

# VARIOUS

THE MIRROR OF  
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**Various**  
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**SPIRIT OF THE  
ANNUALS FOR 1833**

**THE PICTURESQUE ANNUAL**

This is certainly one of the most splendid works of the kind ever produced in this or any other country. This is high but not unmerited praise; as the reader will believe when we tell him, that it contains twenty-six large plates, from drawings by Stanfield, engraved by first-rate artists, and superintended by Mr. Charles Heath. They are all, strictly speaking, PICTURESQUE scenes, chosen with great skill, and with right understanding of the Picturesque. The literary portion consists of Travelling Sketches on the Rhine, and in Belgium, and in Holland, by Mr.

Leitch Ritchie. The plates are, of course, intended as illustrations to the letter-press; but it is too evident, that the latter has been *written* to the plates. However, that matters not, for the twenty-six engravings are amply worth twenty-one shillings, the cost of the volume. The author's share is lively and jaunty, and of the most here-and-there description. We only intend to quote the portion accompanying the Engraving on the annexed page.<sup>1</sup>

### ST. GOAR, (*on the Rhine*)

"We now arrived at St. Goar, and the ruins of the castle of Rheinfels: but here the pen gives willing place to the pencil. In the view, the town and river are seen through an arch, in such a way as to convey a complete idea of what we call the Lakes of the Rhine. In entering St. Goar by the gate of the Rhine, a stranger of these every-day times thinks of nothing but being bothered about his passport. It was once very different. A traveller of any consideration, who visited the town for the first time, was asked by the functionary, 'Sir, My Lord, or Sir Knight'—as it happened—'with what do you please to be baptized, wine or water?'—'With wine,' of course was the answer, if the respondent happened to be a man of any kind of good sense or virtuous habits; and, after being commanded to prepare himself for the ceremony, by giving alms to the poor, he

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<sup>1</sup> Copied by permission of the Proprietor.

was straightway led by his sponsors to the Fleur de Lys. In this ancient hostelrie, the neophyte was seated amidst the assembled brethren, a brazen crown placed on his head, and the rules of the Order of the Collar read to him. A huge goblet of silver was then presented to him, filled to the lip with wine, and this he was commanded to drain to the health of the Emperor; a second was emptied to the honour of the Landgrave of Hesse; and a third gurgled salutation to the company. The same ceremony was gone through by the sponsors; and the name of the baptized being duly entered in the register of the Order, a second collection was made for the poor, and he was permitted to continue his way into the town. If, instead of wine, the misguided individual desired baptism with water, he was justly punished for the immorality, by a bucket of the insipid element being tumbled over his head. This Order, it is said, had its origin in the reconciliation at St. Goar of the two sons of Charlemagne; which was doubtless accompanied by much out-pouring of wine, and in memory whereof they hung up at the gates a brazen collar."

This is the second volume of the *Picturesque Annual*. The Public are stated, in its preface, to have contributed from ten to twelve thousand guineas to the support of last year's volume; and we are inclined to think, that, in his next, the Editor will have the gratification of reporting still more munificent patronage: for, if guineas be somewhat less abundant than twelve months since, the disposition to foster British art, and a liberal appreciation of its merits, has been and is on the increase; and, though the proverb

be somewhat musty, "Where there is a will," &c.

# THE BOOK OF BEAUTY

[This is a title of no small pretension. It is in certain respects ill chosen, though it may, in some degree, denote the exquisite triumphs which art has here accomplished. The Illustrations consist of eighteen portraits of every order of beauty, of variety enough to realize Sir Philip Sidney's aphorism, that "whatsoever is liked, to the liker is beautiful." But here all must be liked; therefore all are beautiful. The very names would make out a sort of court-roll of Venus, and the book itself the enchanting effect of the goddess' embroidered girdle, which had the gift of inspiring love. This charm will doubtless ensure the volume hundreds of possessors. The names of a few of the galaxy will give the reader a faint idea of their charms, unless the reader accord with Juliet's somewhat peevish "What's in a name." Thus, we find Julia, the queen of sentimentality; Belinda, gay and sparkling; Madeline, the early prey of despair; Lolah, languishing amid Eastern magnificence; the Orphan, pencilled in the very simplicity of nature, and finely contrasted with the coquetry of art; Theresa, the very type of romance; Geraldine, Meditation, the Bride, and Lucy Ashton. But we must not omit the heroine of our extract—with tall, ethereal form, raven ringlets, and pearly eyes—such charms as would attune the wise man to another Song of Beauty.

