written to him, the proofs of her compassion and of her friendship for him and for Irolite. She sent him a ring made of four separate metals, gold, silver, brass, and iron. This ring had the power to save him four times from the persecution of the cruel Danamo, and Favourable assured the Prince that the Fairy would not order him to be pursued more often than that ring was able to protect him. These good tidings restored the Prince to health, and he sent with all speed for Mana's kinsman. He entrusted him with a letter for Irolite, informing her of the success they might hope for. There was no time to be lost. The Queen had determined the wedding of Irolite should take place in three days. That evening there was to be a ball given by the Princess Azire. Irolite was to be present. Parcín Parcínét could not endure the idea of appearing "*en négligé*," as his recent illness might have permitted him, he dressed himself in the most magnificent style, and looked more brilliant than the sun. He dared not at first speak to the fair Irolite; but what did not their eyes discourse when occasionally, they ventured to glance at each other. Irolite was in the most beautiful costume in the world. The Fairy had presented her with some marvellous jewels, and as she had only four days to remain in the palace, Danamo had resolved, during that short period, to treat her with all due honour. Her beauty, which had hitherto been unadorned, in such splendour, appeared wonderful to the whole court, and, above all, to the enamoured Parcín Parcínét. He even imagined he could read in some joyous flashes of her bright eyes an acknowledgment that she had received his letter. Prince Ormond addressed Irolite frequently; but he was so ill-looking, notwithstanding the gold and jewels with which he was burthened, that he was not a rival worth the jealousy of the young Prince. The ball was nearly over, when Parcín Parcínét, carried away by his love, wished with intense ardour for an opportunity to speak for one moment to his Princess. "Cruel Queen, and thou, also, hateful Azire!" he mentally exclaimed; "will ye still longer deprive me of the delightful pleasure of repeating a thousand times to the beautiful Irolite that I adore her! Jealous witnesses of my happiness, why do ye not quit this spot? Love can only triumph in your absence." Scarcely had Parcín Parcínét formed this wish, than the Fairy, feeling rather faint, called to Azire, and passed with her into an adjoining apartment, followed by Ormond. Parcín Parcínét had on his finger the ring which the fairy Favourable had sent him, and which had the power to rescue him four times from the persecutions of Danamo. He should have reserved such certain help for the most pressing necessity; but when did violent love obey the dictates of prudence?

The young Prince was convinced by the sudden departure of the Fairy and Azire, that the ring had begun to favour his love. He flew to the fair Irolite. He spoke to her of his affection in terms more ardent than eloquent. He felt that he had perhaps invoked the spell of Favourable too thoughtlessly; but could he regret an imprudence which obtained for him the sweet gratification of speaking to his dear Irolite? They agreed as to the place and hour at which, the next day, they would meet, to fly from their painful bondage. The Fairy and Azire, after some time, returned to the ball-room. Parcín

Parcinet separated with regret from Irolite. He looked at the fatal ring, and perceived that the iron had mixed with the other metals, and was no longer distinguishable, he therefore saw too clearly that he had only three more wishes to make. He resolved to render them more truly serviceable to the Princess than the first had been. He confided the secret of his flight to no one but his faithful slave, and passed the rest of the night in making all the necessary preparations. The next morning he calmly presented himself to the Queen, and appeared even in better spirits than usual. He jested with Prince Ormond on his marriage, and conducted himself in such a manner as to lull all suspicions, had any existed as to his intentions. Two hours after midnight he repaired to the Fairy's Park; he found there his faithful slave, who, in obedience to his master's orders, had brought thither four of his horses. The Prince was not kept long waiting. The lovely Irolite appeared, walking with faltering steps, and leaning upon Mana. The young Princess felt some pain in taking this course. It had needed all the cruelties of Danamo, and all the bad qualities of Ormond, to induce her to do so. Love alone had not sufficed to persuade her.

It was autumn. The night was beautiful, and the moon, with a host of brilliant stars, illuminated the sky, shedding around a more charming light than that of day. The Prince eagerly advanced to meet his beloved, there was no time for long speeches, Parcinet tenderly kissed the hand of Irolite and assisted her to mount her horse. Fortunately she rode admirably. It was one of the amusements she had taken pleasure in during her captivity. She had frequently ridden with her attendants in a little wood close to the Château she resided in, and of which the Fairy allowed her the range. Parcinet, after the interchange of a few words with the Princess, mounted his own horse. The other two were for Mana and the faithful slave. The Prince then drawing the brilliant sabre he had received from the Fairy, swore on it to adore the beautiful Irolite as long as he should live, and to die, if it were necessary, in defending her from her enemies. They then set out, and it seemed as if the Zephyrs were in league with them, or that they mistook Irolite for Flora, for they accompanied them in their flight.

Morning disclosed to Danamo the unexpected event. The ladies in attendance on Irolite were surprised that she slept so much later than usual; but, in obedience to the orders the prudent Mana had given them over-night, they did not venture to enter the Princess's apartment without being summoned by her. Mana slept in Irolite's chamber, and they had quitted it by a small door that opened into a court-yard of the Palace that was very little frequented. This door was in Irolite's cabinet. It had been fastened up, but, with a little trouble, in two or three evenings, they had found means to open it. The Queen at length sent orders for Irolite to come to her. The Fairy's commands were not to be disobeyed by any one. They accordingly knocked at the chamber door of the Princess. They received no answer. Prince Ormond arrived. He came to conduct Irolite to the Queen, and was much surprised to find them knocking loudly at the door. He caused it to be broken open. They entered, and finding the little door of the cabinet had been forced, no longer doubted that the Princess had fled the Palace. They bore these tidings to the Queen, who trembled with rage at hearing them. She ordered a search to be made everywhere for Irolite, but in vain did they endeavour to obtain a clue to her evasion, no one knew anything about it. Prince Ormond himself set out in pursuit of Irolite. The Fairy's Guards were despatched in all haste, and in every direction it was thought possible she might have taken. It was observed, however, by Azire, that amidst this general agitation, Parcinet had not made his appearance. She sent an urgent message to him, and jealousy opening her eyes, she felt certain that the Prince had carried off Irolite, although she had not until that moment suspected he was in love with her. The Fairy could not believe it; but she hastened to consult her books, and discovered that Azire's suspicion was but too well founded.

In the meanwhile that Princess having learned that Parcinet was not in his apartments, and could not be found anywhere in the Palace, sent some one to the Château in which Irolite had so long resided, to see if they could find any evidence that would convict or acquit the Prince. The prudent Mana had taken care to leave nothing in it that could betray the understanding that had existed between Irolite and Parcinet; but they found near the seat on which the Prince had lain

so long insensible, the scarf Azire had given to him. It had been unfastened during his swoon, and the Prince and Mana, absorbed in their grief, had neither of them subsequently observed it. What were the feelings of the haughty Azire at the sight of this scarf? Her love and her pride were equally wounded. She was exasperated beyond measure. She flung into the Fairy's prisons all who had been in the service of Irolite or of the Prince. Parcine Parcinet's ingratitude to the Queen also goaded her naturally furious temper into madness, and she would have willingly parted with one of her kingdoms to be revenged on the two lovers.

Meanwhile the fugitives were hotly pursued: Ormond and his troop found everywhere fresh horses in readiness for them by the Fairy's orders. Those of Parcine Parcinet were fatigued, and their speed no longer answered to the impatience of their master. As they issued from a forest, Ormond appeared in sight. The first impulse of the young Prince was to attack his unworthy rival. He was spurring towards him with his hand on the hilt of his sword, when Irolite exclaimed, "Prince! Rush not into useless danger! Obey the orders of Favourable!" These words calmed the anger of Parcine Parcinet, and in obedience to his Princess, and to the Fairy, he wished that the beautiful Irolite was safe from the persecution of the cruel Queen. He had scarcely formed the wish, when the earth opened between him and Ormond, and presented to his sight a little misshapen man in a very magnificent dress, who made a sign to him to follow him. The descent was easy on his side, he rode down it accompanied by the fair Irolite. Mana and the faithful slave followed them, and the earth reclosed above them. Ormond, astonished at so extraordinary an event, returned with all speed to inform Danamo.

Meanwhile our young lovers followed the little man down a very dark road, at the end of which they found a vast Palace, lighted only by a great quantity of lamps and flambeaux. They were desired to dismount, and entered a Hall of prodigious magnitude. The roof was supported by columns of shining earth covered with golden ornaments. The walls were of the same material. A little man all covered with jewels was seated at the end of the Hall on a golden throne surrounded by a great number of persons as misshapen as the one who had conducted the Prince to that spot. As soon as the latter appeared leading the charming Irolite, the little man rose from his throne and said, "Approach, Prince. The great Fairy Favourable, who has long been a friend of mine, has requested me to save you from the cruelties of Danamo. I am the King of the Gnomes. You and the fair Princess who accompanies you are welcome to my Palace." Parcine Parcinet thanked him for the succour he had afforded them. The King and all his subjects were enchanted with the beauty of Irolite. They looked upon her as a star that had descended to illuminate their abode. A magnificent banquet was served up to the Prince and Princess. The King of the Gnomes did the honours. Music of a very melodious, though somewhat barbaric, character, formed the entertainment of the evening. They sang the charms of Irolite, and the following verses were frequently repeated: —

What lovely star hath left its sphere
This subterranean realm to cheer?
Beware! for in its dazzling light
Is more than danger to the sight.
The while its lustre we admire
It sets the gazer's heart on fire.

After the concert the Prince and Princess were each conducted to magnificent apartments. Mana and the faithful slave attended on them. The next morning they were shown all over the King's Palace. He was master of all the treasures contained in the bosom of the earth. It was impossible to add to his riches. They presented a confused mass of beautiful things; but art was wanting everywhere. The Prince and Princess remained for a week in this subterranean region. Such was the order of Favourable to the King of the Gnomes. During this time entertainments were made for the Princess and her

lover, which, though not very tasteful, were exceedingly magnificent. The eve of their departure, the King, to commemorate their sojourn in his empire, caused statues of them to be erected, one on each side of his throne. They were of gold, and the pedestals of white marble. The following inscription, formed with diamonds, was upon the pedestal of the Prince's statue: —

"We desire no longer to behold the sun, —
We have seen this Prince;
He is more beautiful and more brilliant."

And on that of the Princess were these words, formed in a similar manner: —

"To the immortal glory
Of the Goddess of Beauty.
She descended to this spot
Under the form and name of Irolite."

The ninth day they presented the Prince with the most beautiful horses in the world. Their harness was of gold entirely covered with diamonds. He quitted the gloomy abode of the Gnomes with his little troop, after having expressed his gratitude to the King. He found himself again on the very spot where Ormond had confronted him. He looked at his ring, and perceived that only the silver and brazen portions of it were discernible. He resumed his journey with the charming Irolite, and made all speed to reach the abode of Favourable, where at length they might feel themselves in safety, when all on a sudden, as they emerged from a valley, they encountered a troop of Danamo's guards, who had not given up the pursuit. The soldiers prepared to rush upon them, when the Prince wished, and instantly a large piece of water appeared between the party of Parcin Parcinet and that of the Fairy. A beautiful nymph, half naked, in a little boat made of interwoven rushes, was seen in the middle of it. She approached the shore, and requested the Prince and Princess to enter the boat. Mana and the slave followed them. The horses remained in the plain, and the little boat suddenly sinking, the Fairy's Guards believed that the fugitives had perished in their attempt to escape. But at the same moment they found themselves in a Palace, the walls of which were only great sheets of water, which incessantly falling with perfect regularity, formed halls, apartments, cabinets, and surrounded gardens, in which a thousand fountains of the most extraordinary shapes marked out the lines of the parterres. Only the Naiades, in whose empire they were, could inhabit this Palace, as beautiful as it was singular. To offer, therefore, a more substantial dwelling to the Prince and the fair Irolite, the Naiade who was their conductor led them into some grottoes of shell-work, where coral, pearls, and all the treasures of the deep, were seen in dazzling profusion. The beds were of moss. An hundred dolphins guarded the grotto of Irolite, and twenty whales that of Parcin Parcinet. The Naiades admired the beauty of the Princess, and more than one Triton was jealous of the looks and attentions which were bestowed on the young Prince. They served up in the grotto of the Princess a superb collation composed of all sorts of iced fruits. Twelve Syrens endeavoured with their sweet and charming songs to calm the anxiety of the young Prince and the fair Irolite. The concert finished with these verses: —

Wherever with Love for our leader we stray,
To render us happy he knows the sweet way.
Rejoice, Perfect Lovers, who here, in his name
The floods may defy to extinguish your flame.

In the evening there was a banquet, at which nothing was served but fish, but of most extraordinary size and exquisite flavour. After the banquet the Naiades danced a ballet in dresses of fish-scales of various colours, which had the most beautiful effect in the world. The horns of Tritons, and other instruments unknown to mortals, performed the music, which, though strange, was novel and very agreeable.

Parcin Parcinet and the beautiful Irolite remained four days in this empire. Such were the commands of Favourable. The fifth day the Naiades assembled in crowds to escort the Prince and Princess. The two lovers were placed in a little boat made of a single shell, and the Naiades, half out of the water, accompanied them as far as the border of a river, where Parcin Parcinet found his horses waiting for him, and recommenced his journey with the more haste, as he perceived, on examining his ring, that the silver had disappeared, and that nothing remained but the brass; they were, however, but a short distance from the wished-for dwelling of the Fairy Favourable. They travelled unmolested for three more days; but on the fourth morning they saw weapons glitter in the distance in the rays of the rising sun, and as those who bore them advanced, they recognised Prince Ormond and his band. Danamo had sent them back in pursuit with orders not to leave them when seen again, nor to quit the spot where anything extraordinary might occur to them, and, above all things, to endeavour to engage Parcin Parcinet in single combat. Danamo had correctly imagined, from the account of Ormond, that a Fairy protected the Prince and Princess; but her science was so great, that she did not despair of conquering, by spells more potent than her antagonist could cast around them. Ormond, delighted at beholding again the Prince and Irolite, whom he had sought with so much toil and anxiety, galloped, sword in hand, to encounter Parcin Parcinet, according to the commands of the Fairy. The young Prince also drew his sabre with so fierce an air, that Ormond more than once felt inclined to waver in his course; but Parcin Parcinet, observing Irolite bathed in tears, touched at the sight, formed his fourth wish, and instantly a great fire rising almost to the clouds, separated him from his enemy. This fire made Ormond and his troop fall back, while the young Prince and Irolite, closely followed by the faithful slave and the prudent Mana, found themselves in a Palace, the first sight of which greatly alarmed the fair Irolite.

It was entirely of flame; but her alarm subsided as she perceived that she felt no more heat than from the rays of the sun, and that this flame had only the brilliancy and blaze of fire, without its more insupportable qualities. Crowds of young and beautiful personages, in dresses over which light flames appeared to wanton, presented themselves to receive the Princess and her lover. One amongst them, whom they imagined to be the Queen of those regions, by the respect that was paid to her, accosted them, saying, "Come, charming Princess, and you also, handsome Parcin Parcinet; you are in the Kingdom of Salamanders. I am its Queen, and it is with pleasure I have undertaken to conceal you for seven days in my Palace, according to the commands of the Fairy Favourable. I would only that your stay here might be of longer duration." After these words they were led into a large apartment, all of flames, like the rest of the Palace, and in which a light shone brighter than that of day. The Queen gave that evening a grand supper, composed of every delicacy, and well served.

After the feast they repaired to a terrace, to witness a display of fireworks of marvellous beauty and great singularity of design, which were let off in a large court-yard of the Palace of Salamanders. Twelve Cupids were seen upon as many columns of various coloured marbles. Six of them appeared to be drawing their bows, and the other six bore a large shield, on which these words were written in letters of fire: —

Irolite, that matchless fair!
Conqueror is everywhere.
In vain our flaming arrows fly;
Those that issue from her eye
Burn more fiercely, yet are found

Cherished in the hearts they wound.

The young Princess blushed at her own fame, and Parcin Parcinet was enchanted that the Salamanders considered her as beautiful as she appeared to him. Meanwhile, the Cupids shot their flaming arrows, which, crossing each other in the air, formed in a thousand places the initials of the lovely name of Irolite, and rose up to the Heavens.

The seven days she remained in the Palace were passed in similar pleasures. Parcin Parcinet remarked that all the Salamanders were witty and charmingly vivacious, very gallant and affectionate. The Queen herself appeared not to be exempt from the influence of the tender passion, but to be enamoured of a young Salamander of wonderful beauty.

The eighth day they quitted with regret a retreat so congenial to their feelings. They found themselves in a lovely country. Parcin Parcinet looked at his ring, and discovered engraved upon the metals, which were now all four mixed together, the following words: —

"You have wished too soon."

