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Nicolas Pedrosa and the Friars.

SELECT

Comic Tales,

From the

BEST AUTHORS.



John Audley and the Ghost.

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SELECT

COMIC TALES.

JOHN AUDLEY.

JOHN AUDLEY was a good simple soul, a parish-clerk and a cobbler, and lived at Eccleston in Lancashire; where he had many years exercised these respectable functions, entirely to his own satisfaction, and, generally speaking, to the content of the good folks of the village. His talents were held in much estimation by the lads and lasses in the neighbourhood; he had assisted at most of the christenings, mended their shoes, cut their valentines, pronounced Amen, and sung Arthur O'Bradley at their weddings; and was famous for having himself, three several times in his life, seen the Shrieking Woman, and the apparition of the Murdered Tinker. He also told more stories of ghosts and hobgoblins than any person in Eccleston, Dame Dickinson the midwife alone excepted.

John Audley's customers, like the houses of the parish where he lived, lay scattered. He had been, on a winter evening, to carry home a pair of mended shoes to farmer Down's; and was returning, by moon-light, half petrified with fear, and endeavouring to whistle away from remembrance the story of the Tall Woman in White, and her Headless Horse; when suddenly a four-footed creature brushed by him, and a voice thundered through his ears—'Hey, Firetail! Firetail—Ah, sirrah! here, devil, here!'—'Lord have mercy upon me!' said John Audley, and again the thing passed him, swift as dust blown by a whirlwind. John's legs were exceedingly willing to run, but wanted the power, and therefore stopped. His eyes were fixed upon two animals that he saw approaching; they appeared of a frightful magnitude and figure: one of them walked upright, and the other on all-fours; both had heads as rough as a Russian bear, and both grew bigger and bigger as they drew near.

'In the name of the Father, Son, and—' 'Bow, wow!' replied Firetail, cutting short John Audley's invocation,—'Ah, rascal! keep close, devil!' said the upright apparition; and Firetail growled and retreated. 'Lord have mercy upon me!' again said John Audley, who imagined the devil was only restrained for a moment, that he might return with greater fury. 'How now, friend!' said Firetail's master, 'What, are you at prayers in this place? What do you do down upon your marrow-bones?'—'I charge you, in the name of God,' answered John, 'tell me, be you a Christian, a ghost, or a devil?'—'Neither.'—'Wh-wh-what are you, then?'—'A merry fellow, a traveller, and, moreover, a story-teller.'—'And is not that an evil spirit by your side?'—'An evil spirit!—What, Firetail?—A bottle-conjurer!'—'Lord preserve me!'—'A calf's head and cabbage. Lie down, sirrah! Be quiet, dog's face!—You would find him an evil spirit if I were to let him loose upon you, perhaps.'—'I pray you, don't!—I pray you, don't!—My name's John Audley—I am a poor harmless man, and a parish-clerk, and mortally afraid of evil spirits.'

John Audley, by the arguments of the stranger, was half inclined, after a deal of persuasion, to believe him real flesh and blood; that Firetail was a rough Newfoundland dog; and that the hairy head of his master was a shaggy goat-skin cap, made in a whimsical form; so that the eyes (that is, eyes of glass) face, and horns, were preserved. Such an apparition, at such a time, and in such a place, might have startled a stouter man than John Audley: but though he began to suspect him not to be actually the devil, he remained firmly persuaded he must be a conjuror at least; and this opinion was confirmed, both by his head-dress, which exactly tallied with John's ideas of a conjuror, and his sudden supernatural appearance; as supernatural indeed it was to him, whose fear had swallowed up his senses.

'And pray, Sir,' said John Audley, as they were jogging on together, 'What may your name be?'—'Andrew Errant.'—'And where be you going to-night?'—'As far as your house, friend; where, with your leave, I intend to sup and sleep.'—John Audley's pulse again began to quicken; he was afraid to say yes, but still more afraid to say no; he would have told a lie, and said he had neither meat nor bed, had he not thought the conjuror knew to the contrary, and would take some desperate revenge: at last he stammered out, 'Yo-you-your worship shall be very welcome.'

Mr Errant was a very communicative person; and, as they walked along, informed his companion, that he was of a merry, happy temper, loved rambling, hated employment, and was blessed with a quick imagination, and a good memory, by means of which he contrived to live; in short, that he was, by trade, a story-teller; a trade formerly in great request, but now grown obsolete, he being the only one who at present lived by it professionally; not one word of all which John Audley believed. Mr Errant added, that whether it was for the want of rivals, or his own excellence, he could not

absolutely determine; but that he had been very successful in his attempts, and that he never visited a family a second time who were not very glad to see him, and who did not make a little feast to entertain him whenever he called. John Audley understood by this, that the conjuror loved good eating and drinking; and for once he was not mistaken.

Mr Errant continued giving farther traits of his talents and character; such as, that he had a large assortment of stories, humorous, marvellous, terrible, and tender; that he always studied the temper and dispositions of his hearers before he began; and that the faculty he had of suiting his history to his host, was, as he believed, the principal cause of his success. 'You, now, honest John Audley,' said he, 'I am sure, are very attentive to any tale of a ghost; and so, I warrant, is your good wife.' John Audley blessed himself, 'How well he knows my name! (He had forgot that he himself had told it.) He knows I have a wife too, and knows—he knows every thing!' Such were John's silent cogitations, when they arrived at his cottage.