The letter-press of the volume is too in the type of beauty

—from the chastely-elegant pen of Miss Landon. It consists of tales and sketches, lights and shadows, such as none but her accomplished pen could tell or harmonize. Here is probably the best illustration—]

## THE ENCHANTRESS. (*By herself.*)

You see in me, "the only living descendant of those Eastern Magi to whom the stars revealed their mysteries, and spirits gave their power. Age after age did sages add to that knowledge which, by bequeathing to their posterity, they trusted would in time combat to conquer their mortality. But the glorious race perished from the earth, till only my father was left, and I his orphan child. Marvels and knowledge paid his life of fasting and study. All the spirits of the elements bowed down before him; but the future was still hidden from his eyes, and death was omnipotent. His power of working evil had no bounds, but his power of good was limited; and yet it was good that he desired. How dared he put in motion those mighty changes, which seemed to promise such happiness on earth, while he was ignorant of what their results might be? and of what avail was the joy he might pour out on life, over whose next hour the grave might close, and only make the parting breath more bitter from the blessings which it was leaving behind?"

I was no unworthy daughter of such a sire; I advanced in these divine studies even to his wish, and looked to the future with a

hope which many years had deadened in himself, but from which I caught an omen of ultimate success. Alas! he mastered not his destiny: I have said before, his ashes are in yonder urn. A few unwholesome dews on a summer night were mightier than all his science. For a time I struggled not with despair; but youth is buoyant, and habit is strong. Again I pored over the mystic scroll—again I called on the spirits with spell and with sign. Many a mystery was revealed, many a wonder grew familiar; but still death remained at the end of all things, as before. One night I was on the terrace of my tower. Above me was the deep, blue sky, with its stars—worlds filled, perchance, with the intelligence which I sought. On the desert below was the phantasm of a great city. I looked on its small and miserable streets, where hunger and cold reigned paramount, and man was as wretched as if flung but yesterday on the earth, and there had been as yet no time for art to yield its assistance, or labour to bring forth its fruit. I gazed next on scenes of festivity, but they were not glad; for I looked from the wreath into the head it encircled, and from the carcanet of gems to the heart which beat beneath—and I saw envy, and hate, and repining, and remorse. I turned my last glance on the palace within its walls; but there the purple was spread as a pall, and the voice of sorrow and the cry of pain were loud on the air. I bade the shadows roll away upon the winds, and rose depressed and in sorrow. I was not alone: one of those glorious spirits, whose sphere was far beyond the power of our science, whose existence we rather surmised than knew; stood beside me.

From that hour a new existence opened before me. I loved, and I was beloved—love, to which imagination gave poetry, and mind gave strength, was the new element added to my being. Alas! how little do the miserable race to which I belong know of such a feeling. They blend a moment's vanity, a moment's gratification, into a temporary excitement, and they call it love. Such are the many, and the many make the wretchedness of earth. And yet your own heart, Leoni, and that of my gentle cousin, may witness for my words, there are such things as truth, and tenderness, and devotion in the world; and such redeem the darkness and degradation of its lot. Nay, more, if ever the mystery of our destiny be unravelled, and happiness be wrought out of wisdom, it will be the work of love.

It matters little to tell you of my blessedness; but my very heart was filled with the light of those radiant eyes, which were to me what the sun is to the world. Yet one dark shadow rested on my soul, beyond even their influence. Death had been the awful conqueror with whom my race had so often struggled, and to whom they had so often yielded. A mortal, I loved an immortal, and the fear of separation was ever before me; yet a long and happy time passed away before my fear found words.