These words sadly afflicted the Prince and Princess, but they were now so near the abode of the Fairy Favourable, that they were in hopes of arriving there before evening. This reflection consoled them, and they proceeded, invoking Fortune and Love; but, alas! they are frequently treacherous conductors. Parcin Parcinet was, in short, on the point of entering the dominions of the Fairy Favourable; but Ormond, obeying the commands of Danamo, had not retired far from the spot where the fire had risen between him and his rival. He had encamped, with his party, behind a wood, and his sentinels, who kept incessant watch, brought him word that the Prince and Princess had re-appeared in the plain. He ordered his men to mount, and about sunset encountered the unfortunate Prince and the divine Irolite. Parcin Parcinet was not dismayed at the numbers that fell upon him altogether. He charged them with a courage that daunted them. "I fulfil my promise, beautiful Irolite," he exclaimed, as he drew his sabre; "I will die for you or deliver you from your enemies!" With these words he made a blow at the foremost, and felled him to the earth. But oh, unexpected misfortune! the wonderful sabre, which was the gift of the Fairy Danamo, flew into a thousand pieces. She had foreseen this result of the combat. Whenever she made a present of weapons, she charmed them in so peculiar a manner, that the instant they were employed against her, the first blow shivered them to pieces.

Parcin Parcinet, then disarmed, could not make any prolonged resistance. He was overwhelmed by numbers, taken, laden with chains, and the young Irolite shared his fate. "Ah, Fairy Favourable," mournfully ejaculated the Prince, "abandon me to all the severity of Danamo, but save the fair Irolite!" "You have disobeyed the Fairy," replied a youth of surprising beauty, who appeared in the air. "You must suffer the penalty. Had you not been so prodigal of her favour, we should to-day have saved you for ever from the cruelties of Danamo. All the Empire of the Sylphs laments being deprived of the glory of securing happiness to so charming a Prince and so beautiful a Princess." So saying, he vanished, and Parcin Parcinet groaned at the recollection of his imprudence: he seemed insensible to his own misfortunes, but how deeply did he feel those of Irolite! His remorse at having been the cause of them would have destroyed him, had not Destiny resolved that he should live to suffer still more cruel agony.

The young Irolite displayed a courage worthy of the illustrious race from which she had descended, and the pitiless Ormond, far from being affected at so touching a spectacle, strove to aggravate the misery he occasioned them. He had the prisoners separated, and so deprived them of the melancholy pleasure of mingling their tears over their departed hopes. Their wretched journey ended, they were taken to the palace of the wicked Fairy. She felt a malignant joy at seeing the young Prince and Princess in a state that would have awakened pity in the heart of any other creature. Even Azire commiserated Parcin Parcinet, but did not dare to evince it before the Fairy. "I shall at length,

then," said the cruel Queen, addressing herself to the Prince, "have the pleasure of revenging myself for thy ingratitude. Go! In lieu of ascending the throne my favour had destined thee, enter the prison on the sea, in which thou shalt end thy wretched life in frightful tortures." "I prefer the most horrible dungeon," replied the Prince, looking proudly at her, "to the favours of so unjust a Queen as thou art!" These words increased the irritation of the Fairy. She had expected to see him humble himself at her feet. She sent him instantly to the prison she had fixed upon. Irolite wept as he was dragged away; Azire could not suppress her sighs, and all the Court mourned in secret the merciless sentence. As for the beautiful Irolite, the Queen had her removed to the Château in which she had previously so long resided, placed a strict guard upon her, and treated her with all the inhumanity of which she was capable.

The prison to which they conveyed the Prince was a frightful tower in the midst of the sea, built on a little desert island. They shut him up in it, laden with irons, and treated him with all the severity imaginable. What an abode for a Prince worthy to reign over the universe! To think of Irolite was his sole occupation. He invoked the help of the Fairy Favourable for his dear Princess alone, and wished a thousand times a day, to expiate by death the only injury he had done her. His faithful slave had been consigned to the same prison, but he had not the satisfaction of serving his illustrious master, and Parcin Parcinet had about him none but fierce soldiers, devoted to the Fairy, who nevertheless, while obeying her orders, respected, despite themselves, the unfortunate captive. His youth, his beauty, and, above all, his courage, excited in them an admiration which compelled them to regard him as a man very superior to all others. The prudent Mana had been dragged to the Château in which they had immured Irolite, as the Prince's faithful slave had been to the prison on the sea. Danamo's women alone approached the Princess, and by the Fairy's orders overwhelmed her every moment with new misery, by their accounts of the sufferings of Parcin Parcinet. The distresses of her lover made Irolite forget her own, and everything renewed her tears in that spot where she had so often heard that charming Prince swear to her eternal fidelity. "Alas!" she murmured to herself, "why have you been so faithful, my dear Prince? Your inconstancy would have killed me; but what of that, you would have lived, and been happy!"

After three months' suffering, Danamo, who had employed that period in the preparation of a spell of extraordinary power, sent to Irolite one morning a couple of lamps, one of gold, the other of crystal, commanding her to keep one of the two always burning, but leaving her to choose which she would light. Irolite, with her natural docility, sent word that she would obey the Fairy's orders, without even seeking to comprehend their object.

She carried the two lamps carefully to a cabinet. The golden one was lighted when she received it, and therefore she allowed it to burn throughout that day and night, and the next morning she lighted the other. In this manner she continued to obey the Fairy, lighting the lamps alternately for fifteen days, when her health became seriously affected. She attributed her failing strength to her sorrow, and, to increase her grief, they informed her that Parcin Parcinet was exceedingly ill. What tidings for Irolite! Her deep distress, her utter prostration, affected all her attendants. One evening, when the rest were asleep, one of them softly approached the Princess, and seeing her about to light the crystal lamp, said to her, "Extinguish that fatal light, your existence depends upon it. Save the life of one so lovely from the cruel designs of Danamo." "Alas!" feebly replied the wretched Irolite, "she has rendered my life so miserable, that it is but kind of the Fairy to afford me such means of ending it; but," added she, with an emotion which brought back the colour to her pale cheeks, "what life depends upon the golden lamp, which I have been equally careful to light in its turn?" "That of Parcin Parcinet," answered the confidante of Danamo, for the woman was but obeying her orders in thus speaking to the Princess. The wicked Fairy wished to torment her by this revelation of the cruel task she had imposed upon her. At this intelligence her agony at having unconsciously hastened the termination of her lover's existence, deprived her for some considerable time of her senses. On recovering them, she at the same time returned to her despair. "Hateful Fairy!" she exclaimed, as soon

as she had power to speak, "Barbarous Fairy! will not my death satisfy thy vengeance? Wouldst thou condemn me, inhuman, to destroy with my own hand a Prince so dear to me, and so worthy of the most perfect and tender affection? But death, a thousand times more merciful than thou art, will soon deliver me from all the tortures which thy wrath hath invented, to rack such fond and faithful hearts."

The young Princess wept incessantly over the fatal lamp, on which depended the life of Parcin Parcinet, and from that moment only lighted the one that wasted her own. That she saw burn with joy, regarding it as a sacrifice to love, and to her lover. In the meanwhile the wretched Prince was a prey to tortures, which surpassed even his powers of endurance. By command of the Fairy, one of his guards, feigning to pity the misfortunes of the illustrious prisoner, informed him that Irolite had consented to marry Prince Ormond, a few days after he (Parcin Parcinet) had been consigned to the frightful dungeon in which he still languished. That the Princess had appeared quite happy since her marriage, that she had been present at all the entertainments given in celebration of it, and had finally quitted the country with her husband. This was the only misfortune the Prince had not anticipated, and it was also the only one too heavy for him to bear. "What!" he exclaimed, despairingly, "Thou art faithless to me, dear Irolite! Thou art the bride of Ormond! Thou hast not even pitied my misfortunes. Thou hast but thought how to end those my love brought upon thyself. Live happy, ungrateful Irolite! Inconstant as thou art, I still adore thee, and desire but to die for love, as thou wouldst not I should have the glory of dying for thee!"

Whilst Parcin Parcinet was plunged in this affliction, and the tender Irolite wasted her own life to prolong that of her lover, Danamo was moved by the despair of Azire, who was dying with sorrow for the sufferings of Parcin Parcinet. The cruel Fairy perceived at length that, to save the life of her child, it was necessary to pardon the Prince, to permit Azire to visit him, and to promise him all the benefits that had previously awaited him, provided he consented to marry her, and the Fairy determined to put Irolite to death, the moment the Prince had accepted that offer.

The hope of again beholding Parcin Parcinet restored Azire to life, and the Fairy allowed her to send to Irolite's Château for the golden lamp, which she desired to keep in her own custody, that she might be certain it was not lighted. This mandate seemed more cruel than all the others to the afflicted Irolite. What anxiety did she not endure respecting the fate of Parcin Parcinet. "Do not distress yourself so much about the Prince," said the women in attendance upon her, "he is going to marry the Princess Azire, and it is she who, interested in the preservation of his life, has sent for the lamp on which it depends."

The torments of jealousy had as yet been wanting, to complete the misery of the unfortunate Irolite. At these words she felt them waking in her heart. In the meanwhile Azire had visited the Prince, and offered him her hand and her kingdoms; then, pretending to be ignorant that he had been told that Irolite had married Ormond, she endeavoured to convince him by citing this example, that he had been more than sufficiently constant. Parcin Parcinet, to whom nothing was valuable without the charming Irolite, preferred his prison and his sufferings to liberty and sovereignty. Azire was distracted at his refusal, and her affliction rendered her almost as unhappy as he was.

During this time the Fairy Favourable, who had hitherto boasted of her insensibility to love, had found it impossible to resist the attractions of a young Prince residing at her Court. He had conceived a passion for her. The Fairy had considerable difficulty in bringing herself to let him know that his attentions had conquered her pride. At length, however, she yielded to the desire of acquainting him with his triumph. The pleasure of conversing with those we love appeared to her then so charming and so desirable, that, excusing the fault she had so severely punished, she repaired, in all haste, to the assistance of Parcin Parcinet and the beautiful Irolite.

A little later, and her aid would have been useless. The fatal lamp of Irolite had but six days longer to burn, and the grief of Parcin Parcinet was rapidly terminating his existence, when the Fairy Favourable arrived at the Palace of Danamo. She was by far the most powerful, and made herself obeyed despite the anger of the wicked Fairy. The Prince was released from prison; but he would not

quit it until he was assured by Favourable that the fair Irolite might still be his bride. He appeared, notwithstanding his pallor, more beautiful than the day, the light of which he was once more permitted to behold. He repaired, with the Fairy Favourable, to the Château of his Princess. Her lamp emitted but a feeble light, and the dying Irolite would not allow them to extinguish it until she had been assured of the fidelity of her now happy lover. There are no words capable of expressing the perfect joy experienced by the fond pair at this meeting. The Fairy Favourable restored them in an instant to all their former health and beauty, and endowed them with long life and constant felicity. Their affection she found it impossible to increase. Danamo, furious at beholding her authority thus overthrown, perished by her own hand. The fate of Azire and of Ormond was left by the Prince to the decision of Irolite. The only vengeance she took upon them was uniting them in marriage, and Parcin Parcinet, as generous as he was constant, would only receive his father's kingdom, leaving Azire to reign over those of Danamo.

The nuptials of the Prince and the divine Irolite were celebrated with infinite magnificence, and after duly expressing their gratitude to the Fairy Favourable, and heaping rewards on the slave and the prudent Mana, they departed for their kingdom, where the Prince and the charming Irolite enjoyed the rare happiness of loving as fondly and truly in prosperity as they had done in adversity.

ANGUILLETTE

To whatever greatness Destiny may elevate those it favours, there is no worldly felicity exempt from serious sorrow. One cannot be acquainted with Fairies, and be ignorant that the most skilful amongst them have failed to discover a charm which would secure them from the misfortune of being compelled to change their shape some few days in every month, for that of some animal, terrestrial, celestial, or aquatic.

During that dangerous period, when they are completely at the mercy of mankind, they have frequently great difficulty in saving themselves from the perils to which that stern necessity exposes them.

One amongst them, who had changed herself into an Eel, was unfortunately taken by fishermen, and flung immediately into a small square tank in the midst of a beautiful meadow, wherein they kept the fish that were daily required for the table of the King of that country. Anguillette (so was the Fairy named) found in her new abode a great many fine fish destined, like herself, to live but a few hours. She had heard the fishermen say to one another, that that very evening the King purposed to give a grand banquet, for the which these fine fish had been carefully selected.

What tidings for the unfortunate Fairy! She accused the Fates of cruelty a thousand times! She sighed most sadly; but after hiding herself for some time at the very bottom of the water, in order to bewail her misfortune in solitude, the desire to escape if possible from so urgent a peril, induced her to look about her in every direction to see if she could not by some means get out of the reservoir, and regain the river which ran at no great distance from that spot. But the Fairy looked in vain. The tank was too deep for her to hope to get out of it without help, and her distress was augmented by seeing the fishermen who had taken her again approaching. They began to throw in their nets, and Anguillette, by avoiding them with great cunning, retarded for a few moments the death that awaited her. The youngest of the King's daughters was walking at that time in the meadow. She approached the tank to amuse herself by seeing the men fish.

The sun, about to set, shone brilliantly on the water. The skin of Anguillette, which was very glossy, glittered in its rays as if partly gilt and of all the colours of the rainbow. The young Princess caught sight of her, and thinking her exceedingly beautiful, ordered the fishermen to try and catch that Eel for her. They obeyed, and the unfortunate Fairy was speedily placed in the hands of the person who would decide her fate.

When the Princess had contemplated Anguillette for a few moments, she was touched with compassion, and running to the riverside, put her gently into the water. This unexpected service filled the Fairy's heart with gratitude. She appeared on the surface, and said to the Princess, "I owe you my life, generous Plousine (such was her name), but it is most fortunate for you that I do so. Be not afraid," she continued, observing the young Princess about to run away. "I am a Fairy, and will prove the truth of my words by heaping an infinite number of favours upon you."

As people were accustomed in those days to behold Fairies, Plousine recovered from her first alarm, and listened with great attention to the agreeable promises of Anguillette. She even began to answer her; but the Fairy interrupting her, said, "Wait till you have profited by my favour before you express your acknowledgments. Go, young Princess, and return to this spot to-morrow morning. Think, in the meantime, what you would wish for, and whatever it may be I will grant it. You may, at your choice, possess the most perfect and bewitching beauty, the finest and most charming intellect, or incalculable riches." After these words, Anguillette sank to the bottom of the river, and left Plousine highly gratified with her adventure.

She determined not to tell any one what had befallen her, "For," said she, to herself, "if Anguillette should deceive me, my sisters will believe that I invented this story."

After this little reflection, she hastened to rejoin her suite, which was composed of only a few ladies. She found them looking for her.

The young Plousine was occupied all the succeeding night in thinking what should be her choice. Beauty almost turned the scale; but as she had sufficient sense to desire still more, she finally determined to request that favour of the Fairy.

She rose with the sun, and ran to the meadow under the pretence of gathering flowers to make a garland, as she said, to present to the Queen, her mother, at her levée. Her attendants dispersed themselves about the meadow to cull the freshest and most beautiful of the flowers with which it was everywhere enamelled.

Meanwhile, the young Princess hastened to the riverside, and found upon the spot where she had seen the Fairy, a column of white marble, of the most perfect purity. An instant afterwards, the column opened and the Fairy emerged from it, and appeared to the Princess no longer as a fish, but as a tall and beautiful woman, of majestic demeanour, and whose robes and head-dress were covered with jewels.

"I am Anguilette," said she to the young Princess, who gazed upon her with great attention; "I come to fulfil my promise. You have chosen intellectual perfection, and you shall possess it from this very moment. You shall have so much sense as to be envied by those who till now have flattered themselves they were specially endowed with it."

The youthful Plousine, at these words, felt a considerable alteration taking place in her mind. She thanked the Fairy with an eloquence that till then she had been a stranger to.

The Fairy smiled at the astonishment the Princess could not conceal at her own powers of expression. "I am so much pleased with you," said the benignant Anguilette, "for making the choice you have done, in lieu of preferring beauty of person, which has such charms for one of your sex and age, that to reward you, I will add the gift of that loveliness you have so prudently foregone. Return hither to-morrow, at the same hour, – I give you till then to choose the style of beauty you would possess."

The Fairy disappeared, and left the young Plousine still more impressed with her good fortune. Her choice of superior intellect was dictated by reason, but the promise of surpassing beauty flattered her heart, and that which touches the heart is always felt most deeply.

On quitting the riverside, the Princess took the flowers presented to her by her attendants, and made a very tasteful garland with them, which she carried to the Queen; but what was her Majesty's astonishment, that of the King, and of all the Court, to hear Plousine speak with an elegance and a fluency which captivated every heart.

The Princesses, her sisters, vainly endeavoured to contest her mental superiority; they were compelled to wonder at and admire it.

Night came. The Princess, occupied with the expectation of becoming beautiful, instead of retiring to rest, passed into a cabinet hung with portraits, in which, under the form of goddesses, were represented several of the Queens and Princesses of her family. All these were beauties, and she indulged a hope that they would assist her in deciding on a style of beauty worthy to be solicited from a Fairy. The first that met her sight was a Juno. She was fair and had a presence such as should distinguish the Queen of the Gods. Pallas and Venus stood beside her. The subject of the picture was the Judgment of Paris.