John Audley's dwelling was snug, well thatched, and warm; the inside was decorated with shelves, on which the white and well-scoured wooden dishes and trenchers were placed in rows: beneath which were pasted King Charles's Golden Rules, Death and the Lady, with various miraculous histories of angels that appeared in white robes to ministers of the gospel, and devils that carried away perjured lovers, Sabbath-breakers, and blasphemers, in flashes of fire, to the astonishment and terror of all beholders.

John Audley opened his door, winked to his wife Dorothy with significant terror, and told her he had brought home a very honest gentleman, to give him a bed for the night, and a bit of such meat as she had in the house. Dorothy, who was not in the habit of paying implicit obedience to her husband's mandates, was going to put in a caveat; and John, who knew by her physiognomy she would not be nice in her choice of words, sidled up to her and whispered in her ear—'Hold thy foolish tongue; do not be curst!—'tis a conjuror!'—Dorothy had almost as great respect for, or rather fear of, conjurors, as John Audley himself; her countenance changed, she dropt a curtsey, placed a stool, cast a look at the cap and the dog, trembled, and desired the gentleman would sit down, and drew her countenance into a demure form.

'Thou hadst better kill the young cock, and boil him with a bit of bacon,' said John. 'I will,' replied Dorothy! and went about it, though it grieved her to the heart—she could have sold him for ninepence at Prescot market.

She presently returned with the victim in her hand; telling John Audley, as she entered, with an expressive look and emphasis, that she had not the least difficulty in catching him, but that, on the contrary, he had flown into her arms.

Although the talkative and frank disposition of Mr Errant was some relief to the awakened fears of John and Dorothy, it could not make them totally subside; and as fear is nearly related to cunning, it inspired John with a thought, which he imagined would act like a charm in his favour, supposing the conjuror should be inclined to be mischievous, from the nature of such animals, which he believed to be exceedingly probable. This was no other, than to reach down the bible, and sit upon it; which John Audley effected with great slyness and dexterity. We have before remarked, that John was of the Gentle Craft; and it is here necessary to observe, that there was a ball of shoemaker's wax, which by accident had been laid upon the bible, over which, being near the fire, it had spread; and this, in his anxiety to cheat the devil, or (which is much the same) the conjuror, John Audley had never noticed, but placed it under next his breech, which being thus in contact with the bible, he hoped might secure his body against the power of magic.

Mr Errant, whose profession in some measure implied a ready wit, and a certain knowledge of the heart, observed the working of that powerful sorceress Fancy upon the spirits of John and Dorothy, determined to convert it to his own amusement. 'I will tell you the story of the Bleeding Finger, good folks,' said he; 'it is very strange, and very true: it will divert us while the pot is boiling, and I dare say you will like to hear it.'

The Story of the Bleeding Finger.

'There lived a magician in days of old, who had power over the winds and waves; whose word could command the demons of the deep, and the spirits of the air durst not disobey his will. This magician was held to be a sociable, merry, good sort of person when pleased, considering he was a magician; for, you must understand, conjurors, wizards, necromancers, and magicians, are very tetchy and revengeful, and never fail to send their imps and goblins, to torment such as affront or use them disrespectfully.

'The name of this magician was Tomogorod, which signifies Eat-him-up; and he had a daughter, called Holakaree, that is to say, Blood-sucker, who was an enchantress. Whenever either of them went abroad, they had at least one spirit to attend them, who was sometimes disguised in the form of a bear, at others in a monkey or cat, and sometimes in the

likeness of a huge mastiff; mostly, for expedition's sake, they travelled through the air, and then they were usually drawn by four flaming torches, followed by fiends in the shape of tadpoles, who were so numerous, that their swarms darkened the air.

'Tomogorod,' as I have said, 'was not much inclined to mischief, unless provoked; but woe be to any one that affronted him! If he asked a clownish fellow where he was going, and the lout returned a saucy answer, he would fix him astride upon the next stile without the power of moving, or turn him into a pitchfork, and give him his own shape again when any body had stuck him up to the hilts in a dunghill. His name denoted him to be a lover of good living, and he always behaved civilly to such as gave him the best they had to eat.

'Holakaree, his daughter, who was of an ambitious temper, had the wickedness to fall in love with the king's son, a youth of three and twenty, of a sweet disposition, and the most charming person in the world. His name was Dulimond, which means Dimple-face, and he was the sole heir to the crown. It happened one day, while he was hunting, that he saw the most beautiful blue hare run by him that eyes had ever beheld, and he was so charmed with the appearance of that strange animal, that he could not forbear leaving his other sport to follow this new game. He presently lost sight of his courtiers and attendants; who, as people often are, were more intent upon their diversion than their duty.

'He followed the animal for more than half an hour; and being mounted upon a swift Arabian courser, seemed every instant to be within a hair's-breadth of catching her; when presently his eye was attracted, by the descent of an eagle, that darted upon the hare, and rose with an incredible swiftness, till they were both lost in the clouds. While the prince stood gazing, and looking after the eagle and her prey, which still remained like a speck upon his sight, the sky began to lower, the heavens darkened, and the distant thunders rolled. The prince looked round, but saw neither place of refuge nor human being. The storm increased; the elements, with dreadful bursts, seemed to crack and split over his very head; and the fires of the firmament darted their forked and penetrating essence into the torn bosom of the earth. But what astonished him most was, that though the waters appeared to stream from the heavens on every side of him, not a hair of his head, nor a thread of his garments, were wet. The heart of Dulimond was as the heart of a lion; he was awed, but not dismayed.