It was one evening we were floating over the earth, and the crimson cloud on which we lay was the one where the sun's last look had rested. Its gleam fell on a small nook, while all around was fast melting into shade. Still it was a sad spot which was thus brightened—it was a new made grave. Over the others

the long grass grew luxuriantly, and speckled, too, by many small and fragrant flowers; but on this, the dark-brown earth had been freshly turned up, and the red worm, writhed restlessly about its disturbed habitation. Some roses had been scattered, but they were withered; their sweet leaves were already damp and discoloured. All wore the present and outward signs of our eternal doom—to perish in corruption.

The shadows of the evening fell, deepening the gloom into darkness—the one last, bright ray had long been past, when a youth came from the adjacent valley. That grave but yesterday received one who was to have been his bride—his betrothed from childhood, for whose sake he had been to far lands and gathered much wealth, but who had pined in his absence and died. He flung himself on the loathsome place, and the night-wind bore around the ravings of his despair. Wo for that selfishness which belonged to my mortality! I felt at that moment more of terror than of pity! I thought of myself: Thus must I, with all my power, my science, and loved by one into whose sphere death comes not, even thus must I perish! True, the rich spices, the perfumed woods, the fragrant oils, which would feed the sacred fire of my funeral pyre, would save my mortal remains from that corruption which makes the disgust of death even worse than its dread. A few odoriferous ashes alone would be left for my urn. Yet not the less must I share the common doom of my race—I must die!

"Nay, my beautiful!" said the voice, which was to me as the fiat of life and of death, so utterly did it fill my existence: "why

should we thus yield to a vague terror? Listen, my beloved! I know where the waters of the fountains of life roll their eternal waves—I know I can bear you thither and bid you drink from their source, and over lips so hallowed death hath no longer dominion. But, alas! I know not what may be the punishment. Like yourselves, the knowledge of our race goes on increasing, and our experience, like your own, hath its agonies. None have dared what I am about to dare, and the future of my deed is even to me a secret. But what may not be borne for that draught which makes my loved one as immortal as my love!"

I gazed on the glorious hope which lighted up his radiant brow, and I said to him, "Give me an immortality which must be thine." Worlds rolling on worlds lay beneath our feet when we stood beside the waters of life. A joyful pride swelled in my heart. I, the last and the weakest of my race, had won that prize which its heroes and its sages had found too mighty for their grasp. A sound, as of a storm rushing over ocean, startled me when I stooped to drink, the troubled waves rose into tumultuous eddies, their fiery billows parted, and from amid them appeared the dark and terrible Spirit of Necessity. The cloud of his awful face grew deeper as it turned on me. "Child of a sinful and a fallen kind!" said he, and he spoke the language most familiar to my ear, which yet sounded like that of another world, "who have ever measured by their own small wisdom that which is infinite—drink, and be immortal! Be immortal, without the wisdom or the power belonging unto immortality. Drink!"

I shrunk from the starry waters as they rose to my lip, but a power stronger than my will compelled me to their taste. The draught ran through my veins like ice. Slowly I turned to where my once-worshipped lover was leaning. The same change had passed over both. Our eyes met, and each looked into the other's heart, and there dwelt hate—bitter, loathing, and eternal hate. I had changed my nature; I was no longer the gentle, up-looking mortal he had loved. I had changed my nature; he was no longer to me the one glorious and adored being. We gazed on each other with fear and abhorrence. The dark power, whose awful brow was fixed upon us like Fate, again was shrouded in the kindling waters. By an impulse neither could control, the Spirit and I flung ourselves down the steep, blue air, but apart and each muttering, "Never! never!" And that word "never" told our destiny. Never could either feel again that sweet deceit of happiness, which, if it be a lie, is worth all truth. Never more could each heart be the world of the other.