The noble haughtiness of Pallas excited the admiration of the young Princess; but the loveliness of Venus almost decided her choice. Nevertheless, she passed on to the next picture, in which was seen Pomona reclining on a couch of turf, beneath trees laden with the finest fruits in the world. She appeared so charming, that the Princess, who since morning had become acquainted with all their stories, was not surprised that a God had taken various forms in order to please her.

Diana next appeared, attired as the poets represent her, the quiver slung behind her, and the bow in her hand. She was pursuing a stag, and followed by a numerous band of Nymphs.

Flora attracted her attention a little further off. She appeared to be walking in a garden, the flowers of which, although exquisite, could not be compared to the bloom of her complexion. Next came the Graces, beautiful and enchanting. This picture was the last in the room.

But the Princess was struck by that which was over the mantel-piece. It was the Goddess of Youth. A heavenly air was shed over her whole person. Her tresses were the fairest in the world; the turn of her head was most graceful, her mouth charming, her figure perfectly beautiful, and her eyes appeared much more likely to intoxicate than the nectar with which she seemed to be filling a cup.

"I will wish," exclaimed the young Princess, after she had contemplated with delight this lovely portrait, "I will wish to be as beautiful as Hebe, and to remain so as long as possible."

After this determination she returned to her bed-chamber, where the day she awaited seemed to her impatience as if it would never dawn.

At length it came, and she hastened again to the riverside. The Fairy kept her word. She appeared, and threw a few drops of water in the face of Plousine, who became immediately as beautiful as she had desired to be.

Some sea-gods had accompanied the Fairy. Their applause was the first effect produced by the charms of the fortunate Plousine. She looked at her image in the water, and could not recognise herself. Her silence and her astonishment were for the moment the only indications of her thankfulness.

"I have fulfilled all your wishes," said the generous Fairy. "You ought to be content; but I shall not be so if my favours do not far exceed your desires. In addition to the wit and beauty I have endowed you with, I bestow on you all the treasures at my disposal. They are inexhaustible. You have but to wish whenever you please for infinite wealth, and at the same moment you will acquire it, not only for yourself, but for all those you may deem worthy to possess it."

The Fairy disappeared, and the youthful Plousine, now as lovely as Hebe, returned to the palace. Everybody who met her was enchanted. They announced her arrival to the King, who was himself lost in admiration of her, and it was only by her voice and her talent that they recognised the amiable Princess. She informed the King that a Fairy had bestowed all those precious gifts upon her; and she was no longer called anything but Hebe, in consequence of her perfect resemblance to the portrait of that Goddess. What new causes were here to engender the hatred of her sisters against her! The beauties of her mind had excited their jealousy much less than those of her person.

All the Princes who had been attracted by their charms became faithless to them without the least hesitation. In like manner were all the other Court beauties abandoned by their admirers. No tears or reproaches could stop the flight of those inconstant lovers, and this conduct, which then appeared so singular, has since, it is said, become a common custom.

Hebe inflamed all hearts around her, while her own remained insensible.

Notwithstanding the hatred her sisters evinced towards her, she neglected nothing that she thought might please them. She wished for so much wealth for the eldest – and to wish and to give were the same thing to her, – that the greatest Sovereign in that part of the world requested the hand of that Princess in marriage, and the nuptials were celebrated with incredible magnificence. The King, Hebe's father, desired to take the field with a great army. The wishes of his beautiful daughter caused him to succeed in all his enterprises, and his kingdom was filled with such immense wealth, that he became the most formidable of all the monarchs in the universe.

The divine Hebe, however, weary of the bustle of the Court, was anxious to pass a few months in a pleasant mansion a short distance from the capital. She had excluded from it all magnificence, but everything about it was elegant, and of a charming simplicity. Nature alone had taken care to embellish the walks, which Art had not been employed to form. A wood, the paths through which had something wild in their scenery, intersected by rivulets and little torrents that formed natural cascades, surrounded this beautiful retreat.

The youthful Hebe often walked in this solitary wood. One day, when her heart felt more than usually oppressed with a tedium and lassitude to which she was now constantly subject, she endeavoured to ascertain the reason of it. She seated herself on the turf, beside a rivulet that with gentle murmur courted meditation.

"What sorrow is it," she asked herself, "that comes thus to trouble the excess of my happiness? What Princess in all the universe is blest with a lot so perfect as mine? The beneficence of the Fairy has accorded me all I wished for. I can heap treasures upon all who surround me. I am adored by all who behold me, and my heart is a stranger to every painful emotion. No! I cannot imagine whence arises the insupportable weariness which has for some time past detracted from the happiness of my life."

The young Princess was incessantly occupied by this reflection. At length she determined to go to the bank of Anguilette's river, and endeavour to obtain an interview with her.

The Fairy, accustomed to indulge her inclinations, appeared on the surface of the water. It happened to be one of the days when she was changed into a fish.

"It always gives me pleasure to see you, young Princess," said she to Hebe. "I know you have been passing some time in a very solitary dwelling, and you appear to me in a languishing state, which does not at all correspond with your good fortune. What hails you, Hebe? Confide in me." "There is nothing the matter," replied the young Princess, with some embarrassment. "You have showered too many benefits upon me for anything to be wanting to a felicity which is your own work." "You would deceive me," rejoined the Fairy; "I see it easily. You are no longer satisfied. Yet what more can you desire? Deserve my favour by a frank confession," added the gracious Fairy, "and I promise you I will again fulfil your wishes." "I know not what I wish," replied the charming Hebe. "But nevertheless," she continued, casting down her beautiful eyes, "I feel a lack of something, and that, whatever it may be, it is that which is absolutely essential to my happiness." "Ah!" exclaimed the Fairy, "it is love that you are sighing for. That passion alone could inspire you with such strange ideas. Dangerous disposition!" continued the prudent Fairy. "You sigh for love – you shall experience it. Hearts are but too naturally disposed to be affected by it. But I warn you that you will vainly invoke me to deliver you from the fatal passion you believe to be so sweet a blessing. My power does not extend so far."

"I care not," quickly replied the Princess, smiling and blushing at the same moment. "Alas! of what value to me are all the gifts you have bestowed upon me, if I cannot in turn make with them the happiness of another?" The Fairy sighed at these words, and sank to the bottom of the river.

Hebe retraced her steps to the wilderness, her heart filled with a hope which already began to dissipate her melancholy. The warnings of the Fairy caused her some anxiety; but her prudent reflections were soon banished by others, as dangerous as they were agreeable.

On reaching home she found a courier awaiting her with a message from the King, commanding her return to the Court that very day, in order that she might be present at an entertainment in preparation for the succeeding one. She took her departure accordingly, a few hours after the receipt of the message, and returned to the Court, where she was received with great pleasure by the King and Queen; who informed her that a foreign Prince, upon his travels, having arrived there a few days previously, they had determined to give him a fête, that he might talk in other countries of the magnificence displayed in their kingdom.

The youthful Hebe, obeying a presentiment of which she was unconscious, first inquired of the Princess, her sister, if the foreigner was handsome. "I never yet saw any one that could be compared to him," answered the Princess. "Describe, him to me," said Hebe, with emotion. "He is such as they paint heroes," replied Ilerie. "His form is graceful; his demeanour noble; his eyes are full of a fire that has already made more than one indifferent beauty at this Court acknowledge their power. He has the finest head in the world; his hair is dark brown; and the moment he appears, he absorbs the attention of all beholders."

"You draw a most charming portrait of him," said the youthful Hebe; "is it not a little flattered?" "No, sister," replied the Princess Ilerie, with a sigh she could not suppress. "Alas! you will find him, perhaps, but too worthy of admiration."

The Queen retired, and the beautiful Hebe, as soon as she had time to examine her heart, perceived that she had lost that tranquillity of which, till now, she had not known the value.

"Anguilette!" she exclaimed, as soon as she was alone. "Alas! what is this object which you have allowed to present itself to my sight? Your prudent counsels are rendered vain by its presence. Why do you not give me strength enough to resist such attractive charms? It may be, however, that their power surpasses that of any Fairy."

Hebe slept but little that night. She rose very early, and the thought of how she should dress herself for the fête that evening occupied her the whole day, to a degree she had been previously a stranger to, for it was the first time she had felt an anxiety to please.

The young foreigner, actuated by the same desire, neglected nothing that might make him appear agreeable to the eyes of the charming Hebe. The Princess Ilerie was equally solicitous of conquest. She possessed a thousand attractions, and when Hebe was not beside her, she was considered the most beautiful creature in the world; but Hebe outshone every one. The Queen gave a magnificent ball that evening; it was succeeded by a marvellous banquet. The young foreigner would have been struck by its prodigious splendour, if he could have looked at anything besides Hebe. After the banquet, a novel and brilliant illumination shed another daylight over the palace gardens. It was summer-time; the company descended into the gardens for the pleasure of an evening promenade. The handsome foreigner conducted the Queen; but this honour did not compensate him for being deprived of the company of his Princess, even for a few moments. The trees were decorated with festoons of flowers, and the lamps which formed the illumination were disposed in a manner to represent, in every direction, bows, arrows, and other weapons of Cupid, together, in some places, with inscriptions.

The company entered a little grove, illuminated like the rest of the gardens, and the Queen seated herself beside a pleasant fountain, around which had been arranged seats of turf, ornamented with garlands of pinks and roses. Whilst the Queen was engaged in conversation with the King and a host of courtiers that surrounded them, the Princesses amused themselves by reading the sentences formed by small lamps under the various devices. The handsome foreigner was at that moment close to the beautiful Hebe. She turned her eyes towards a spot in which appeared a shower of darts, and read aloud these words, which were displayed beneath them: —

"Some are inevitable."

"They are those which are shot from the eyes of the divine Hebe," quickly added the Prince, looking at her tenderly. The Princess heard him, and felt confused; but the Prince drew from her embarrassment a happy augury for his love, as it appeared unmingled with anger. The fête terminated with a thousand delightful novelties. The charms of the stranger had touched too sensibly the heart of Ilerie for her to be long without perceiving that he loved another. The Prince had paid her some attention previous to the arrival of Hebe at Court; but since he had seen the latter, he had been wholly engrossed by his passion.

In the meanwhile the young stranger endeavoured, by every proof of affection, to touch the heart of the beautiful Princess. He was devoted, amiable – her fate compelled her to love, and the Fairy abandoned her to the inclinations of her heart. What excuses for yielding! She could no longer struggle against herself. The charming Stranger had informed her that he was the son of a King, and that his name was Atimir. This name was known to the Princess. The Prince had performed wonders in a war between the two kingdoms; and as they had always been opposed to each other, he had not chosen to appear at the Court of Hebe's royal father under his real name.

The young Princess, after a conversation during which her heart fully imbibed the sweet and dangerous poison of which the Fairy had warned her, gave permission to Atimir to disclose to the King his rank and his love. The young Prince was transported with delight; he flew to the King's apartments, and urged his suit with all the eloquence his love could inspire him with.

The King conducted him to the Queen. This proposed marriage, assuring the establishment of a lasting peace between the two kingdoms, the hand of the beautiful Hebe was promised to her happy lover as soon as he had received the consent of the King, his father. The news was soon circulated, and the Princess Ilerie suffered anguish equal to her jealousy. She wept – she groaned; but it was necessary to control her emotion and conceal her vain regrets.

The beautiful Hebe and Atimir now saw each other continually; their affection increased daily, and in those happy days the young Princess could not imagine why the Fairies did not employ all their skill to make mortals fall in love when they wished to insure their felicity.

An ambassador from Atimir's royal father arrived at Court. He had been awaited with the utmost impatience. He was the bearer of the required consent, and preparations were immediately commenced for the celebration of those grand nuptials. Atimir had therefore no longer any reason for anxiety – a dangerous state for a lover one desires to retain faithful.

As soon as the Prince felt certain of his happiness, he became less ardent. One day that he was on his way to meet the fair Hebe in the palace gardens, he heard the voices of females in conversation in a bower of honeysuckles. He caught the sound of his name, and this awakened his curiosity to know more. He approached the bower softly, and easily recognised the voice of the Princess Ilerie. "I shall die before that fatal day, my dear Cléonice," said she, to a young person seated beside her. "The gods will not permit me to behold the ungrateful object of my love united to the too fortunate Hebe. My torments are too keen to endure much longer." "But, madam," replied her female companion, "Prince Atimir is not faithless; he has never avowed love for you. Destiny alone is to blame for your misfortunes, and amongst all the princes who adore you, you might find, perhaps, one more amiable than he is, did not a fatal prepossession engross your heart." "More amiable than him!" rejoined Ilerie. "Is there such a being in the universe? Powerful Fairy!" she added, with a sigh, "of all the blessings with which you have laden the fortunate Hebe, I but covet that of Atimir's devoted attachment to her." The words of the Princess were interrupted by her tears. Ah! how happy would she have been had she known how much those tears had moved the heart of Atimir!

She rose to leave the bower, and the Prince hid himself behind some trees to escape observation. The tears and the love of Ilerie had affected him deeply, but he imagined they were but the emotions of pity which he felt for a beautiful Princess whom he had unintentionally made so miserable. He proceeded to join Hebe, and the contemplation of her charms banished for the moment all other thoughts from his mind. In passing through the gardens, as he returned with the Princess Hebe to the Palace, he trod upon something which attracted his attention. He picked it up, and found it was a set of magnificent tablets. It was not far from the bower in which he had overheard the conversation of Ilerie and her attendant. He feared if Hebe saw the tablets, she would obtain some knowledge of his adventure. He hid them, therefore, without her having observed them. She happened at that moment to be occupied in re-adjusting some ornament in her head-dress.

That evening Ilerie did not make her appearance in the Queen's apartments. It was reported that she had felt indisposed on returning from her walk. Atimir perfectly understood that her object was to conceal the agitation to which he had seen her a prey in the bower of honeysuckles. This reflection increased his compassion for her.

As soon as he had retired to his own chamber he opened the tablets he had picked up. On the first leaf he saw a cipher formed of a double A, crowned with a wreath of myrtle, and supported by two little Cupids, one of whom appeared to be wiping the tears from his cheeks with the end of the ribbon that bandaged his eyes, and the other breaking his arrows. The sight of this cipher agitated the

young Prince. He knew that Ilerie drew admirably. He turned over the leaf quickly to gain further information, and on the opposite side found the following lines: -

Hither all-conquering Love thy footsteps led;
At thy first glance sweet peace my bosom fled;
Oh, cruel one, to try on me the dart
With which you meant to wound another's heart!

The handwriting, which he recognised, but too clearly proved to him that the tablets were those of the Princess Ilerie. He was affected by the great tenderness of these sentiments, which far from being nourished by his love and attentions, were not even encouraged by hope. These verses reminded him that previous to the arrival of Hebe at Court he had thought Ilerie lovely. He began to consider himself unfaithful to that Princess, and he became too seriously so to the charming Hebe.

He struggled, however, against these first emotions; but his heart was accustomed to range, and so dangerous a habit is rarely corrected.

He threw Ilerie's tablets on a table, resolving not to look at them any more; but he took them up again a moment afterwards, despite himself, and found in them a thousand things which completed the triumph of Ilerie over the divine Hebe.

The Prince's heart was occupied all night by conflicting feelings. In the morning he waited on the King, who named the day he had fixed on for his marriage with Hebe. Atimir replied with an embarrassment which the King mistook for a proof of his passion – (how little do we know of the human heart!) It was the effect of his inconstancy! The King desired to visit the Queen; the Prince was obliged to follow him. He had been there but a short time when the Princess Ilerie appeared with an air of melancholy which made her more lovely in the eyes of the inconstant Atimir, who was aware of its cause. He approached her, and talked to her for some time. He gave her to understand that he was no longer ignorant of her affection for him. He spoke with ardour of his feelings for her. It was too much for Ilerie. Ah! how is it possible to receive calmly the assurance of so great so unexpected a happiness.

The charming Hebe entered the Queen's apartments shortly afterwards. Her sight brought the blood into the cheeks both of the Princess Ilerie and of the fickle Atimir. "How beautiful she is!" exclaimed Ilerie, looking at the Prince with an emotion she could not conceal. "Avoid her, sir, or end at once my existence." The Prince had not power to answer her. Hebe approached them with a grace and charm which unconsciously loaded with reproaches the ungrateful Atimir. He could not long endure his position. He quitted the Princess, saying that he was anxious to despatch a courier to his father. She was so prepossessed in his favour that she never noticed some eloquent glances at Ilerie, which he cast on leaving her.

While Ilerie triumphed in secret, the beautiful Hebe learned from the King and Queen that in three days she was to be the bride of Atimir. How unworthy was he of the sensations which this news awakened in the heart of the lovely Hebe.

The faithless Prince, though pre-occupied by his new passion, passed part of the day in Hebe's company. Ilerie was present, and was a thousand times ready to die with jealousy. Her love had redoubled since she had entertained hope.

On returning to his own apartments in the evening, the Prince was presented with a note by an unknown messenger. He opened it hastily, and found in it these words: —

"I yield to a passion a thousand times stronger than my reason. Since I can no longer attempt to conceal sentiments which chance has revealed to you, come, Prince, come, and learn the determination to which I am driven by the love you have inspired me with. Oh, how happy will it be for me if it cost me but my life!"