'While his eyes were endeavouring to trace the uncertain path of the life-snatching lightning, and his ears filled with the terrific tumults of the sky, he beheld, not far above him, a bright cloud, that seemed in the centre to be a lambent flame, and whence issued a voice loud and impulsive, but sweet as music in dreams, which pronounced distinctly the following words:

"Beware of her with a Golden Thumb.
Follow the Bleeding Finger.
Plunge, fearless, into the Lake of Bitterness,
to recover the white wand of Orophalis.
Plunge, fearless, into the Lake of Bitterness,
and obedient; or you perish."

'The voice ceased, and the rain, and the thunder, and the lightning, were no more; the sun was resplendent, the forest had vanished, and the scene was changed. Vallies of a thousand different reviving shades of green were seen on every side; aromatic shrubs, flowers, and various trees, were scattered round, and distant lakes, and more distant mountains, were in view.

'The prince, filled with wonder at all these strange accidents, was sunk deep in reflection; insomuch, that his eyes were fixed, and his soul absorbed by the cogitations of his mind; when he was awakened from his trance by the voice of a lady, who sweetly and courteously demanded, if he could direct her to the palace of the Seven Dragons. Dulimond started, looked up, and was again fixed in astonishment. Never before had he beheld such perfections, such grace, such features! Seated upon a milk-white courser, with hair that descended in waving ringlets upon her horse's back, and a face more beauteous than the face of Nature at the sun's rising, this lady looked like a spirit of heaven, and not an inhabitant of the earth. She was obliged to repeat her question; and the prince, respectfully bowing, answered, he never before had heard of such a palace. The lady gracefully inclined her head in token of thanks, and passed swiftly forward; while the prince, ravished with the angelic apparition, gave his steed the rein, kept within sight of her, and forgot the scenes that had so lately happened.

'They rode that way for more than an hour, at a hard rate, when they came to a vast forest. The prince, who had a piercing eye, beheld an inscription as he was riding by the side of the forest; and stopping a moment in hopes of learning some intelligence, whereby he might oblige the lady, he read—

"This leads to the Palace of the Seven Dragons."

'The prince immediately put spurs to his horse; and, gently calling after the lady, beckoned her to return. She, who seemed to have slackened her pace when Dulimond stopped, presently heard, and obeyed. As she approached the prince, she thanked him with the most winning words and action; whilst he, ravished with her charms and condescension, prayed to be admitted to escort her to the palace. The lady again gave a courteous reply, and they entered the forest together. They had not proceeded far, before they lost all sight of the surrounding country, and were buried in a gloom so thick, that light could scarcely penetrate. As they rode on, strange noises saluted their ears; sometimes, as it were, the faint groanings of the dying; at others, the fierce howlings of wild beasts in torture; and then again like the whizzing of sky-rockets, accompanied with loud, confused, and innumerable shrieks and screams, as though the spirits of the air were battling till the very elements were tormented. Visions, as strange as the sounds they heard, likewise molested their journey: at one instant, a head without a body would seem to dance backward before them, sometimes with ghastly looks, and sometimes with grimaces, mewing at them; at another, serpents, the bodies of which were black, their eyes flaming, and their tails triply divided, with a sting at the end of each, seemed to threaten the travellers: but, what was more remarkable, an urchin, that lay in the path at the entrance of the forest, became a ball of fire, and rolled itself along before them, as if to direct them in the rout they should pursue.

'Dulimond was not more astonished at these things than at the behaviour of the lady; who continued her way undismayed, and almost without noticing such strange events, notwithstanding that the demons (for the forest was enchanted) became more dreadfully terrible in their howls and shrieks, and unnatural shapes, the farther they proceeded. However, if a lady had the courage to go on, it was not for Dulimond to recede! It almost appeared unmanly to draw his sabre; but from doing this it was scarcely possible to refrain, so fearfully were they beset. Nor could the dangers to which they were exposed hinder the prince from thinking on his most beautiful companion with rapture. Her demeanour, her form, her wit, and her fortitude, made him consider her as a miracle; and he found his affections so totally enslaved, as to be absolutely irretrievable. How could he forbear to admire, when he heard her only utter some short exclamation at the moment that the fiends were most horrible and insolent, and when he saw her turn and smile with ineffable sweetness upon him, as it were to wish him not to fear or suffer on her account? This he esteemed a noble generosity of soul; and he could not but adore her who was capable of such heroic exertion.

'They came at length to the other side of the forest; and the urchin of fire that accompanied them bounded from the earth, and gambolled in the air with a thousand antic motions. Instead, however, of an open country, they beheld a black rock, the front of which extended farther than sight, and its summit lay beyond the clouds. As they approached it, they read in huge and transparent characters,

"This is the entrance to the Palace of the Seven Dragons."

"How," cried Dulimond, "this the entrance! Here is no entrance; this is a vast and solid rock: a rock of marble; and all the powers of nature cannot enter here!"

'The lady smiled, alighted nimbly from her horse, approached the place of the inscription, and stretched forth her arm. She laid her *thumb*, her Golden Thumb, upon the marble, when instantaneous thunder rolled, and the massy front of the rock opened.

'Imagine what was the astonishment of Dulimond, and what his grief, when he beheld this miracle performed by the Lady with the Golden Thumb! His heart sunk in his bosom, and his arm fell nerveless by his side. Yet this was no time for despondency; danger was before him, behind him, and on every side of him; and the crisis of his fate drew on.