Our feelings are as little in our power as the bodily structure they animate. My love had been sudden, uncontrollable, and born not of my own will—and such was my hate. As little could I master the sick shudder his image now called up, as I could the passionate beating of the heart it had once excited. I stood alone in my solitary hall—I gazed on the eternal fire burning over the tomb of my father, and I wished it were burning over mine. For the first time I felt the limitations of humanity. The desire of my race was in me accomplished—I was immortal! and what was

this immortality? A dark and measureless future. Alas! we had mistaken life for felicity! What was my knowledge? it only served to show its own vanity; what was my power, when its exercise only served to work out the decrees of an inexorable necessity? I had parted myself from my kind, but I had not acquired the nature of a spirit. I had lost of humanity but its illusions, and they alone are what render it supportable. The mystic scrolls over which I had once pored with such intensesness, were now flung aside; what could they teach me? Time was to me but one great vacancy; how could I fill it up, who had neither labour nor excitement? I set me down mournfully, and thought of the past. Why, when love is perished, should its memory remain? I had said to myself, so long as I have life, one deep feeling must absorb my existence. A change—and that too of my own earnest seeking—had passed over my being; and the past, which had been so precious, was now as a frightful phantasm. The love which alters, in its inconstancy may set up a new idol, and worship again with a pleasant blindness; but the love which leaves the heart with a full knowledge of its own vanity and nothingness,—which saith, The object of my passion still remains, but it is worthless in my sight—never more can I renew my early feeling—I marvel how I ever could have loved—I loathe, I disdain the weakness of my former self;—ah, the end of such love is indeed despair!

"Do you mark yonder black marble slab, which is spread as over a tomb? It covers the most silvery fountain that ever mirrored the golden light of noon, or caught the fall of the

evening dew, in an element bright as themselves. The radiant likeness of a spirit rests on those waters. I bade him give duration to the shadow he flung upon the wave, that I might gaze on it during his absence. The first act of my immortality was to shut it from my sight. There must that black marble rest for ever."

[By the way, the ancients are excellent judges of beauty. Socrates calls beauty (we dare not use the contemptible *it*,) a short-lived tyranny: Xenophon says "Fire burns only when we are near it; but a beautiful face burns and inflames, though at a distance: Plato calls beauty a privilege of nature: Theophrastus (arch fellow,) a silent cheat: Theocritus, (cunning elf,) a delightful prejudice; Carneades, a solitary kingdom, (which he doubtless would keep to himself): Domitian says that nothing is more grateful, (not even killing flies); Aristotle affirms that beauty is better than all the letters of recommendation in the world: Homer, that it is a glorious gift of nature; and Ovid calls beauty a favour bestowed by the gods, which this same Ovid shows the gods to have been jealous of among mortals." Certainly the moderns do not wage war for a beautiful woman, as did the ancients: we fear they would rather fight for an old castle.

To conclude, if, as Steele tells us, "to make happy is the true empire of beauty;" why, buy the Book of Beauty, to be sure.]

# THE COMIC OFFERING

[MISS SHERIDAN presents us with her third volume of ladye mirth, as heretofore, over-flowing with fun and patter, and sprinkled with some sixty or seventy Cuts—many of them, to use a critical term, of "spirited design." Probably, the most humorous tale among the fifty is—]

# THE FLYBEKINS, OR THE FIRE-ESCAPE

The Flybekins were distant connexions of the great Lord B., living "genteelly" in the west of England: and Mr. and Mrs. Flybekin were the only adult members of the family at the period of the incident which gave rise to this anecdote. It happened once that these "country cousins" were possessed with an uncontrollable desire to enter within the hitherto unapproached circle of London fashion and gaiety in which their noble relatives moved with such distinction. Every thing was propitious in furtherance of the meditated scheme: the spring was approaching, London filling, the country emptying, and the children could all go to school. A few weeks "in Town, just to see what was going on," would be fully worth the journey, especially as it would afford an opportunity for them to commence an acquaintance with their magnificent relation. And as the boys were growing up, it might be serviceable to their interests to tighten the bonds of connexion a little, which had, from lapse of time, and want of intercourse, become somewhat loosened. There is an old saying—"where there is a will, there is always a way."—In a short time Mr. and Mrs. Flybekin, being bent on the measure, argued themselves into a belief of the projected visit being nothing short of an imperative moral duty.

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