The bearer of the note informed the Prince that he was commissioned to conduct him to the spot where the Princess Ilerie awaited him. Atimir did not hesitate a moment to follow him, and after several turnings, he was introduced into a little pavilion at the end of a very dark avenue. The interior of the pavilion was sufficiently lighted. He found in it Ilerie with one of her attendants; the rest were walking in the gardens. When she had retired to this apartment, no one entered it without her orders. Ilerie was seated on a pile of cushions of crimson and gold embroidery. Her dress was rich and elegant, the material being of yellow and silver tissue. Her hair, which was black and exceedingly beautiful, was ornamented with ribbons of the same colour as the dress, and ties of yellow diamonds. At her sight, Atimir could not persuade himself that infidelity was a crime. He knelt at her feet, and Ilerie, gazing upon him with a tenderness sufficiently indicative of the emotion of her heart, said, "Prince, I have not caused you to come hither in order to persuade you to break off your marriage; I know too well it is determined upon, and the expressions with which you have endeavoured to alleviate my misfortune and flatter my affection do not induce me to believe that you would abandon Hebe for me; but," she continued, with a gush of tears, which completed the conquest of the heart of Atimir, "I will not endure the life which you have rendered so wretched. I will sacrifice it without regret to my love, and this poison," she added, showing a little box which she had in her hand, "will save me from the fearful torment of seeing you the husband of Hebe."

"No, beautiful Ilerie!" exclaimed the fickle Prince, "I will never be her husband. I will abandon all for your sake; I love you a thousand times better than I loved Hebe; and despite my duty and my faith so solemnly plighted, I am ready to fly with you to a spot where no obstacle shall exist to our happiness." "Ah, Prince!" said Ilerie, with a sigh, "can I confide, then, in one so faithless?" "He will never be faithless to you," rejoined Atimir. "And the King, your father, who gave Hebe to me, will not refuse to sanction my union with the lovely Ilerie, when she is already mine." "Away, then, Atimir," said the Princess, after a few minutes' silence. "Let us hasten whither our destiny leads us. Whatever misery the step entails on me, nothing can weigh against the sweet delights of loving and being beloved."

After these words, they consulted together respecting their flight. There was no time to lose. They determined to depart the following night. They separated with regret, and, notwithstanding the vows of Atimir, Ilerie still feared the power of Hebe's attractions. The rest of that night and all the next day she was a prey to that anxiety.

In the meanwhile, the Prince hurriedly gave all the necessary orders for keeping his departure secret, and the next day, as soon as everybody in the palace had retired to their apartments, he hastened to join Ilerie in the pavilion in the garden, where she awaited him, attended only by Cléonice. They set out, and made incredible haste to pass the frontiers of the kingdom.

The following morning the news was made public, by a letter which Ilerie had written to the Queen, and another which Atimir had addressed to the King. They were couched in touching language, and it was easy to perceive that love had dictated them. The King and Queen were extremely enraged; but no words can express the agony of the unfortunate and charming Hebe. What despair! what tears! what petitions to the Fairy Anguilette to terminate torments equal to the most cruel she had predicted! But the Fairy kept her word. In vain did Hebe seek the riverside. Anguilette did not appear, and she abandoned herself to all the horrors of desperation. The Princes who had been discouraged by the success of the ungrateful Atimir now felt their hopes revive; but their attentions and professions only increased the torture of the faithful Hebe.

The King ardently desired that she should select for herself a husband, and had several times urged her to do so; but that duty appeared too cruel to her affectionate heart. She determined to fly from her father's kingdom; but, before her departure, she went once more in search of Anguilette. The Fairy could no longer resist the tears of the beautiful Hebe. She appeared to her, and at her sight the Princess wept still more, and had not the power to speak to her.

"You have now experienced," said the Fairy, "what that fatal pleasure which I would never willingly have accorded to you is; but Atimir has too severely punished you, Hebe, for your neglect of my advice. Go! Fly these scenes, where everything recalls to you the remembrance of your love. You will find a vessel on the coast, which will bear you to the only spot in the world where you can be cured of your unfortunate attachment; but take care," added Anguillette, raising her voice, "when your heart shall have regained its tranquillity, that you never seek to behold again the faithless Atimir, or it will cost you your life!" Hebe wished more than once to see that Prince again at whatever price Love might compel her to pay for that gratification; but a whisper of Reason, and respect for her own honour, induced her to accept the Fairy's offer. She thanked her for this last favour, and departed the next morning for the sea-coast, followed by such of her women as she had most confidence in.

She found the vessel Anguillette had promised her. It was gilt all over. The masts were of marqueterie of the most admirable pattern; the sails, of rose-colour and silver tissue; and in every part of it was inscribed the word "Liberty." The crew were attired in dresses of the same colours as the sails. All appeared to breathe in this atmosphere the sweet air of freedom.

The Princess entered a magnificent cabin. The furniture was admirable, and the paintings perfect. She was as much a prey to sorrow in this new abode as she was in her father's Court. They strove in vain to amuse her by a thousand pleasures; she was not yet in a state of mind to pay the slightest attention to them.

One day while she was contemplating a painting in her cabin, which represented a landscape, she remarked in it a young shepherd, who, with a smiling countenance, was depicted cutting nets to set at liberty a great number of birds that had been caught in them, and some of these little creatures seemed to be soaring to the skies with marvellous velocity. All the other pictures displayed similar subjects. None suggested an idea of love, and all appeared to boast the charms of Liberty. "Alas!" exclaimed the Princess, sorrowfully, "will my heart never enjoy that sweet happiness which reason prays for so often in vain?"

The unfortunate Hebe thus passed her days, struggling between her love and her desire to forget it. The ship had been a month at sea without touching anywhere, when one morning that the Princess was on deck she saw land at a distance, which appeared to be that of a very lovely country. The trees were of surprising height and beauty, and as the vessel neared them, she perceived they were covered with birds of the most brilliant plumage, whose songs made a charming concert. Their notes were very soft, and it appeared as if they were afraid of making too much noise. They landed on this beautiful shore. The Princess descended from the vessel, followed by her women, and from the moment she breathed the air of this island, some unknown power seemed to set her heart at rest, and she fell into an agreeable slumber, which for a short time sealed up her beautiful eyes.

This pleasant country, to which she was a stranger, was the Peaceful Island. The Fairy Anguillette, a near relation of the Princes who reigned in these parts, had conferred upon it, for two thousand years, the happy power of curing unfortunate attachments. It is confidently asserted that it still possesses that power; but the difficulty is to find the island.

The Prince who reigned in it at that period, was descended in a right line from the celebrated Princess Carpillon and her charming husband, of whom a modern Fairy, wiser and more polished than those of ancient times, has so gracefully recounted the wonderful adventures.⁸

While the fair Hebe enjoyed a repose, the sweetness of which she had not tasted for six months, the Prince of the Peaceful Island was taking an airing in the wood that fringed the shore. He was seated in his car, drawn by four young white elephants, and surrounded by a portion of his Court. The sleeping Princess attracted his attention. Her beauty astonished him. He descended from his car with a haste and vivacity unusual to his nature. He felt at the sight of her all the love which the charms

⁸ This compliment, so deservedly paid to the Countess d'Aulnoy, proves that this story was written after the production of that lady's popular fairy tale entitled "La Princesse Carpillon."

of Hebe were worthy to inspire. The noise awoke her, and on opening her lovely eyes, she was struck by a thousand beauties in the young Prince. He was of the same age as Hebe – just nineteen. He was perfectly handsome, his figure full of grace, his height above the ordinary standard, and his hair, which fell in rich curls down to his waist, was of the same colour as Hebe's. His dress was composed of feathers of a thousand different colours, over which he wore a sort of mantle, with a train all made of swan's-down, and fastened on his shoulders by the finest jewels in the world. His girdle was of diamonds, from which hung by golden chains a small sabre, the hilt and sheath of which were entirely covered with rubies. A sort of helmet, made of feathers like the rest of his attire, crowned his handsome head, and on one side of it, fastened by a diamond of prodigious size, was a plume of heron's feathers, which added greatly to the effect of his appearance.

The Prince was the first object that presented itself to the eyes of the young Princess at her waking. He appeared worthy of her observation, and for the first time in her life she looked upon another than Atimir with some interest.

"Everything assures me," said the Prince of the Peaceful Island to the Princess, "that you can be no other than the divine Hebe. Alas! who else could possess so many charms?" "Who, my Lord," replied the young Princess, blushing, as she rose to her feet, "could have so soon informed you of my having landed on this island?" "A powerful Fairy," answered the young monarch, "who, desirous of making me the happiest Prince in the world, and this country the most fortunate, had promised to lead you hither, and had even permitted me to indulge in the proudest hopes; but I am too well aware," he added, with a sigh, "that my fate depends much more upon your favour than upon hers."

After this speech, to which she replied with much propriety, the Prince requested her to enter his car, that she might be conducted to the palace; and out of respect to her, he would have declined taking his place in it, but as she had gathered from his language and his attendants that he was the sovereign of the island, she insisted on his seating himself beside her. Never had two such beautiful persons been seen in the same car. All the Prince's courtiers at the sight involuntarily burst into a tumult of applause. On the road, the young Prince entered into conversation with Hebe, with great animation and tenderness; and the Princess, happy to find her heart once more at ease, had recovered all her natural vivacity.

They reached the palace; it was not far from the sea-coast. It was approached through long and beautiful avenues, bordered by canals of running water. It was built entirely of ivory and roofed with agate.

The Prince's guards were drawn up in line in all the courts. In the first, they were clothed with yellow feathers, and carried quivers, bows and arrows of silver. In the second, they were all clothed with flame-coloured feathers, and wore sabres with golden hilts, and sheaths ornamented with turquoises. The royal party entered the third court, in which the guards were dressed in white feathers, and held in their hands demi-lances painted and gilt, and entwined with garlands of flowers. There was never any war in that country, so that they did not carry any formidable weapons.

The Prince, descending from his car, led the lovely Hebe to a magnificent apartment. His Court was numerous, the ladies were beautiful; the men gallant and graceful; and although everybody in the Island was dressed in feathers only, they evinced so much taste in the arrangement of the colours, that the effect was very agreeable.

That evening, the Prince of the Peaceful Island gave a superb banquet to the beautiful Hebe, which was followed by a concert of flutes, lutes, theorbos and harpsichords. In that country they were not fond of any noisy instruments. The music was very charming; when it had lasted some time, a very sweet voice sang the following words: —

Ever to be thy beauty's slave I swear,
Nor can my heart conceive a happier state
Than constant bondage in a chain so fair —

Faithful as fond – on thee depends my fate.

The Prince gazed on Hebe while this tender air was sung, with an expression which persuaded her that the verses but declared his own sentiments.

When the concert was over, the Prince of the Peaceful Island, as it was late, led the Princess to the apartment selected for her. It was the most beautiful room in the palace. She found in it a great many ladies, who had been chosen by the Prince to have the honour of attending upon her.

The Prince quitted the beautiful Hebe the most enamoured of men. The Princess retired to rest, the ladies of the Court withdrew, and no one remained in the bed-chamber except the attendants she had brought with her. "Who could have believed it?" said she to them, as soon as they were left together, "my heart is tranquil. What deity has appeased my sufferings? I no longer love Atimir. I can think that he is the husband of Ilerie without dying of grief. Is not all this a dream which passes around me? No," she continued, after a moment's pause; "for even my dreams were never so free from agitation." She then returned thanks a thousand times to Anguillette, and fell asleep.

When she awoke the next morning the Fairy appeared to her with a gracious smile upon her countenance, which she had not seen her wear since the fatal day she had requested the gift of love. "At length," said the kind Fairy, "I have fortunately brought you hither. Your heart is free, and therefore it may be happy. I have cured you of a baneful passion; but, Hebe, may I trust that the fearful torments to which you have been exposed will sufficiently induce you to shun for ever those places in which you might chance to meet the ungrateful Atimir." What promises did not the young Princess make to the Fairy! How repeatedly did she abjure love and her faithless lover! "Remember, at least, your promises," rejoined the Fairy, with an air that inspired respect. "You will perish with Atimir should you ever seek again to behold him; but everything around you here ought to prevent your entertaining a desire so fatal to your existence. I will no longer conceal from you what I have determined upon in your favour. The Prince of the Peaceful Island is my kinsman. I protect him and his empire. He is young, he is amiable, and no Prince in the world is so worthy of being your husband. Reign, then, fair Hebe, in his heart and over his realm. Your royal father consents to your union. I was in his palace yesterday. I informed him and the Queen of your present position, and they gave me full power to care for your future fortunes."

The Princess was greatly tempted to ask the Fairy what news had been heard of Atimir and Ilerie since her departure, but she dared not, after so many favours, run the risk of displeasing her. She employed to thank her all the eloquence the Fairy had gifted her with.

Her attendants now entered the chamber, and the Fairy disappeared. As soon as Hebe had arisen, twelve children of the most perfect beauty, dressed as Cupids, brought to her from the Prince twelve crystal baskets, filled with the most brilliant and fragrant flowers in the world. These flowers covered sets of jewels of all colours and of marvellous beauty. In the first basket presented to her, she found a note containing these lines: —

To the Divine Hebe

That I adored thee yesterday I swore
An hundred times; and broken ne'er can be
The vows I uttered from my fond heart's core;
For Love himself dictated them to me,
And beauty such as thine ensureth constancy.

After what the Fairy had ordained, the Princess comprehended that she ought to receive these attentions from her new admirer as those of a Prince who was shortly to be her husband.

She received the little Cupids very graciously, and they had scarcely taken their departure, when twenty-four dwarfs, fancifully, but magnificently attired, appeared, bearing other presents. They consisted of dresses made entirely of feathers; but the colours, the work, and the jewels with which they were ornamented were so beautiful, that the Princess admitted she had never seen anything so elegant.

She chose a rose-coloured dress to wear that day. Her head-dress was composed of plumes of the same colour. She appeared so charming with these new ornaments, that the Prince of the Peaceful Island, who came to see her as soon as she was dressed, felt his passion for her redoubled. All the Court hastened to admire the Princess. In the evening the Prince proposed to the fair Hebe to descend into the palace gardens, which were admirably laid out.

During the promenade, the Prince informed Hebe that the Fairy had, for the last four years, led him to expect that Princess's arrival in the Peaceful Island; "but shortly after that period," added the Prince, "on my pressing her to fulfil her promise, she appeared distressed, and said to me, 'The Princess Hebe is destined by her father to another; but if my science does not deceive me, she will not marry the Prince who has been chosen for her husband. I will let you know the issue.' Some months afterwards the Fairy returned to the island. 'Fate favours you,' said she to me: 'the Prince who was to have married Hebe will not be her husband, and in a short time you will behold here the most beautiful Princess in the world.'"

"It is true," replied Hebe, blushing, "that I was to have married the son of a King whose dominions were adjacent to those of my father; but, after several events, the love he conceived for the Princess, my sister, induced him to fly with her from my father's kingdom."

The Prince of the Peaceful Island said a thousand tender things to the beautiful Hebe respecting the happy destiny which, in accordance with the Fairy's desire, had brought the Princess into his dominions. She listened to him with greater pleasure, as it interrupted her account of her own adventures, for she feared she could not speak of her faithless lover without the Prince's observing how great had been her affection for him.

The Prince of the Peaceful Island led Hebe into a grotto, highly decorated, and embellished by wonderful fountains. The further end of the grotto was dark; there were a great many niches in it, filled with statues of nymphs and shepherds, but they could scarcely be distinguished in the obscurity. As soon as the Princess had remained a few minutes in the grotto, she heard some agreeable music. A sudden and very brilliant illumination disclosed to her that it was a portion of these statues who were performing this music, whilst the rest advanced, and danced before her a very elegant and well-conceived ballet. It was intermixed with sweet and tender songs.

They had placed all the actors in this divertissement in the depths of the grotto, to surprise the Princess more agreeably.

After the ballet wild men appeared, and served up a superb collation under an arbour of jasmine and orange flowers.

The entertainment had nearly reached its termination, when suddenly the Fairy Anguilette appeared in the air, seated in a car drawn by four monkeys. She descended, and announced to the Prince of the Peaceful Island a delightful piece of good fortune, by apprising him that it was her desire he should become the husband of Hebe, and that that beautiful Princess had promised her consent.

The Prince, transported with joy, was uncertain at the moment whether his first thanks were due to Hebe or to Anguilette; and although joy does not inspire one with such affecting expressions as sorrow, he nevertheless acquitted himself with much talent and grace.

The Fairy determined not to leave the Prince and Princess before the day fixed for their union. It was to be in three days. She made superb presents to the fair Hebe and to the Prince of the Peaceful Island, and at length, on the day she had named, they repaired, followed by their whole Court and an infinite number of the inhabitants of the Island, to the temple of Hymen.

It was constructed simply of branches of olive and palmtrees interlaced, and which, by the power of the Fairy, never withered.

Hymen was therein represented by a statue of white marble, crowned with roses, elevated on an altar, decorated only with flowers, and leaning on a little Cupid of exquisite beauty, who, with a smiling countenance, presented to him a crown of myrtle.