'The chasm of the rock had remained open some minutes, the prince stood plunged in sorrowful suspense, and the lady seemed attending on his coming. A voice proclaimed—

"Let not such as would enter the Palace of the Seven Dragons linger, for the Rock of Sculls is about to close."

'At the same moment, Dulimond beheld a naked arm, with the fore-finger slowly dropping blood, and pointing the way to the palace of the Seven Dragons. The vision, though horrible, gave him pleasure; his heart was with the lady; and he rejoiced that his duty furnished him with an excuse to follow his inclinations.

'The prince had but just time to make the passage of the rock before it shut; and had he been a moment later, it would have closed upon him; which accident having happened to many, it was called the Rock of Skulls. They proceeded onward till they came to a bridge, where lay the Seven Dragons, whence the palace derived its name. At their approach, all these horrible monsters lashed their prodigious tails, opened their destructive jaws (set all over with teeth like harrows), and projected their long and forked tongues; and, with an insatiate fury, were flying upon Dulimond. Mortal resistance to such enemies seemed vain, and death inevitable; when, at the very instant they were about to seize on the prince, the lady held forth the Golden Thumb, and they dropped senseless to the earth in a profound sleep.

'They passed the bridge, and drew near to the palace, which was the most superb that eyes ever beheld. Its magnitude and architecture filled the mind with grandeur, and the richness of its ornaments dazzled the sight to behold. They came at last to a place where the road divided; one way went directly forward, and the other deviated to the left, which led to the palace. On the confines of the latter stood troops of nymphs, whom none could equal in beauty, the Lady with the Golden Thumb alone excepted, and such as imagination only has seen. Some of them played on instruments, the sound of which ravished the ear; others danced with such delightful motion, as put mortal senses into a delirium of pleasure. They were come to meet the lady and prince, and this way were they proceeding, when Dulimond beheld the Bleeding Finger point the contrary road. He stopped, he looked, he considered, his bosom heaved a profound sigh, the war within him was strong, and his body was motionless. The lady did not persuade him by words, she took a more powerful method; her looks, sorrowful and dejected; her eyes, with all the well-feigned grief of poverty, told him, that in him was all her happiness centered; with him she should be blessed; without him miserable. Neither did she remind him of the dangers to which he had been exposed, and from which he had been preserved by her; therefore Dulimond remembered them the more forcibly. His heart was enslaved by her beauty, he could no longer resist her charms, and again he began to follow her; when the air was filled with the most doleful wailings, and the finger of the naked arm began to stream with blood.

'The heart of Dulimond was strongly virtuous: he had been nurtured in a sublime morality. The remembrance of the firm resolutions he had so often made, to persevere amidst all temptations in the paths of rectitude and honour, came with a gleam of heroic ardour upon his mind, elevated his soul, and made it equal to the glorious contest. He turned his eyes from the witcheries of passion and pleasure, and, with a determined spirit, followed the naked arm; the blood again more slowly dropped; but the vast concave of the sky became tortured with shrieks, cries, and howlings, so piercing, that distraction would have seized any one of less virtue and courage than Dulimond.

'Undaunted did he follow his bleeding guide, though the fiends now transformed themselves into ten thousand hideous shapes, and chattered at, insulted, and assaulted him, with a hundred-fold more malignity and fury, than they did in his passage through the enchanted forest. He came at length to the Lake of Bitterness; but who can describe the dreadful, horrible, and disgusting animals, by which its waters were guarded! On the surface, vipers, water-snakes, and dun-coloured serpents, hissed terror with their forked tongues. At the border lay toads, with starting eyes and vast bloated bodies; their mouths just above the water, diving sometimes beneath the slimy sedge, while the lake bubbled poison, and again ascending to the water's edge. The bottom was covered over with lizards, newts, and efts, darting upon their prey; reptiles, with speckled bellies and a hundred legs, that shot swift as an arrow from a bow, whither their voracity or malice willed; and spiders, so huge and inflated, that the shagged hair of their bodies was like the bristles of the hunted boar; and their eyes, globular and projecting, were as the eyes of tigers watching whom they might devour.

'All these, and innumerable others for which nature has no likeness, immediately, on the approach of Dulimond, ceased their obscene sports, and rancorous wars, on one another; and, with their million of mouths, came in voracious swarms, as if in expectation of their prey. Humanity shuddered, and shrunk: it was a sight of horror.

'The naked arm, in the mean time, rested over the centre of the lake, the finger ceased to bleed, and pointed downward. Thither the prince cast his eye, and beheld the white wand of Orophalis; he stayed not to consider on the danger; but quitted his steed, and threw himself, fearless, into the Lake of Bitterness. His arm divided the waters; and though his body seemed to be penetrated and torn by a host of these devouring reptiles, he still had the power to proceed. He arrived at the spot; and, unterrified, plunged to the bottom. The earth shook; the heavens were on fire, and Nature seemed to groan, as though her end was come. He seized the wand; and, lo! the lake was no more! He stood upon dry land, his enemies were annihilated, and himself unhurt.

'While he stood considering these things, he heard a sound of a multitude singing "Praises to the valorous Prince Dulimond, who hath broken the charms of hell, and hath delivered us from the spells of Holakaree." He turned, and saw coming towards him troops of knights and ladies; and, at their head, a venerable old man, leading as he thought, the Lady of the Golden Thumb.

"Fear not, valorous prince," said the aged knight; "your trials are past, and your reward is come: this virgin is no enchantress."

'The happiness of Dulimond was extreme, when he was informed, that Holakaree had assumed the beauteous form of Bellimante; that the vile enchantress was now no more: that his valour and virtue had freed the most angelic princess of the universe, her father, and many other noble knights and ladies, who had fallen into her snares. In his transport, he cast himself at Bellimante's feet, and kissed her virgin hand, which he was in extacy to find was not now stigmatized by the Golden Thumb.

'As for the magician Tomogorod, he became disconsolate for the loss of his daughter; and, some say, he now wanders over the face of the earth without a settled habitation; and that he is always attended by one faithful demon, that assists him in his wants, and revenges him upon his enemies.

'So ends the tale of the Bleeding Finger.'

It is easy to imagine, what effect a story like this would have upon John Audley and his dame Dorothy. Had not Mr Errant, who still was attentive to the supper, occasionally interrupted his narrative, to remind his hostess of the pot's boiling, the cock and bacon might have cooked themselves for Dorothy. Blue hares, bleeding fingers, enchanted forests, and the rest of the machinery, were things so amazing, so new, and so true to them, that gaping astonishment, terror, and agitation, possessed them wholly. And though our narrator could not so far degrade his subject as to lower his language to their exact scale of comprehension, yet his fine words, and figurative expressions, gave even at the fire-side of John Audley, a certain dignity to his subject that made it more wonderful.

It may be observed, too, with what art Mr Errant threw in touches, which, though in themselves foreign, and of a heterogeneous nature to the subject, served his purpose. Thus, though the magician was a character inconsistent with and superfluous to the tale, he was not so to Mr Errant. The insinuation, that he was attended by the devil in the shape of a dog, was not lost upon John Audley; and the concluding sentence, that again revived this circumstance in his memory, had its due weight. In short, John's imagination had been led such a dance, and was so much disturbed, that he could not be said precisely to know, if he was sitting in a cottage, or in an enchanted castle.

Mr Errant had observed the incident of the bible, as well as the wax that was attached to it; and waving his walking-stick in a circular and grave manner, touched it, and demanded of John what it was he had under him. John, who doubted whether the stick was a stick, or the wand of Orophalis, replied, with a trembling voice—"The-the-the bi-bible—bible, Sir,"—"The bible!—are you sure it is the bible—or are you sure it is actually there?"—"I-I believe so, Sir,"—"Be so good as to rise and come see." John trembled, rose, and looked, but no bible was there.—His hair would have lifted his hat off, had it been on.—"The Lord of heaven bless me!" said John.—"Christ have mercy upon me!"—"What is that fastened to thy—" said Dorothy. John clapped his hand behind, and ejaculated—"The Lord pardon me, miserable sinner; I am bewitched!" Mr Errant could not forbear laughing at John's distress: it was truly ludicrous—John Audley was fully convinced he was now more firmly married to the bible than ever he had been to Dorothy herself; nay, and strange it may seem, he thought the last the worst match of the two. To carry such a wen for life was not to be supported. John fell on his knees—"I pray and beseech you, for the love of Heaven's mercy, almighty goodness, and grace, Mr Conjuror, have pity on me—I am a poor, innocent man; I never meant to offend your worship's goodness; indeed, indeed, I never did!" John did not perform his part *solus*; Dorothy prayed as fast as he; and Mr Errant, as soon as he could for laughing, desired John to rise, and he would disenchant him; which office he kindly and faithfully performed: and, after a few consolatory sentences, which Mr Errant knew perfectly well how to adapt, he prevailed on his simple, but kind hosts, to prepare for supper.

Had it not been for that powerful and universal disturber, Fear, it would have been difficult to have found, in a like number of persons, a more happy fire-side, or one round which there was more true content, and native simplicity of heart. Even this very fear had something of pleasure in it, and something enviable. It was a delirium of the soul, to be at supper with an enchanter; to see a demon, in the form of a dog, fixing his eyes upon them; and to suppose that, if the mighty conjuror pleased, he could turn their cottage into a palace, or fly with them through the air, escorted by an army of

spirits, to the remotest parts of the earth. There is a large portion of the sublime, even to philosophy, in such ideas, notwithstanding their extravagance; but, to the simple and believing soul, they form an incomprehensible world of wonders, which, though dreadful, it delights to contemplate.