Anguilette, who had erected this temple, resolved that everything in it should be marked by the greatest simplicity, to show that love alone could render Hymen happy. The difficulty is to unite them. As it was a miracle worthy the power of a Fairy, she had joined them indissolubly in the Peaceful Island, and, contrary to the custom in other kingdoms, one could there be married, and remain fond and faithful.

In this temple of Hymen the fair Hebe, led by Anguilette, plighted her troth to the Prince of the Peaceful Island, and received his vows with pleasure. She did not feel for him the same involuntary inclination which she had done for Atimir; but her heart, being at that moment free from passion, she received this husband, by command of the Fairy, as a Prince worthy of her by his personal merit, and still more so by the affection he bore to her.

The marriage was celebrated by a thousand splendid entertainments, and Hebe found herself happy with a Prince who adored her.

In the meanwhile the King, Hebe's father, had received some ambassadors from Atimir, who sent them to request permission for him to espouse Ilerie. The King, Atimir's father, was dead, and that Prince was consequently absolute master in his own country. The hand of the Princess he had carried off was accorded to him with joy. After the marriage Queen Ilerie sent other ambassadors to her royal parents to request permission for her to revisit their Court, and to obtain their forgiveness for the fault which love had caused her to commit, and which the merit of Atimir might be pleaded in excuse of. The King consented, and Atimir proceeded to the Palace with his bride. A thousand entertainments marked the day of their arrival. Shortly afterwards the fair Hebe and her charming husband sent ambassadors also to the King and Queen, to announce their marriage to them. Anguilette had already informed them of the event, but they did not on that account receive the ambassadors with less delight or distinction.

Atimir was with the King when they were introduced to their first audience. The lovely form of Hebe could never be effaced from a heart in which she had reigned with such supreme power. Atimir sighed, in spite of himself, at the recital of the happiness of the Prince of the Peaceful Island. He even accused Hebe of being inconstant, forgetting how much reason he had given her for becoming so.

The ambassadors of the Prince of the Peaceful Island returned to their sovereign laden with honours and presents. They related to the Princess how much delight the King and Queen had manifested at the tidings of her happy marriage. But, oh! too faithful chroniclers, they informed her at the same time that the Princess Ilerie and Atimir were at the Court. These names, so dangerous to her peace, renewed her anxiety. She was happy; but can mortals command uninterrupted felicity?

She could not resist her impatience to return to the Court of the King, her father. It was only, she said, to see once more him and her mother. She believed this herself; and how often, when we are in love, do we mistake our own feelings!

Notwithstanding the threats uttered by the Fairy, in order to prevent her from revisiting the spot where she might again behold Atimir, she proposed this voyage to the Prince of the Peaceful Island. At first he refused. Anguilette had forbidden him to let Hebe go out of his dominions. She continued to press him. He adored her, and was ignorant of the passion she had formerly entertained for Atimir. Is it possible to refuse anything to those we love?

He hoped to please Hebe by his blind obedience. He gave orders for their departure, and never was there seen such magnificence as was displayed in his equipage and on board his vessels.

The sage Anguilette, indignant at the little respect paid by Hebe and the Prince of the Peaceful Island to her instructions, abandoned them to their destiny, and did not make her appearance to renew the prudent advice by which they had so little profited.

The Prince and Princess embarked, and after a very prosperous voyage, arrived at the Court of Hebe's father. The King and Queen were extremely delighted to behold once more that dear Princess. They were charmed with the Prince of the Peaceful Island: they celebrated the arrival of the royal pair by a thousand entertainments throughout the kingdom. Ilerie trembled on hearing of the return of Hebe. It was decided that they should meet, and that no reference whatever should be made to past events.

Atimir requested to be allowed to see Hebe. It appeared to Ilerie, indeed, that he preferred his request with a little too much eagerness.

The Princess Hebe blushed when he entered her apartment, and they both felt an embarrassment out of which all their presence of mind could not extricate them.

The King, who was present, remarked it. He joined in their conversation; and to render the visit shorter, proposed to the Princess to descend into the Palace Gardens.

Atimir dared not offer his hand to Hebe. He bowed to her respectfully, and retired.

But what thoughts and what feelings did he not carry away with him in his heart! All the deep and tender passion he had formerly felt for Hebe was rekindled in a moment. He hated Ilerie; he hated himself. Never was infidelity followed by so much repentance, nor by so much suffering.

In the evening he went to the Queen's apartments. The Princess Hebe was there. He had no eyes but for her. He sought assiduously for an opportunity of speaking to her. She continued to avoid him; but her glances were too clearly comprehended by him for his peace. He persisted for some time in compelling her to observe that her eyes had regained their former empire over him.

Hebe's heart was alarmed by it. Atimir appeared to her still too charming. She determined to shun him as carefully as he sought her. She never spoke to him but in presence of the Queen, and then only when she could not possibly avoid it. She resolved also to advise the Prince of the Peaceful Island to return speedily to his own kingdom. But with what difficulty do we endeavour to fly from those we love!

One evening that she was reflecting on this subject, she shut herself up in her cabinet, in order to indulge in her musings without interruption. She found in her pocket a note, which had been slipped into it unperceived by her, and the handwriting of Atimir, which she recognised, threw her into an agitation which cannot be described. She considered she ought not to read it; but her heart triumphed over her reason, and opening it she found these lines: —

No more my love can to your heart appeal —
For me indifference alone you feel.
Your heart, fair Hebe, faithless is in turn,
So soon my fatal falsehood could it learn.
Alas, why can you not, with equal speed,
Back to its early faith the truant lead?

The happy time is past when Hebe fair,
Love's pains and pleasures deigned with me to share.
Both have their fetters broken, it is true,
But I my bondage hasten to renew.
Alas! for my sad fault must I atone,
By languishing in this sweet chain alone?

"Ah, cruel one!" exclaimed the Princess. "What have I done to you that you seek to rekindle in my soul a passion which has cost me so much agony?" The tears of Hebe interrupted her utterance.

In the meanwhile Ilerie was tortured by a jealousy which was but too well founded. Atimir, carried away by his passion, lost all control over himself. The Prince of the Peaceful Island began to perceive his attachment to Hebe; but he was desirous of examining more narrowly the conduct of Atimir before he spoke to the Princess on the subject. He adored her with unabating constancy, and feared by his remarks to draw her attention to the passion of his rival.

A few days after Hebe had received Atimir's note, a tournament was proclaimed. The Princes, and all the young noblemen of the Court, were invited to break a lance in honour of the ladies.

The King and Queen honoured the tournament with their presence. The fair Hebe and the Princess Ilerie were to confer the prizes with their own hands. One was a sword, the hilt and sheath of which were entirely covered with jewels of extraordinary beauty. The other, a bracelet of brilliants of the finest water.

All the knights entered for the lists made their appearance with marvellous magnificence, and mounted on the finest horses in the world. Each wore the colours of his mistress, and on their shields were pictured gallant devices, expressive of the sentiments of their hearts.

The Prince of the Peaceful Island was superbly attired, and rode a dun-coloured horse with black mane and tail of incomparable beauty. In all his appointments rose colour was predominant. It was the favourite colour of Hebe. An ample plume of the same hue floated above his light helmet. He drew down the applause of all the spectators, and looked so handsome in his brilliant armour, that Hebe mentally reproached herself a thousand times for entertaining such feelings as the unhappiness of another had inspired her with.

The retinue of the Prince of the Peaceful Island was numerous. They were all attired according to the fashion of their country. Everything around him was elegant and costly. An esquire bore his shield, and all were eager to examine the device.

It was a heart pierced with an arrow; a little Cupid was depicted shooting many others at it to inflict fresh wounds, but all except the first appeared to have been shot in vain. Beneath were these words: —

"I fear no others."

The colour and the device of the Prince of the Peaceful Island, rendered it obvious that it was as the champion of the fair Hebe he had chosen to enter the lists.

The spectators were still admiring his magnificent array, when Atimir appeared, mounted on a proud and fiery steed, entirely black. The prevailing colour of the dress he had assumed for that day was what is usually termed "dead-leaf," unadorned with gold, silver, or jewels; but on his helmet he wore a tuft of rose-coloured feathers, and although he affected great negligence in his attire, he was so handsome, and bore himself so proudly, that from the moment he entered the lists no one looked at anything else. On his shield, which he carried himself, was painted a Cupid trampling upon some chains, while at the same time he was loading himself with others that were heavier. Around the figure were these words: —

"These alone are worthy of me."

The train of Atimir were attired in dead-leaf and silver, and on them he had showered jewels. It was composed of the principal noblemen of his Court, and although they were all fine-looking men, it was easy to see by the air of Atimir that he was born to command them. It is impossible to describe the various emotions which the sight of Atimir awakened in the hearts of Hebe and Ilerie, and the

poignant jealousy which the Prince of the Peaceful Island felt when he saw floating over the helmet of Atimir, a plume of the same colour as his own.

The motto of his device kindled his anger into a fury, which he controlled for the moment, only to choose a better time to vent it on his rival.

The King and Queen saw clearly enough the audacity and imprudence of Atimir, and were exceedingly angry with him; but it was not the time to show it.

The tilting was commenced amidst a flourish of trumpets which rent the air. It was exceedingly good. All the young knights made proof of their skill. The Prince of the Peaceful Island, although a prey to his jealousy, signaled himself particularly, and remained conqueror.

Atimir, who was aware that the prize for the first encounter would be given by Ilerie, did not present himself to dispute the victory with the Prince of the Peaceful Island. The judges of the field declared the latter victor; and, amidst the acclamation and applause of all the spectators, he advanced with the greatest possible grace to the spot where the Royal Family were seated, to receive the diamond bracelet.

The Princess Ilerie presented it to him. He received it with due respect, and having saluted the King, Queen, and Princesses, returned to his place in the lists.

The mournful Ilerie had too clearly observed the contempt with which the fickle Atimir had treated the prize destined to be accorded by her hand. She sighed sadly, while the fair Hebe felt a secret joy which reason vainly endeavoured to stifle in her heart. Other courses were run with results similar to those which had preceded them. The Prince of the Peaceful Island, animated by the presence of Hebe, performed wonders, and was a second time conqueror; but Atimir, weary of beholding the glory of his rival, and flattered by the idea of receiving the prize from the hand of Hebe, presented himself at the opposite end of the lists.

The rivals gazed at each other fiercely, and the impending encounter between two such great Princes was distinguished by the fresh agitation which it excited in the two Princesses. The Princes ran their course with equal advantage. Each broke his lance fairly without swerving in his saddle. The acclamations were redoubled, and the Princes, without giving their horses time to breathe, returned to their places, received fresh lances, and ran a second course with the same address as the first. The King, who feared to see Fortune give the victory to either of these rivals, and in order to spare the feelings of both, sent in all haste to them to say that they ought to be satisfied with the glory they had acquired, and to request them to let the tilting terminate for that day with the course they had just run.

The King's messenger having approached them, they listened with impatience to the royal request, particularly Atimir, who, seizing the first opportunity to reply, said, "Go, tell the King that I should be unworthy the honour he does me in taking an interest in my glory, if I could remain satisfied without conquest."

"Let us see," rejoined the Prince of the Peaceful Island, clapping spurs to his horse, "who best deserves the esteem of the King and the favours of Fortune!"

The King's messenger had not retraced his steps to the royal balcony before the two rivals, animated by stronger feelings than the mere desire to carry off the prize of the joust, had met in full career.

Fortune favoured the audacious Atimir: he was the conqueror. The horse of the Prince of the Peaceful Island, fatigued with the many severe courses he had run, fell, and rolled his master in the dust.

What joy for Atimir! and what fury for the unfortunate Prince of the Peaceful Island! Leaping to his feet again instantly, and advancing to his rival before any one could reach to part them, – "Thou hast conquered me in these games, Atimir," said he, with an air which sufficiently expressed his wrath, "but it is with the sword that our quarrel must be decided." "Willingly," replied the haughty Atimir. "I will await thee to-morrow at sunrise in the wood that borders the palace gardens." The Judges of the Field joined them as these last words were uttered, and the Princes mutually affected

unconcern, for fear the King should suspect and frustrate their intentions. The Prince of the Peaceful Island remounted his horse, and rode with all the speed he could urge it to, from the fatal spot where he had been defeated by Atimir. In the meanwhile that Prince proceeded to receive the prize of the joust from the hand of Hebe, who presented it to him with a confusion sufficiently betraying the conflicting emotions in her bosom; while Atimir, in receiving it, displayed all the extravagancies of a passionate lover.

The King and Queen, who kept their eyes upon him, could not fail to observe this, and returned to the Palace much discontented with the termination of the day. Atimir, occupied only by his passion, left the lists, forbidding any of his train to accompany him; and Ilerie, smarting with grief and jealousy, retired to her apartments.

What then were the feelings of Hebe! "I must depart," she said to herself. "What other remedy is there for the evil I anticipate?"

In the meanwhile, the King and the Queen determined to request Atimir would return to his own dominions, to avoid the painful consequences which his love might entail upon them. They resolved also to make the same proposition to the Prince of the Peaceful Island, in order not to show any preference for either; but ah! too tardy prudence! whilst they were deliberating how best to secure the departure of the two Princes, the rivals were preparing to meet in mortal combat.

Hebe, on returning from the lists, immediately inquired for the Prince of the Peaceful Island. She was answered that he was in the palace gardens; that he had desired he might not be followed, and that he appeared very melancholy. The fair Hebe thought it was her duty to seek and console him for the slight mischances which had happened to him, and therefore, without staying a moment in her own apartment, descended into the gardens, followed only by a few of her women.

In the course of her search for the Prince of the Peaceful Island, she entered a shady alley, and came suddenly on the enamoured Atimir, who, transported by his passion, and listening only to its promptings, threw himself on his knees at a short distance from the Princess, and drawing the sword which he had that day received from her hand, exclaimed, "Hear me, beautiful Hebe! or see me die at your feet!"

Hebe's attendants, terrified by the actions of the Prince, rushed upon him, and endeavoured to force from his grasp the sword, the point of which he had directed towards himself with desperate resolution. Hebe, the unhappy Hebe, would have flown from the spot; but how many reasons concurred to detain her near him she loved!

The desire to suppress the scandal this adventure might create; the intention to implore Atimir to endeavour to stifle a passion which was so perilous to them; the pity naturally awakened by so affecting an object, – everything, in short, conspired to arrest her flight. She approached the Prince. Her presence suspended his fury. He let fall his sword at the feet of the Princess. Never was so much agitation, so much love, so much anguish, displayed in an interview that lasted but a few minutes. No words can express the feelings of those wretched lovers during that brief period. Hebe, alarmed at finding herself in the company of Atimir, almost, perhaps, in sight of the Prince of the Peaceful Island, made a great effort to depart, and left him with a command never to see her more. What an order for Atimir! But for the recollection of the combat to which he had been challenged by the Prince of the Peaceful Island, he would have turned his sword an hundred times against his own breast; but he trusted to perish in revenging himself on his rival.

In the meanwhile, the fair Hebe shut herself up in her own chamber, to avoid more surely the sight of Atimir. "Relentless Fairy," she cried, "thou didst only predict my death as the consequence of my again beholding this unhappy Prince; but the tortures I suffer are a much more dreadful penalty." Hebe sent her attendants to seek for the Prince of the Peaceful Island in the gardens, and throughout the Palace; but he was nowhere to be found, and she became extremely anxious on his account. They hunted for him all night long, but in vain, for he had concealed himself in a little rustic building in the middle of the wood, to be more certain that no one could prevent his proceeding to the spot fixed

on for the combat. He was on the ground at sunrise, and Atimir arrived a few minutes afterwards. The two rivals, impatient for revenge and victory, drew their swords. It was the first time the Prince of the Peaceful Island had wielded his in earnest, for war was unknown in his island.

He proved, however, not a less redoubtable antagonist on that account to Atimir. He had little skill, but much bravery, and great love. He fought like a man who set no value on his life, and Atimir worthily sustained in this combat the high reputation he had previously acquired. The Princes were animated by too many vindictive feelings for their encounter not to terminate fatally. After having fought with equal advantage for a considerable period, they dealt each other at the same instant so furious a blow, that both fell to the earth which was speedily red with their blood.

The Prince of the Peaceful Island fainted with the loss of his; and Atimir, mortally wounded, uttered but the name of Hebe as he expired for her sake.

One of the parties in search of the Prince of the Peaceful Island arrived on the spot, and were horror-struck at the sight of this cruel spectacle.

The Princess Hebe, urged by her anxiety, had descended into the gardens. She hastened towards the place from whence she heard the exclamations of her people, who uttered in confusion the names of the two Princes, and beheld these fatal and affecting objects. She believed the Prince of the Peaceful Island was dead as well as Atimir, and at that moment there was little difference to be distinguished between them. "Precious lives," exclaimed Hebe, despairingly, after gazing for an instant on the unfortunate Princes, – "precious lives, which have been sacrificed for me; I hasten to avenge you by the termination of my own!" With these words she flung herself upon the fatal sword Atimir had received from her hands, and buried the point in her bosom before her people, astonished at this dreadful scene, had power to prevent her.