The present occasion could not fail to recall to the imagination of John Audley his own adventures with the ghosts, and the stories he had heard others relate. 'An't please you,' said John to Mr Errant, 'did you ever see the Skreeking Woman?'—'No,'—'No! now I have seen her three times.'—'And pray what kind of a lady is she?'—'Why, I'll tell your honour. As I wur walking home one night from Thomas O'Wilkins, (I remember Dame Dickinson had that very night been telling us a mort of tales about ghosts;) and so, as I wur turning the corner of Roger Fairley's barn, I saw, what I then thought to be a huge black cat; and so it run towards the barn-door, and vanished. So, upon seeing it vanish, I begun to bethink me; and, to tell you truth, I wur almost afraid to go by the door where the huge black cat vanished. So I stood still a bit to consider; and, as sure as you are alive, I thought I smelt a smell o' brimstone. So, to tell you the truth, I began to be mortagiously frightened and afraid! and so, as I wur standing there, I heard the most woundy uproar, and squeaking and squalling, and scampering, in the barn, that ever I heard sin' the hour I wur born. So I bethought me, that this barn were certainly a meeting place for witches and wizzards; and, what made it more likely, it wur Saturday night, and the wind had just then begun to blow as thof heaven and earth would come together; so that, what with the noise within and the noise without, you never in all your life heard such a deadly din: I'm sure I never did; except, indeed, the night that old Miser Gripegut died. Well, as I tell you, there I stood, quite in a stound, and could neither stir foot backward nor forward; and in a deadly taking, to be sure, I wur, as you may well think: for you must know, it came into my mind, that they might drag me into the barn and make a wizzard o' me, whether I would or no; nay, and I do assure you, I saw an imp, in the very exact form of a rat, that came out of the barn, and ran tow'rd me, as fierce as thof it wur resolute to seize upon me: but, as Heaven would have it, I started, and cried, "God bless me!" and it vanished. Well; and so as I wur standing there, with my eye fixed upon the barn-door, for I durst no' venture to turn my head the least in the world to the right or to the left, all at once there wur a dead cold hand clapt to my cheek, and something at the same time gave me such a whang on the back, that down I fell, and I really thought there wur an end o' me. But, however, for once it seems I wur more frightened than hurt, as I found afterwards, when Dick Walter, or Dick Dare-devil, as he is called in our parish, gave me his hand, and helped me up. You may be sure I wur not a little pleased; so I told him the whole story of the Black Cat and the clattering, and the devil's imp running at me to make a wizzard o' me, and all; and so he pretended to laugh at me, and not to believe me, and not to put no faith in such things; but that, as you may suppose, was all pretence, for I am certain every body knows there is such things; because, why, does not the bible tell us so? But Dick had a mind to seem fasheous, and fear nothing; though, to be sure, Dick is as bold as a lion, and as strong as a horse, and there is not a man in Lancashire dare to face him fairly; but then, to be sure, he is deadly wicked and prophane; and I have heard him challenge old Nick, if he durst appear. And so I was so pleased to find Dick, that I would take him down to Hal's at the bottom of the hill, and gi' him a mug of ale. So away we went; and when we came there, we found Will Tipler, the drunken shoemaker, along wi' Farmer Upton's tall Tom, who is six-foot seven inches and a half without his shoes: and so Dick would be a pint to my pint; and Will he wur another; and Tom wur another; and so on, till we made it very late; and so you must know, my road home from Hal's lay over the stile and gate, where the Skreeking Woman commonly sits; but you must know by this time I had got a drop in my head, and then, somehow or another, when one's in company wi' Dick, one never fears nothing; and he is such a good-natured fellow too, when nobody puts upon him, for he won't suffer no man to fash and affront any man that he is in company wi'; so, as I tell you, I had to go over the Skreeking Woman's stile; so as I did no' half like it, but wur got pot-valiant, and would no' ask Dick to go wi' me, for I knew he'd game and laugh at me. So away I set; and so, as I told you, a deadly windy night it wur; so, as sure as can be, when I had got a bit from the house, I began to feel a forethought, and to be partly sure that I should see her; and the farther I went, the more I wur certain; and so I began heartily to wish I had got Dick or some one to come wi' me: but that was all over; so away I went wi' my heart in my mouth, as I may say, and I wish I may be hanged if my hair did not stand an end every now and then wi' thinking on't. Well; so, as I tell you, I kept going my gait a thisen till I came almost wi' my nose upon the stile; but I should have told you, it wur most mortagious dark, for the moon wur gone down, and the night wur as black as pitch. I believe in my heart the heavens never sent out or saw a more murky welkin; the sky wur like a bag of soot. So, as I tell you, I had got wi' my very nose almost upon the stile, when all of a sudden I saw her rise from behind the hedge, as it were, and place herself upon the stile. Lord! how my knees knocked together! At first I had not the power to move hand or limb; and I do think I stood for some minutes, with no more life in me than an oyster; and then, when I came a little to myself, my teeth chattered, and I dithered as thof I had been in an ague: so what to do I did na know: for if I turned back she would walk before me. So I bethought me it wur best to put my trust in my Maker, and to say the Lord's prayer, and so go a bit lower down along the hedge where there wur a gate. Well: will you believe me; as sure as I sit on this stool,

when I came to the gate, there wur she again. "The Lord of heaven's goodness deliver me," thought I, "what will become o' me!" And so, do you know, all the sins that ever I had committed began to come into my head. I bethought me o' the five apples I had stolen when I went to school with old Dame Trott o' Prescott; and of the bastard I had, by half-witted Mall o' the Hill, before I wur four and twenty; and o' the robin-red-breast I shot instead of a crow; and the silver-groat that I found, the first year I was made clerk o' this parish, which I wickedly spent at the fair instead of giving notice on't at the church-door, as I ought to have done; and moreover, of having the very Sunday before fallen asleep in sarmunt time, and what wur wors, when his reverence, the vicar, wur in the pulpit, and not the curate; which his reverence afterwards told me, in the vestry, wur breaking the commandments, and an abomination to the Lord. So, as I tell you, I began to pray to the gracious Providence of marcy, for deliverance and forgiveness of my sins; for, to be sure, as I have told you, a wicked sinner I had been; so, while as I wur here, in this most dismal and terrible astoundification, some how or another, I found she wur vanished and disappeared, and wur gone; so I then fell upon my knees, and thanked the grace of heavenly goodness, and the Lord of hosts, and the Almighty Maker of heaven and earth, and the God of Israel, for all his manifold marcifil loving-kindness to me a poor wicked and unworthy sinner; and so I begun to put my trust in him; and so, seeing as I did not see her any longer, I ventured by little and little tow'rd the gate; and so at last I laid my hand upon't, and then one foot, and then t'other; and so at last I got o' the other side o' the hedge, and so I wur fain to walk by the hedge side for fear o' losing myself, it wur so mortagious dark, as I tell you; and so, as I wur walking along, I thought I heard a whispering o' t'other side o' the hedge; and I am not a Christian soul in the land o' the living, if it wur not as like the whispering of men's voices as my right-hand is to my left; and so my hair began to bristle as bad almost as before, and I stopt; and so, when I stopt, the whispering vanished; but I heard a mortagious running and a scampering, and a clattering o' feet, o' t'other side o' the hedge, which I could compare to nothing but a parcel of devils running a race towards the stile; and, for all we know well enough that spirit's bodies are not bodies, I'm sure they made as great a clattering as thof they had had legs and feet of flesh and blood. Well; so I wur now, as I thought, o' the right side o' the hedge, so I kept my gait till I came to the stile; and seeing as I saw nothing of her there, I began to have some hopes that she wur gone for good and all; so I set forward again tow'rd home, and begun to bethink me that I had got something to talk about as long as I lived; but will you believe me? I had not gone not half the field's length, till I saw her again walking right before me! "The Lord of heavenly blessedness defend me!" thought I; "what will become o' me!" I stopt, and she stopt—I took heart and made two or three-steps—and so did she. Never since I wur a sinner, wur I in such a quandary before! What could I do? If a man is so fearful as to turn back, I had always been told, she is so mischievous she will twine his neck round, mayhap, or blight him i' the eyes, or somewhat like, as she struck Goody Hazel a box o' the ear, and she has been deaf o' that side ever sin. So, as I said, what could I do? Why, I prayed to the Lord, and thought I would keep on my gait as long as she was that distance before me. I should have told you, tho', she wur all in white, or else, as you may think, I could no a' seen her; there wur not a sheet in all Lancashire whiter than she; and at first she did na seem so high as my breast, and she walked as thof she were partly lame, or crouching on the hams; and so I had na followed her far, before she began to get higher and higher!—and higher and higher!—and higher and higher!—till at last, Lord Almighty bless me! she wur taller than any tree in Eccleston parish, or the next to it, I am positive? Marcy's goodness be upon me, what a condition I wur in! Well; and so, would you believe it? when she wur at the tallest, she turned about, and gave such a stride tow'rds me! and a skreek! and, as I suppose, vanished; for I dropped down as dead as this trencher; and there, as Heaven's marcy would have it, wur found by Dick Walters and Tall Tom; and so they, seeing me so frightened, (for I did na stir out of my bed for a week) wanted to persuade me that it wur nowt but a trick o' theirs to scare me; but, however, I wur na such a fool as to believe'm, as you may well think, after what I had seen and heard.'

John Audley ended; and his looks, while relating, were sufficient to convince the hearer what his sensations must have been, while his wicked companions were playing him the trick he had just recounted. Mr Errant had been much among the simple inhabitants of villages, and knew how impossible it is to cure those who have once contracted the disease of credulity: he knew too, there is in every district a Dick Dare-devil, who diverts himself at the expense of those whose faculties or bodies are not so robust as his own.

THE SAILOR.

From Chrysal; or, the Adventures of a Guinea.

In one of the cells of the Inquisition, there was confined an English seaman, who had been seized, and secretly conveyed thither, for some disrespectful expressions against the divinity of St Dominick.

The manly, modest resolution, with which he had refused to own the authority of their tribunal, and his firmness under the first torture, marked him out to the Inquisitor as the person proper for his design of escaping with the fair Ilissa; for he would not trust any one of his own countrymen, not even his brother, whose treachery he abhorred.

As soon as he opened the door of his cell, the sailor, whose soreness prevented his sleeping very sound, perceived him, and imagining it was a summons to a repetition of the torture, he sprung up as far as his chains would admit him, and cried, 'Hollo! who comes there?'—The inquisitor advancing, answered, 'A friend.'—'Aye! damn all such friends, (replied the sailor,) I suppose you are come to give me another toasting; but if my hands were out of the bilboes, I'd send you off with a salt eel for your supper.'

'Moderate your rage a moment, my friend; I come to set you free, if you desire, and will deserve it.'—'Avaust hauling, brother! I do not understand you!'—'Why, do not you desire to be free?'—'Desire! aye, that I do! but I may whistle for that wind long enough before it will blow.'—'Perhaps not; perhaps that wind, as you say, is nearer blowing than you imagined: what would you do to be free?'—'Do! I'd burn the Inquisition, and cut the inquisitor's throat! I'd do any thing but turn papist, or fight against Old England.'—'Honest Briton! But suppose I should set you free; would you serve me faithfully in one thing that is neither against your country nor your religion?' 'Belay that, and I'll warrant you, if I say it, I'll do it without more words. I'm no landsman nor Portuguese.'—'Well then, I'll take your word, and so come with me.'—'The sailor was surprised, he scarce knew whether he was asleep or awake; however, as soon as the Inquisitor had unlocked his chains, he shrugged his shoulders, and followed him without more questions.