She expired, and the Fairy Anguilette, moved by so much misery despite of all the obstacles her science had enabled her to raise, appeared on the spot which had witnessed the destruction of these beautiful beings. The Fairy upbraided Fate, and could not restrain her tears. Then hastening to succour the Prince of the Peaceful Island, who she knew was still breathing, she healed his wound, and transported him in an instant to his own island, where, by the miraculous power she had conferred on it, the Prince consoled himself for his loss, and forgot his passion for Hebe.

The King and Queen, who had not the advantage of such assistance, gave themselves up entirely to their sorrow; and time only brought them consolation. As to Ilerie, nothing could exceed her despair. She remained constant to her grief, and to the memory of the ungrateful Atimir.

Meanwhile, Anguilette, having transported the Prince of the Peaceful Island to his dominions, touched with her wand the sad remains of the charming Atimir and the lovely Hebe. At the same instant they were transformed into two trees of the most perfect beauty. The Fairy gave them the name of *Charmes*,⁹ to preserve for ever the remembrance of the charms which had been so brilliantly displayed in the persons of these unfortunate lovers.

⁹ *Charmes* is the French name for that species of elm called the yok elm.

YOUNG AND HANDSOME

Once on a time there was a potent Fairy, who endeavoured to resist the power of Love; but the little god was more potent than the Fairy. He touched her heart without even employing all his power. A handsome Knight arrived at the Court of the Fairy in search of adventures. He was amiable, the son of a king, and had acquired renown by a thousand noble achievements. His worth was known to the Fairy. Fame had wafted the report of it even into her dominions.

The person of the young Prince corresponded so entirely with his high reputation, that the Fairy, moved by so many charms, accepted in a very short time the proposals which the handsome Knight made to her. The Fairy was beautiful, and he was sincerely in love with her. She married him, and by that marriage made him the richest and most powerful King in the world. They lived a long time most happily together after their union.

The Fairy grew old, and the King, her husband, although he kept pace with her in years, ceased to love her as soon as her beauty had departed. He attached himself to some young beauties of his Court, and the Fairy was tormented by a jealousy which proved fatal to several of her rivals. She had had but one daughter by her marriage with the handsome Knight. She was the object of all her tenderness, and was worthy of the affection lavished on her.

The Fairies, who were her relations, had endowed her from her birth with the finest intelligence, the sweetest beauty, and with graces still more charming than beauty. Her dancing surpassed anything that had ever been seen, and her voice subdued all hearts.

Her form was perfect symmetry. Without being too tall, her appearance was noble. Her hair was of the most beautiful black in the world. Her mouth small and exquisitely formed, her teeth of surprising whiteness. Her lovely eyes were black, sparkling, and expressive, and never did glances so piercing and yet so tender awaken love in the bosoms of all beholders.

The Fairy had named her Young and Handsome. She had not as yet endowed her herself. She had postponed that favour in order to judge the better in process of time by what sort of benefit she could ensure the happiness of a child that was so dear to her.

The King's inconstancies were an eternal source of affliction to the Fairy. The misfortune of ceasing to be loved induced her to believe that the most desirable of blessings was to be always lovely. And this, after a thousand reflections, was the gift she bestowed on Young and Handsome. She was then just sixteen: and the Fairy employed all her science in the formation of a spell which should enable the Princess to remain for ever exactly as she appeared at that moment. What greater benefit could she bestow on Young and Handsome than the happiness of never ceasing to be like herself? The Fairy lost the King, her husband, and although he had been long unfaithful to her, his death caused her such deep sorrow, that she resolved to abandon her empire, and to retire to a castle which she had built in a country quite a desert, and surrounded by so vast a forest that the Fairy alone could find her way through it.

This resolution sadly afflicted Young and Handsome. She wished not to quit her mother; but the Fairy peremptorily commanded her to remain; and before she returned to her wilderness, she assembled in the most beautiful palace in the world all the pleasures and sports she had long banished, and composed from them a Court for Young and Handsome, who in this agreeable company gradually consoled herself for the absence of the Fairy.

All the Kings and Princes who considered themselves worthy of her (and in those days people flattered themselves much less than they do now) came in crowds to the Court of Young and Handsome, and endeavoured by their attentions and their professions to win the heart of so lovely a Princess.

Never had anything equalled the magnificence and amusements of the palace of Young and Handsome. Each day was distinguished by some new entertainment. Everybody composing it was

happy, except her lovers, who adored her without hope. She looked with favour upon none; but they saw her daily, and her most indifferent glances were sufficiently attractive to detain them there for ever.

One day Young and Handsome, content with the prosperity and popularity of her reign, wandered into a pleasant wood, followed only by some of her nymphs, the better to enjoy the charm of solitude. Absorbed by agreeable reflections, (what could she think of that would not be agreeable?) she emerged from the wood unconsciously, and walked towards a charming meadow enamelled with thousands of flowers.

Her beautiful eyes were occupied in contemplating a hundred various and pleasing objects, when they lighted in turn on a flock of sheep which was quietly feeding in the meadow on the bank of a little brook that murmured sweetly as it rippled over the pebbles in its path. It was overshadowed by a tuft of trees. A young shepherd, stretched on the grass beside the rivulet, was calmly sleeping; his crook was leaning against a tree, and a pretty dog, which appeared to be more a favourite of its master than the guardian of his flock, lay close to the shepherd.

Young and Handsome approached the brook, and cast her eyes upon the youth. What a beautiful vision! Cupid himself sleeping in the arms of Psyche did not display such charms.

The young Fairy stood gazing, and could not restrain some gestures of admiration, which were quickly succeeded by more tender emotions. The handsome shepherd appeared to be about eighteen, of a commanding form; his brown hair, naturally curling, fell in wavy locks upon his shoulders, and was in perfect harmony with the most charming face in the world. His eyes, closed in slumber, concealed from the Fairy, beneath their lids, new fires reserved by Love to redouble her passion for the shepherd.

Young and Handsome felt her heart agitated by an emotion to which it had hitherto been a stranger, and it was no longer in her power to stir from the spot.

Fairies possess the same privilege as goddesses. They love a shepherd when he is loveable, just as if he were the greatest monarch in the universe. For all classes of mortals are equally beneath them.

Young and Handsome found too much pleasure in her new sensations to endeavour to combat them. She loved fondly, and from that moment only indulged in the happy idea of being loved in return. She did not dare to wake the handsome shepherd, for fear he should remark her agitation; and pleasing herself with the notion of discovering her love for him in a gallant and agreeable manner. She rendered herself invisible to enjoy the astonishment she was about to cause him.

Immediately arose a strain of enchanting music. What an exquisite symphony! It went straight to the heart. The delicious sound awoke Alidor (such was the name of the handsome shepherd), who for some moments imagined he was in an agreeable dream; but what was his surprise when, on rising from the grass on which he had been lying, he found himself attired in the most tasteful and magnificent fashion. The colours of his dress were yellow and grey, laced with silver. His wallet was embroidered all over with the initials of Young and Handsome, and suspended by a band of flowers. His crook was of the most marvellous workmanship, ornamented with precious stones of different colours set in elegant devices. His hat was composed entirely of jonquils and blue hyacinths most ingeniously woven together.

Delighted and astonished at his new attire, he gazed at himself reflected in the neighbouring stream. Young and Handsome, meanwhile, feared an hundred times for him the fate of the beautiful Narcissus.

The wonder of Alidor was still further increased at seeing his sheep covered with silk whiter than snow, in lieu of their ordinary fleeces, and adorned with a thousand knots of ribbons of various colours.

His favourite ewe was more decorated than any of the others. She came skipping over the grass to him, appearing proud of her ornaments.

The shepherd's pretty dog had a golden collar, on which bands of small emeralds formed these four lines: —

Alas! how many fears and doubts alarm
The maiden who on love her hopes would rest;
A look, a word, her youthful heart may charm,
But constancy alone can make it blest.

The handsome shepherd judged by these verses that he was indebted to Love for his agreeable adventure. The sun, by this time, had set. Alidor, absorbed in a delightful reverie, bent his steps towards his cottage. He did not observe any change in its exterior, but he had scarcely crossed the threshold when a delicious fragrance announced to him some agreeable novelty. He found the walls of his little hut hung with a tissue of jasmine and orange flowers. The curtains of his bed were of the same materials, looped up by garlands of pinks and roses. An agreeable atmosphere kept all these flowers perfectly fresh and beautiful.

The floor was of porcelain, on which were represented the stories of all the goddesses who had been in love with shepherds. Alidor observed this; — he was very intelligent. The shepherds of that country were not ordinary shepherds. Some of them were descended from Kings or great Princes, and Alidor could trace his pedigree up to a Sovereign who had long sat on the throne of those realms before they became a portion of the dominions of the Fairies.

Up to this period the handsome shepherd had been insensible to the charms of Love; but he now began to feel, even without having as yet distinguished the particular object, that his young heart burned to surrender itself a prisoner. He was dying with impatience to become acquainted with the Goddess or Fairy who had bestowed upon him such tasteful and beautiful proofs of her affection. He paced his chamber with a sweet anxiety which he had never before experienced. As night fell, an agreeable illumination appeared to shed a new daylight throughout the cottage. The musings of Alidor were interrupted by the sight of a rich and delicate banquet, which was served up to him by invisible hands. "What!" exclaimed the shepherd, smiling; "still new pleasures, and no one to partake them with me?" His little dog attempted to play with him, but he was too much pre-occupied to encourage his gambols.

Alidor seated himself at the table. A little Cupid appeared and presented him with wine in a cup made of one entire diamond. The shepherd made a tolerable supper for the hero of such adventures. He endeavoured to question the little Cupid; but, instead of answering, the boy shot arrows at him, which, the moment they struck, became drops of exquisitely scented water. Alidor comprehended clearly by this sport that the little Cupid was forbidden to explain the mystery. The table disappeared as soon as Alidor had ceased eating, and the little Cupid flew away.

A charming symphony stole upon the ear, awaking a thousand tender sensations in the heart of the young shepherd. His impatience to learn to whom he was indebted for all these pleasures increased every instant, and it was with great joy he heard a voice sing the following words: —

Under what form, Love, wilt thou cast thy dart
At the young shepherd who enthrals my heart?
Once should he know he is the master there,
Will he my form and face account less fair?
Of my affection he will be too sure,
But that may not his love for me secure.
With greater power to charm, my smiles endue,
I need no aid to make me fond or true.

"Appear, thou charming being!" exclaimed the shepherd; "and by your presence crown my happiness. I believe you to be too beautiful to fear that I should ever be faithless."

No answer was returned to this adjuration. The music ceased shortly afterwards; a profound silence reigned in the cottage and invited the shepherd to sweet repose. He threw himself on his bed, but it was some time before he could sleep, agitated as he was by his curiosity and his new-born passion.

The song of the birds awoke him at daybreak. He quitted his cottage and led his pretty flock to the same spot where the preceding day his good fortune had commenced. Scarcely had he seated himself beside the brook, when a canopy, composed of a most brilliant stuff of flame-colour and gold was attached to the branches of the nearest trees to shelter Alidor from the rays of the sun. Some young shepherds and pretty shepherdesses of the neighbourhood arrived at the spot. They were in search of Alidor. His canopy, his flock, and his dress excited in them great astonishment.

They advanced hastily, and eagerly asked him the origin of all these marvels. Alidor smiled at their surprise, and recounted to them what had occurred to him. More than one shepherd felt jealous, and more than one shepherdess reddened with mortification. There were few of the latter in those parts who had not had designs upon the heart of the handsome shepherd, and a goddess or a fairy appeared to them by far too dangerous a rival.

Young and Handsome, who rarely lost sight of her shepherd, endured with considerable impatience the conversation of the shepherdesses. Some amongst them were very charming, and one so lovely that she might be a formidable rival even to a goddess.

The indifference with which Alidor treated them all re-assured the young Fairy. The shepherdesses quitted Alidor reluctantly, and led their flocks further into the meadow.

Shortly after they had departed, leaving only a few shepherds with Alidor, a delicious banquet appeared, set out upon a marble table. Seats of green turf arose around it, and Alidor invited his friends, the shepherds who had come to join him, to share his repast. On seating themselves at the table, they discovered that they were all attired in handsome dresses, though less magnificent than that of Alidor, which at the same moment became dazzling with jewels.

The neighbouring echoes were suddenly awakened by rustic, but graceful, music, and a voice was heard singing the following words: —

Of Alidor, envy the pleasure supreme,
He only could love to this bosom impart;
Ye shepherds, who beauty and worth can esteem,
Do honour to him as the choice of my heart.

The astonishment of the shepherds increased every moment. A troop of young shepherdesses approached the banks of the rivulet. The melody of the music was not so much the attraction which led them to this spot, as the desire to see Alidor. They began to dance beneath the trees, forming an agreeable little *bal-champêtre*.

The young Fairy, who was present all the time, but invisible, assumed in an instant, with six of her nymphs, the prettiest shepherdesses' dresses that had ever been seen. Their only ornaments were garlands of flowers. Their crooks were adorned with them, and Young and Handsome, with a simple wreath of jonquils, which produced a charming effect in her beautiful black hair, appeared the most enchanting person in the world. The arrival of these fair shepherdesses surprised the whole company. All the beauties of the district felt mortified. There was not a shepherd who did not eagerly exert himself to do the honours of the *fête* to the new-comers.

Young and Handsome, though unknown to them as a Fairy, did not receive less respect or attract less attention. The sincerest homage is always paid to beauty. Young and Handsome felt flattered by the effect of her charms unaided by the knowledge of her dignity.

As to Alidor, the instant she appeared amongst them, forgetting that the love which a goddess or a fairy bore to him bound him to avoid anything that might be displeasing to her, he flew towards Young and Handsome, and accosting her with the most graceful air in the world: – "Come, beautiful shepherdess," said he, "come and occupy a place more worthy of you. So exquisite a person is too superior to all other beauties to remain mingled with them." He offered his hand, and Young and Handsome, delighted with the sentiments which the sight of her had begun to awaken in the breast of her shepherd, allowed herself to be led by Alidor beneath the canopy which had been attached to the trees as soon as he had arrived at the spot that morning. A troop of young shepherds brought, by his orders, bundles of flowers and branches, and constructed with them a little throne, on which they seated Young and Handsome. Alidor laid himself at her feet. Her nymphs seated themselves near her, and the rest of the party formed a large circle, in which everybody took their places according to their inclinations.

This spot, adorned with so much beauty, presented the most agreeable spectacle in the world. The murmur of the brook mingled with the music, and it seemed as if all the birds in the neighbourhood had assembled there to take their parts in the concert. A great number of shepherds advanced, in separate groups, to pay their court to Young and Handsome. One amongst them, named Iphis, approaching the young Fairy, said to her, "However distinguished may be the place Alidor has induced you to accept, it is one, perhaps, very dangerous to occupy." "I believe so," answered the Fairy, with a smile that had power to captivate all hearts. "The shepherdesses of this village will find it difficult to forgive me the preference which Alidor appears to have accorded to me amongst so many beauties more deserving of it." "No," rejoined Iphis; "our shepherdesses will be more just; but Alidor is beloved by a goddess." And thereupon Iphis related to Young and Handsome the adventure which had befallen the beautiful shepherd. When he had finished his story, the young Fairy, turning towards Alidor with a gracious air, said to him, "I do not desire to provoke so terrible an enemy as the goddess by whom you are beloved. Evidently she did not intend me to occupy this position, and therefore I resign it to her."

She rose as she said these words, but Alidor, gazing fondly upon her, exclaimed, "Stay, lovely shepherdess; there is no goddess whose love I would not sacrifice for the delight of adoring you; and she of whom Iphis speaks is not over wise, at least in matters of the heart, since she has permitted me to behold you!" Young and Handsome could not make any reply to Alidor. The shepherds at that moment came to request her to dance, and never was more grace displayed than on this occasion. Alidor was her partner, who surpassed himself. Never had the most magnificent *fêtes* at the Court of Young and Handsome afforded her so much pleasure as this rural entertainment. Love embellishes every spot in which we behold the object of our affections. Alidor felt his passion increasing every instant, and made a thousand vows to sacrifice all the goddesses and fairies in the world to the ardent love with which his shepherdess had inspired him. Young and Handsome was delighted with the evident attachment of the beautiful shepherd; but she wished to make a momentary trial of his affection. Iphis was amiable, and, if Alidor had not been present, would no doubt have been much admired. The young Fairy spoke to him twice or thrice very graciously, and danced several times with him.

Alidor burned with a jealousy as intense as his love. Young and Handsome observed it, and feeling more sure of her shepherd's heart, she ceased paining it, spoke no more to Iphis during the rest of the day, and bestowed on Alidor her most encouraging glances. Heavens! what glances! they would have filled the most insensible hearts with love.

Evening having arrived, the lovely company separated with regret. A thousand sighs followed Young and Handsome, who forbade any of the shepherds to accompany her; but she promised Alidor, in a few brief words, that he should see her again in the meadows the next morning. She departed, followed by her nymphs and watched by the shepherds, who were in hopes that, by following her at a distance, they might discover, without her perceiving them, the village to which these divine beings belonged; but the moment that Young and Handsome had entered a little wood which concealed her

from the sight of the shepherds, she rendered herself and her nymphs invisible, and they amused themselves for some time in seeing the shepherds vainly endeavouring to trace the road they had taken. Young and Handsome observed with pleasure that Alidor was amongst the most eager of the party.

Iphis was in despair that he had not followed them closely enough, and several of the shepherds, who had been captivated by the nymphs, passed half of the night in hunting the woods and the neighbourhood. Some authors have asserted that the nymphs, following the example of the young Fairy, thought some of these shepherds more charming than all the kings they had ever seen in their lives.

Young and Handsome returned to her palace, and, although a Fairy, always occupied by a thousand different affairs, might absent herself without causing much surprise, she found all her lovers exceedingly uneasy at not having seen her the whole day, but not one of them ventured to reproach her for it. It was necessary to be a very submissive and respectful suitor in the palace of Young and Handsome, or she would speedily issue an order for him to quit her Court. Her admirers did not even dare to speak to her of their passion. It was only by their attentions, their respect, and their constancy, that they could hope eventually to touch her heart.

Young and Handsome appeared little interested in what was passing around. She ate scarcely any supper, fell into frequent fits of musing, and the princes, her lovers, attentive to all her actions, imagined that they heard her sigh several times. She dismissed all the Court very early, and retired to her apartments.

When one is looking forward to a meeting with those we love, everything that presents itself in the interim appears very poor and very troublesome.

The young Fairy, with the nymphs who had followed her all the day, concealed in a cloud, were transported in an instant to the hut of the handsome shepherd. He had returned to it, very much vexed at not being able to ascertain the road his divine shepherdess had taken. Everything in his cottage was as charming as when he had left it; but as in musing he cast his eyes upon the floor of his little chamber, he perceived a change in it. In lieu of paintings from the stories of goddesses who had been in love with shepherds, he perceived the subjects were composed of terrible examples of unfortunate lovers who had proved unworthy of the affection of those divinities.

"You are right," exclaimed the handsome shepherd, on observing these little pictures; "you are right, Goddess. I deserve your anger; but wherefore did you permit so lovely a shepherdess to present herself to my sight? Alas! what divinity could defend a heart from the effects of such charms!" Young and Handsome had arrived in the cottage when Alidor uttered these words. She felt all the tenderness of them, and her affection was redoubled by them.

As on the previous day, a magnificent repast appeared, but Alidor did not enjoy it as he did the first. He was in love, and even a little jealous; for it often recurred to him that his shepherdess had spoken with some interest to Iphis. The promise, however, that she had made him, that he should see her the next day in the meadow, soothed a little his vexation.

The little Cupid waited on him during his repast, but Alidor, occupied by his new anxiety, spoke not a word to him. The table disappeared, and the child, approaching Alidor, presented him with two magnificent miniature cases, and then flew away.

The handsome shepherd opened one of the cases hastily. It contained the portrait of a young female of such perfect beauty, that imagination can scarcely conceive it. Under this marvellous miniature was written, in letters of gold —

"Thy happiness depends on her affection."

"One must have seen my shepherdess," said Alidor, gazing on this beautiful portrait, "not to be enchanted by so lovely a person." He closed the case, and flung it carelessly on a table.

He then opened the other case which the little Cupid had given to him; but what was his astonishment at the sight of the portrait of his shepherdess, resplendent with all the charms that had made so lively an impression on his heart!

She was painted as he had seen her that very day – her hair dressed with flowers, and the little that appeared of her dress was that of a shepherdess. The handsome shepherd was so transported with his love, that he gazed on it for a long time without perceiving that the following words were written beneath the portrait: —

"Forget her attractions, or thy love will be fatal to thee."

"Alas!" exclaimed Alidor, "without her could there be any happiness?" This ecstasy delighted Young and Handsome. The beautiful face he had contemplated unmoved was only a fancy portrait. The young Fairy was desirous of ascertaining whether her shepherd would prefer her to so beautiful a person, and who appeared to be a goddess or a fairy.

Convinced of the love of Alidor, she returned to her palace, after having assembled her nymphs by a signal that had been agreed upon. It was the illumination of the sky by some harmless lightning, and since that time such is often to be seen on a summer evening, unaccompanied by thunder. The nymphs rejoined her: they had also desired to hear something more of their lovers. Some of them were sufficiently pleased. They had found their swains occupied with recollections of them, and speaking of them with ardour, but others were less satisfied with the effect of their beauty. They found their shepherds fast asleep. A man may sometimes appear very much in love during the day, who is not sufficiently so for his passion to keep him awake all night.

The young Fairy retired to rest as soon as she arrived at her palace, charmed with the sincere affection of her shepherd. She had no other anxiety than the agreeable one arising from her impatience to see him again. As to Alidor, he slept a little, and without alarming himself at the warnings which he had read beneath the two miniatures. He thought only of returning to the meadow: he hoped to see his shepherdess there during the day. It seemed to him that he could not get there soon enough.

He led his charming flock to the fortunate spot where he had seen Young and Handsome; his pretty dog took good care of it. The comely shepherd could think of nothing but his shepherdess.

Young and Handsome was, much against her will, occupied that morning receiving the ambassadors of several neighbouring monarchs. Never were audiences so short; yet, notwithstanding, a considerable portion of the day passed in the performance of these tiresome ceremonies. The young Fairy suffered as much as her shepherd, whose keen impatience caused him a thousand torments.

The sun had set. Alidor had no longer any hope of seeing his shepherdess that day. How great was his grief!

He deplored his fate. He sighed incessantly. He made verses on her absence, and with the ferrule of his crook engraved them on the trunk of a young elm.

You on whom Venus looks with envious eyes,
While round your steps her truant Graces play, —
You on whose glances Cupid so relies
That he has thrown all other darts away;
How wretched in your absence must I be
Who prize you ev'ry earthly bliss above! —
And yet my sorrow has a charm for me,
Its gloom is but the shadow of my love.

As he finished carving these lines, Young and Handsome appeared in the meadow at a distance, with her nymphs all still attired as shepherdesses. Alidor recognised her a long way off. He ran – he

flew towards Young and Handsome, who received him with a smile so charming, that it would have increased the felicity of the gods themselves.

He told his love to her with an ardour capable of persuading a heart less tenderly inclined towards him than that of the young Fairy. She desired to see what he had carved on the tree, and was charmed with the talent and affection of her shepherd. He related to her all that happened to him the preceding evening, and offered a thousand times to follow her to the end of the world to fly from the love which a goddess or a fairy had unfortunately conceived for him. "My loss would be too great should you fly from that fairy," replied Young and Handsome, in her sweetest manner. "It is no longer necessary for me to disguise my sentiments from you, as I am convinced of the sincerity of yours. It is I, Alidor!" continued the charming Fairy – "It is I who have given you these proofs of an affection which, if you continue faithful to me, will ensure your happiness and mine for ever!"

The handsome shepherd, transported with love and joy, flung himself at her feet, his silence appeared more eloquent to the young Fairy than the most finished oration. She bade him rise, and he found himself superbly attired. The Fairy then touching the ground with her crook, there appeared a magnificent car, drawn by twelve white horses of surpassing beauty. They were harnessed four abreast. Young and Handsome stepped into the car, and caused the comely shepherd to take his seat beside her. Her nymphs found room in it also, and as soon as they had all taken their places, the beautiful horses, who had no occasion for a driver to intimate to them the intentions of their mistress, swiftly conveyed the whole party to a favourite château belonging to the young Fairy. She had adorned it with everything that her art could furnish her with in the way of wonders. It was called the Castle of Flowers, and was the most charming residence in the world.

The young Fairy and her happy lover arrived with the attendant nymphs in a spacious court-yard, the walls of which were formed out of thick hedges of jasmines and lemon-trees. They were only breast-high. Beneath them ran a lovely river, which encompassed the court-yard; beyond it a charming grove, and then fields stretching as far as the eye could see, through which the said river made a thousand windings, as unwilling to quit so beautiful a home.

The castle was more to be admired for its architecture than for its size. It contained twelve apartments, each of which had its peculiar beauty. They were very spacious; but there was not room enough in them for the residence of Young and Handsome, and all her Court, which was the most numerous and magnificent in the universe. The young Fairy used this castle but as a place of retreat. She was accompanied thither generally by only her most favourite nymphs and the officers of her household.

She led the shepherd into the Myrtle Room. All the furniture was made of myrtles in continual blossom, interlaced with an art that displayed the power and good taste of the young Fairy, even in the most simple things. All the rooms in the castle were furnished in the same manner, with flowers only. The air breathed in them was always fragrant and pure.

Young and Handsome, by her power, had banished for ever from the spot the rigours of winter, and if the heats of summer were ever permitted to penetrate these agreeable bowers, it was only to render more enjoyable the beautiful baths attached to the building, which were delicious.

The apartment was of white and blue porphyry, exquisitely sculptured; the baths being of the most curious and agreeable forms. That in which Young and Handsome bathed, was made out of a single topaz, and placed on a platform in an alcove of porcelain. Four columns, composed of amethysts of the most perfect beauty, supported a canopy of magnificent yellow and silver brocade, embroidered with pearls. Alidor, absorbed by the happiness of beholding the charming Fairy, and remarking her affection for him, scarcely noticed all these marvels.

A delightful and tender conversation detained these happy lovers for a long time in the Myrtle Room. A splendid supper was served in the Jonquil Saloon. An elegant entertainment followed. The nymphs acted to music the loves of Diana and Endymion.

Young and Handsome forgot to return to her palace, and passed the night in the Narcissus Chamber. Alidor, entranced with love, was long before he tasted the sweets of slumber in the Myrtle Room, to which he was conducted by the nymphs, on the termination of the entertainment. Young and Handsome, who forbore to use her power to calm such agreeable emotions, also laid awake till nearly daybreak.

Alidor, impatient to behold again the charming Fairy, awaited the happy moment for some time in the Jonquil Saloon. He had neglected nothing in his attire which could add a grace to his natural attractions. Young and Handsome appeared a thousand times more lovely than Venus. She passed a part of the day with Alidor and the nymphs in the garden of the castle, the beauties of which surpassed the most marvellous description. There was an agreeable little *fête champêtre* in a delicious grove, wherein Alidor, during a favourable opportunity, had the sweet pleasure of professing his ardent love to Young and Handsome.

She desired, that same evening, to return to her palace; but promised Alidor to come back to him the next day. Never has an absence of a few hours been honoured by so many regrets. The handsome shepherd passionately desired to follow the young Fairy, but she commanded him to remain in the Castle of Flowers. She wished to hide her attachment from the eyes of all her Court. No one entered this castle without her order, and she had no fear that her nymphs would disclose her secret. The secrets of a Fairy are always safe. They are never divulged; the punishment would follow the offence too swiftly.

Young and Handsome asked Alidor for the pretty dog which had always followed him, that she might take it with her. Everything is dear to us that pleases those we love.

After the departure of the young Fairy, the shepherd, to indulge in his anxiety, rather than to dissipate it, plunged deeper into the woods to muse on his adorable mistress. In a little meadow, enamelled with flowers, and watered by an agreeable spring, which arose near the middle of the wood, he perceived his flock gambolling in the grass. It was watched by six young female slaves, with handsome features, dressed in blue and gold, with golden chains and collars. His favourite sheep recognised her master and ran to him. Alidor caressed her, and was deeply touched by the attentions of Young and Handsome to everything which concerned him.

The young slaves showed Alidor their hut. It was not far from the spot, at the end of a beautiful and very shady alley. This little dwelling was built of cedar. The initials of Young and Handsome and Alidor entwined together, appeared in every part of it, formed with the rarest woods. The following inscription was written in letters of gold upon a large turquoise: —

Let the flock of him I love
In these meads for ever rove.
By that Shepherd loved, the lot
Of the Gods I envy not.

The handsome shepherd returned to the Castle of Flowers, enchanted by the kindness of the young Fairy. He declined any entertainment that evening. When absent from those we love, what care we for amusements!

Young and Handsome returned the next day, as she had promised, to her happy lover. What joy was theirs to behold each other again! All the power of the young Fairy had never procured for her so much felicity.

She passed nearly all her time at the Castle of Flowers, and rarely now appeared at Court. In vain did the princes, her suitors, grieve almost to death at her absence, everything was sacrificed to the fortunate Alidor.

But could so sweet a happiness last long untroubled? Another Fairy, besides Young and Handsome, had seen the beautiful shepherd, and felt her heart also touched by his charms.

One evening that Young and Handsome had gone to show herself for a few moments to her Court, Alidor, engrossed by his passion, sat deeply musing in the Jonquil Saloon, when his attention was awakened by a slight noise at one of the windows, and on looking towards it he perceived a brilliant light, and the next moment he saw on a table, near which he was seated, a little creature about half a yard high, very old, with hair whiter than snow, a standing collar, and an old-fashioned farthingale. "I am the Fairy Mordicante," said she to the handsome shepherd; "and I come to announce to thee a much greater happiness than that of being beloved by Young and Handsome." "What can that be?" inquired Alidor, with a contemptuous air. "The gods have none more perfect for themselves!" "It is that of pleasing me," replied the old Fairy, haughtily. "I love thee, and my power is far greater than that of Young and Handsome, and almost equals that of the Gods. Abandon that young Fairy for me. I will revenge thee on thine enemies, and on all whom thou wouldst injure."

"Thy favours are useless to me," answered the young shepherd, with a smile; "I have no enemies, and I would injure no one; I am too well satisfied with my own lot; and if the charming Fairy I adore were but a simple shepherdess, I could be as happy with her in a cottage as I am now in the loveliest palace in the world." At these words the wicked Fairy became suddenly as tall and as large as she had hitherto been diminutive, and disappeared making a horrible noise.

The next morning, Young and Handsome returned to the Castle of Flowers. Alidor related his adventure. They both knew the Fairy Mordicante. She was very aged, had always been ugly, and exceedingly susceptible. Young and Handsome and her happy lover made a thousand jokes upon her passion, and never for a moment felt the least uneasiness as to the consequences of her fury.

Can one be a happy lover and think of future misfortunes?

A week afterwards, Young and Handsome and the lovely shepherd took an excursion in a fine barge, gilt all over, on the beautiful river which encircled the Castle of Flowers, followed by all their little Court in the prettiest boats in the world. The barge of Young and Handsome was shaded by a canopy formed of a light blue and silver tissue. The dresses of the rowers were of the same material. Other small boats, filled with excellent musicians, accompanied the happy lovers, and performed some agreeable airs. Alidor, more enamoured than ever, could gaze on nothing but Young and Handsome, whose beauty appeared that day more charming than can be described.

In the midst of their enjoyment they saw twelve Syrens rise out of the water, and a moment afterwards twelve Tritons appeared, and joining the Syrens, encircled with them the little barque of Young and Handsome. The Tritons played some extraordinary airs on their shells, and the Syrens sang some graceful melodies, which for a while entertained the young Fairy and the beautiful shepherd. Young and Handsome, who was accustomed to wonders, imagined that it was some pageant which had been prepared by those whose duty it was to contribute to her pleasure by inventing new entertainments; but all on a sudden these perfidious Tritons and Syrens, laying hold of the young Fairy's boat, dragged it under water.

The only danger which Alidor feared was that which threatened the young Fairy. He attempted to swim to her, but the Tritons carried him off despite his resistance, and Young and Handsome, borne away by the Syrens in the meanwhile, was transported into her palace.

One Fairy having no power over another, the jealous Mordicante was compelled to limit her vengeance to the making Young and Handsome endure all the misery so cruel a bereavement would necessarily occasion. In the meanwhile Alidor was conveyed by the Tritons to a terrible castle guarded by winged dragons. It was there that Mordicante had determined to make herself beloved by the beautiful shepherd, or to be revenged on him for his disdain. He was placed in a very dark chamber. Mordicante, blazing with the most beautiful jewels in the world, appeared to him, and professed her affection for him. The shepherd, exasperated at being torn from Young and Handsome, treated the wicked Fairy with all the contempt she deserved. What could equal the rage of Mordicante? But her love was still too violent to permit her to destroy the object of it. After detaining Alidor several days in this frightful prison, she resolved to endeavour to conquer the faithful shepherd by new artifices.

She transported him suddenly to a magnificent palace. He was served with a sumptuousness which had not been exceeded in the Castle of Flowers. Endeavours were made to dissipate his grief by a thousand agreeable entertainments, and the most beautiful nymphs in the universe, who composed his Court, appeared to dispute with each other the honour of pleasing him. Not a word more was said to him respecting the passion of the wicked Fairy; but the faithful shepherd languished in the midst of luxury, and was in no less despair at his separation from Young and Handsome, when witnessing the gayest entertainments, than he had been whilst immured in his dreadful prison.

Mordicante trusted, however, that the absence of Young and Handsome, the continual round of pleasures provided for Alidor's amusement, and the presence of so many charming women, would at length overcome the fidelity of the shepherd; and her object in surrounding him with so many beautiful nymphs, was but to take herself the figure of the one which might most attract his attention. With this view, she mingled amongst them in disguise, sometimes appearing as the most charming brunette, and at others as the fairest beauty in the universe.

Love, who is all-powerful in human hearts, had subdued for a time her natural cruelty; but desperation at being unable to shake the constancy of Alidor re-awakened her fury so powerfully, that she determined to destroy the charming shepherd, and make him the victim of the faithful love he cherished for Young and Handsome. One day, without being seen, she was watching him in a beautiful gallery, the windows of which opened upon the sea; Alidor, leaning over a balustrade, mused in silence for a considerable time. But, at length, after a heavy sigh, he uttered such tender and touching lamentations, depicting so vividly his passion for the young Fairy, that Mordicante, transported with fury, appeared to him in her natural shape; and, after having loaded him with reproaches, caused him to be carried back to his prison, and announced to him that in three days he should be sacrificed to her hatred, and that the most cruel tortures should avenge her slighted affection.

Alidor regretted not the loss of a life which had become insupportable to him, deprived of Young and Handsome; and satisfied that he had nothing to fear on her account from the wrath of Mordicante, the power of the young Fairy being equal to hers, he calmly awaited the death he had been doomed to.

In the meanwhile, Young and Handsome, as faithful as her shepherd, mourned over his loss. The Syrens who had wafted her back to her palace had disappeared as soon as their task was accomplished, and the young Fairy was convinced that it was the cruel Mordicante who had bereft her of Alidor. The excess of her grief proclaimed at the same time to all her Court, her love for the young shepherd, and her loss of him.

How many monarchs were envious of the misery even into which the wicked Fairy had precipitated Alidor? What vexation for these enamoured princes to learn that they had a beloved rival, and to behold Young and Handsome occupied only in weeping for this fortunate mortal! His loss, however, revived their hopes. They had discovered at last that Young and Handsome could feel as well as inspire affection. They redoubled their attentions. Each flattered himself with the sweet hope to occupy some day the place of that fortunate lover; but Young and Handsome, inconsolable for the absence of Alidor, and worried by the advances of his rivals, abandoned her Court, and retired to the Castle of Flowers. The sight of those charming scenes, where everything recalled to her heart the recollection of the lovely shepherd, increased her melancholy and her affection.

One day, as she was walking in her beautiful gardens, and gazing on the various objects with which they were adorned, she exclaimed aloud, "Alas! ye were formerly my delight; but I am now too much absorbed by my sorrow to take any further interest in your embellishment." As she ceased speaking, she heard the murmur of a gentle breeze that, agitating the flowers of this beautiful garden, arranged them instantaneously in various forms. First, they represented the initials of Young and Handsome; then those of another name, which she was not acquainted with; and a moment afterwards, they formed distinctly entire words, and Young and Handsome, astonished at this novelty, read these verses, written in so singular a fashion: —

Bid fond Zephyr tend thy bowers,
At his breath awake the flowers.
Thus for Flora, every morn,
Doth he mead and grove adorn.
How much more his pride 'twould be,
Fairer Nymph, to sigh for thee!

Young and Handsome was pondering on these verses, when she saw the Deity named in them appear in the air, and hasten to declare his passion to her. He was in a little car of roses, drawn by a hundred white canary birds, harnessed ten and ten, with strings of pearl. The car approached the earth, and Zephyr descended from it close to the young Fairy. He addressed her with all the eloquence of a very charming and very gallant Divinity; but the young Fairy, in lieu of feeling flattered by so brilliant a conquest, replied to him like a faithful lover. Zephyr was not disheartened by the coldness of Young and Handsome. He hoped to soften her by his attentions. He paid his court to her most assiduously, and neglected nothing that he thought could please her.

The glory of Alidor was now complete. He had a God for his rival, and was preferred to him by Young and Handsome.

Nevertheless, this fortunate mortal was on the point of being destroyed by the fury of Mordicante. A year had nearly elapsed since the young Fairy and the beautiful shepherd had been torn from each other, when Zephyr, who had given up all hopes of shaking the constancy of Young and Handsome, and was moved by the tears which he saw her unceasingly shed for the loss of Alidor, exclaimed one day, on finding her more depressed than usual, "Since it is no longer possible for me to flatter myself, charming Fairy, that I shall ever have the good fortune to gain your affections, I am desirous of contributing at least to your felicity. What can I do to make you happy?"

"To make me happy," replied Young and Handsome, with a look so full of tenderness that it was enough to revive all the love of Zephyr, "you must restore to me my Alidor. I am powerless against another Fairy, but you, Zephyr, you are a God, and can destroy all the spells of my cruel rival!" "I will endeavour," rejoined Zephyr, "to subdue the tender sentiments you have inspired me with sufficiently to enable me to render you an agreeable service." So saying, he flew away, leaving Young and Handsome to indulge in a sweet hope. Zephyr did not deceive her. He was not in the habit of loving for any length of time, without the certainty of eventual success; and it was evident to him that the young Fairy was too constant for him to hope that he could ever make her forget Alidor; he therefore flew to the horrible prison where the beautiful shepherd awaited nothing less than death. An impetuous wind, swelled by six northern breezes, that had accompanied Zephyr, blew open in an instant the gates of the dungeon, and the beautiful shepherd, enveloped in a very brilliant cloud, was wafted to the Castle of Flowers.

Zephyr, after he had seen Alidor, was less surprised at the constancy of Young and Handsome; but he did not make himself visible to the shepherd until he had restored him to the charming Fairy.

Who could describe the perfect joy of Alidor and Young and Handsome at seeing each other once more? How lovely each appeared, and how fondly was each beloved! What thanks did not these fortunate lovers render to the Deity who had secured their happiness. He left them shortly afterwards to return to Flora.

Young and Handsome was anxious that all her Court should share in her felicity. They celebrated it by a thousand festivities throughout her empire, despite the vexation of the princes, her less fortunate lovers, who were the spectators of the triumphs of the beautiful shepherd.

In order to have nothing more to fear for Alidor from the wrath of Mordicante, Young and Handsome taught him the Fairy Art, and presented him with the gift of continual youth. Having thus provided for his happiness, she next considered his glory. She gave him the Castle of Flowers, and

caused him to be acknowledged king of that beautiful country, over which his ancestors had formerly reigned. Alidor became the greatest monarch in the universe, on the same spot where he had been the most charming shepherd. He loaded all his old friends with favours; and, retaining for ever his charms, as well as Young and Handsome, we are assured that they loved each other eternally, and that Hymen would not disturb a passion which formed the happiness of their existence.

THE PALACE OF REVENGE

Once on a time there was a King and Queen of Iceland, who, after twenty years of married life, had a daughter. Her birth gave them the greatest pleasure, as they had so long despaired of having children to succeed to their throne. The young Princess was named Imis; her dawning charms promised from her infancy all the wonderful beauty which shone with so much brilliancy when she arrived at a maturer age.

No one in the universe would have been worthy of her had not Cupid, who thought it a point of honour to subject to his empire, some day, so marvellous a person, taken care to cause a Prince to be born in the same Court equally charming with that lovely Princess. He was called Philax, and was the son of a brother of the King of Iceland. He was two years older than the Princess, and they were brought up together with all the freedom natural to childhood and near relationship. The first sensations of their hearts were mutual admiration and affection. They could see nothing so beautiful as themselves, consequently they found no attraction in the world that could interfere with the passion each felt for the other, even without yet knowing its name.

The King and Queen saw this dawning affection with pleasure. They loved young Philax. He was a Prince of their blood, and no child had ever awakened fairer hopes. Everything seemed to favour the designs of Cupid to render Prince Philax some day the happiest of men. The Princess was about twelve years old when the Queen, who was exceedingly fond of her, desired to have her daughter's fortune told by a Fairy, whose extraordinary science was at that time making a great sensation.

She set out in search of her, taking with her Imis, who, in her distress at parting with Philax, wondered a thousand and a thousand times how anybody could trouble themselves about the future when the present was so agreeable. Philax remained with the King, and all the pleasures of the Court could not console him for the absence of the Princess.

The Queen arrived at the Fairy's castle. She was magnificently received; but the Fairy was not at home. Her usual residence was on the summit of a mountain at some distance from the castle, where she lived all alone and absorbed in that profound study which had rendered her famous throughout the world.

As soon as she heard of the Queen's arrival, she returned to the castle. The Queen presented the Princess to her, told her her name and the hour of her birth, which the Fairy knew as well as she did, though she had not been present at it. The Fairy of the Mountain knew everything. She promised the Queen an answer in two days, and then returned to the summit of the mountain. On the morning of the third day she came back to the castle, bade the Queen descend into the garden, and gave her some tablets of palm leaves closely shut, which she was ordered not to open except in the presence of the King.

The Queen, to satisfy her curiosity in some degree, asked her several questions respecting the fate of her daughter. "Great Queen," replied the Fairy of the Mountain, "I cannot precisely tell you what sort of misfortune threatens the Princess. I perceive only that love will have a large share in the events of her life, and that no beauty ever inspired such violent passions as that of Imis will do." It was not necessary to be a fairy to foresee that the Princess would have admirers. Her eyes already seemed to demand from all hearts the love which the Fairy assured the Queen would be entertained for her. In the meanwhile Imis, much less uneasy about her future destiny than at being separated from Philax, amused herself by gathering flowers; but thinking only of his love, and in her impatience to depart, she forgot the bouquet she had begun to compose, and unconsciously flung away the flowers she had amassed at first with delight. She hastened to rejoin the Queen, who was taking her leave of the Fairy of the Mountain. The Fairy embraced Imis, and gazing on her with the admiration she deserved – "Since it is impossible for me," she exclaimed, after a short silence, which had something mysterious in it – "since it is impossible for me, beautiful Princess, to alter in your favour the decrees of destiny,

I will at least endeavour to enable you to escape the misfortunes it prepares for you." So saying, she gathered with her own hands a bunch of lilies of the valley, and addressing the youthful Imis – "Wear always these flowers which I give to you," said she; "they will never fade, and as long as you have them about your person, they will protect you from all the ills with which you are threatened by Fate." She then fastened the bouquet on the head-dress of Imis, and the flowers, obedient to the wishes of the Fairy, were no sooner placed in the hair of the Princess, than they adjusted themselves, and formed a sort of aigrette, the whiteness of which seemed only to prove that nothing could eclipse that of the complexion of the fair Imis.

The Queen took her departure, after having thanked the Fairy a thousand times, and went back to Iceland, where all the Court impatiently awaited the return of the Princess. Never did delight sparkle with more brilliancy and beauty than in the eyes of Imis and of her lover. The mystery involved in the plume of lilies of the valley was revealed to the King alone. It had so agreeable an effect in the beautiful brown hair of the Princess, that everybody took it simply for an ornament which she had herself culled in the gardens of the Fairy.

The Princess said much more to Philax about the grief she felt at her separation from him than about the misfortunes which the Fates had in store for her. Philax was, nevertheless, alarmed at them; but the happiness of being together was present, the evils, as yet, uncertain. They forgot them, and abandoned themselves to the delight of seeing each other again.

In the meanwhile, the Queen recounted to the King the events of her journey, and gave him the Fairy's tablets. The King opened and found in them the following words, written in letters of gold: —

Fate for Imis hides despair
Under hopes that seem most fair;
She will miserable be,
Through too much felicity.

The King and Queen were much distressed at this oracle, and vainly sought its explanation. They said nothing about it to the Princess, in order to spare her an unnecessary sorrow. One day that Philax was gone hunting, a pleasure he indulged in frequently, Imis was walking by herself in a labyrinth of myrtles. She was very melancholy because Philax was so long absent, and reproached herself for giving way to an impatience which he did not partake. She was absorbed in her thoughts, when she heard a voice, which said to her, "Why do you distress yourself, beautiful Princess? If Philax is not sensible of the happiness of being beloved by you, I come to offer you a heart a thousand times more grateful – a heart deeply smitten by your charms, and a fortune sufficiently brilliant to be desired by any one except yourself, to whom the whole world is subject." The Princess was much surprised at hearing this voice. She had imagined herself alone in the labyrinth, and, as she had not uttered a word, she was still more astonished that this voice had replied to her thoughts. She looked about her, and saw a little man appear in the air, seated upon a cockchafer. "Fear not, fair Imis," said he to her; "you have no lover more submissive than I am; and although this is the first time that I have appeared to you, I have long loved you, and daily gazed upon you." "You astonish me!" replied the Princess. "What! You have daily beheld me, and you know my thoughts? If so, you must be aware that it is useless to love me. Philax, to whom I have given my heart, is too charming ever to cease being its master, and although I am displeased with him, I never loved him so much as I do at this moment. But tell me who you are, and where you first saw me." "I am Pagan the Enchanter," replied he, "and have power over everybody but you. I saw you first in the gardens of the Fairy of the Mountain. I was hidden in one of the tulips you gathered. I took for a happy omen the chance which had induced you to choose the flower I was concealed in. I flattered myself that you would carry me away with you; but you were too much occupied with the pleasure of thinking of Philax. You threw away the flowers as soon as you had gathered them, and left me in the garden the most enamoured of beings.

From that moment I have felt that nothing could make me happy but the hope of being loved by you. Think favourably of me, fair Imis, if it be possible, and permit me occasionally to remind you of my affection." With these words he disappeared, and the Princess returned to the palace, where the sight of Philax dissipated the alarm she had felt at this adventure. She was so eager to hear him excuse himself for the length of time he had been hunting, that she had nearly forgotten to inform him of what had occurred to her; but at last she told him what she had seen in the labyrinth of myrtles.

The young Prince, notwithstanding his courage, was alarmed at the idea of a winged rival, with whom he could not dispute the hand of the Princess upon equal terms. But the plume of lilies of the valley guaranteed him against the effect of enchantments, and the affection Imis entertained for him would not permit him to fear any change in her heart.

The day after the adventure in the labyrinth, the Princess, on awaking, saw fly into her chamber twelve tiny nymphs, seated on honey-bees, and bearing in their hands little golden baskets. They approached the bed of Imis, saluted her, and then went and placed their baskets on a table of white marble, which appeared in the centre of the apartment. As soon as the baskets were set upon it, they enlarged to an ordinary size. The nymphs having quitted them, again saluted Imis, and one of them, approaching the bed nearer than the rest, let something fall upon it, and then they all flew away.

The Princess, despite the astonishment which so strange a sight occasioned, took up what the nymph had dropped beside her. It was an emerald of marvellous beauty. It opened the moment the Princess touched it, and she found it contained a rose leaf, on which she read these verses.

Let the world learn, to its surprise,
The wondrous power of thine eyes.
Such is the love I bear to thee,
It makes e'en torture dear to me.

The Princess could not recover from her astonishment. At length she called to her attendants, who were as much surprised as Imis at the sight of the table and the baskets. The King, the Queen, and Philax hastened to the spot on the news of this extraordinary event. The Princess, in her relation of it, suppressed nothing except the letter of her lover. She considered she was not bound to reveal that to any one but Philax. The baskets were carefully examined, and were found to be filled with jewels of extraordinary beauty, and of so great a value as to double the astonishment of the spectators.

The Princess would not touch one of them, and having found an instant when nobody was listening, she drew near to Philax and gave him the emerald and the rose leaf. He read his rival's letter with much disquietude. Imis, to console him, tore the rose leaf to pieces before his face; but ah! how dearly did they pay for that act!

Some days elapsed without the Princess hearing anything of Pagan. She fancied that her contempt for him would extinguish his passion, and Philax flattered himself by indulging in a like belief. That Prince returned to the chase as usual. He halted alone by the side of a fountain, to refresh himself. He had about him the emerald which the Princess had given him, and recollecting with pleasure the little value she set on it, he drew it from his pocket to look at it. But scarcely had he held it a moment in his hand when it slipped through his fingers, and, as soon as it touched the ground, changed into a chariot. Two winged monsters issued from the fountain and harnessed themselves to it. Philax gazed on them without alarm, for he was incapable of fear, but he could not avoid feeling some emotion when he found himself transported into the chariot by an irresistible power, and at the same moment raised into the air, through which the winged monsters caused the chariot to fly with a prodigious rapidity. In the meanwhile night came, and the huntsmen, after searching throughout the wood in vain for Philax, repaired to the Palace, whither they imagined he might have returned alone; but he was not to be found there, nor had any one seen him since he had set out with them for the chase.

The King commanded them to go back and renew their search for the Prince. All the Court shared in his Majesty's anxiety. They returned to the wood, they ran in every direction around it, and did not retrace their steps to the Palace before daybreak, but without having obtained the least intelligence of the Prince. Imis had passed the night in despair at her lover's absence, of which she could not comprehend the cause. She had ascended a terrace of the Palace to watch for the return of the party that had gone in search of Philax, and flattered herself she should see him arrive in their company; but no words can express the excess of her affliction when no Philax appeared, and she was informed that it had been impossible to ascertain what had become of him. She fainted; they carried her into the Palace, and one of her women, in her haste to undress and put her to bed, took out of the hair of the Princess the plume of lilies of the valley which preserved her from the power of enchantments. The instant it was removed a dark cloud filled the apartment, and Imis disappeared. The King and Queen were distracted at this loss, and nothing could ever console them.

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