When they were come into my master's apartment, he made the sailor sit down, and giving him some wine to cheer his spirits, 'You are now at liberty, my friend, (said he) without any farther condition, and may go where you please; but if you will serve me in an affair I shall mention to you, you shall have reason to think of this night with pleasure as long as you live.'—'Serve you, master! (replied the sailor) that I will! name but what you would have me do; that is, as I said before; you understand me; and I'll do it; tho' it was to hand the main-top-gallant-sail in a storm at midnight, when the yard was broke in the slings, and it was not my watch, do you see; it would be but my duty, and there is no merit in a man's doing his duty; I am no flincher, I never say aye when I mean no: though I say it, I am a gentleman; my father was lieutenant of a man of war, and I have been at sea these five-and-thirty years, man and boy, and never once brought to the gangway in all that time. If the noble captain, that rated me a midshipman twenty years ago, had lived to be an admiral, I should have been an officer before now.

The honest openness of heart, that appeared in the sailor's giving his own character, made my master hear him with pleasure, and place an entire confidence in him. As soon as he had finished, therefore, he opened his scheme to him; and the sailor undertook to go to London, buy a good ship, and freight her for Alexandria, and to call at Lisbon in his way, and take my master and his friends on board; to do which, he gave him money and jewels to a great amount; the latter he was to dispose of in London, and account with the Inquisitor for the surplus, after the purchase of the ship and cargo, which were to be his own, in reward for his trouble, as soon as he had made this voyage.

All things being thus settled, the sailor was just departing, when, on a sudden thought, he turned short on the Inquisitor; 'Steady, (said he) steady; so far we go right before the wind, and all's well. But whom do you mean to clap aboard me when I come? If it is the Pretender, or the French king, here take back your trinkams; I'll be damned before I'll help either of them to make his escape.'—'Never fear, my friend, (replied the Inquisitor, scarce able to contain his laughing at the strangeness of such a thought,) I promise you it is neither of these; I promise you not to do any thing against your king or your religion.—'But shall we not have one dash at this damned place? (added the sailor) shall we not set it on fire, and cut the Inquisitor's throat? I'll bring a set of jolly boys, that would shoot the gulph of hell, to have a stroke at the Devil Dominick; shall we not set the Inquisition on fire, and cut the Inquisitor's throat?'—'We will consider about those things: but you had better lose no time; and let me once more caution you, not to be seen in Lisbon at present; and to be as expeditious as possible in your return.'—'Never fear, master; never fear,' replied the sailor; and, shaking him heartily by the hand, away he went.

I here quitted the service of the Inquisitor, being amongst the money which he gave to the sailor.

My new master no sooner found himself at liberty, than he hasted away to the seaside, without ever stopping to look behind him, and luckily finding the packet just ready to sail, he was out of sight of Lisbon before morning.

Never was a heart so intent upon executing a commission faithfully as his; he thought of nothing else all the passage; and the moment he arrived in London, he sold the jewels, bought a ship, manned her well, and, having laid in a proper cargo, set sail for Lisbon, and was there before his employer imagined he was arrived in London.

I had been an idle spectator of these transactions, for young Aminadab had made such deprivations on me, that no one in London would accept of me at my original value; and my master's honour would not think of parting with me for less, without acquainting the person from whom he received me.—The moment he arrived in Lisbon he gave notice to his friend, whose joy at his fidelity and expedition is not to be expressed. He immediately had the treasures, which he designed to take with him, conveyed secretly aboard; and as soon as the wind served, embarked himself with his friends in the night, and obliged my master to sail directly, though greatly to his dissatisfaction, because he would not consent to his firing the prison of the Inquisition, and cutting the Inquisitor's throat.

Heaven seemed to approve of the undertaking, sending a fair wind, which soon carried us out of the fear of our enemies.

It is impossible to conceive an happier company than were now together; nor did the blunt festivity of my master add a little to the pleasure of their voyage, which met but one cloud that seemed at first to threaten a good deal, but soon blew over.

When we were about half our voyage, my master entered the cabin hastily one morning, and with a kind of fierce delight flashing in his eyes, said to the Inquisitor, whom he always called owner, 'Well, owner, you shall now see what English boys can do: there is a large Frenchman bearing down upon us; but if you do not see him sheer off as short as if he had got foul of a lee-shore; I will never take the helm again, if he is not obliged to drop anchor to bring him up along-side of us; and as I expected some such thing, I took out a letter of marque, so that you need not fear being hanged for a pirate, if the worst should happen.

But delighted as my master was, his passengers did not seem so well pleased with the news, especially his owner, who was not used to fighting, and besides was too anxious for his escape with his fair prize, to think of any thing with pleasure, which could possibly deprive him of her.

They all, therefore, went directly upon the deck, and seeing the ship really coming towards them, the Inquisitor went into the cabin that he might not be observed by the men, and sending for my master, accosted him thus; 'Surely, my friend, you cannot mean to wait for that ship, (for we are lying to) she certainly means to attack you.'—'And so let her, owner, (replied my master) I'll warrant she gets as good as she brings.'—'But consider, my friend, (replied the Inquisitor) consider we are on board you.'—'Well, owner, and what then? you are not afraid: the lady may be stowed safe below! and you'll stand as good a chance as another; you are not afraid.'—'My good friend, I have not time to explain my reasons to you; but if you have any regard for me, you will instantly crowd all the sail you can, and get clear of this affair; I desire it; I beg it.'—'Why, look you, owner, what needs all these words; if so be you order us, we must put about to be sure, for the ship is yours; but then the honour of Old England, consider that; the honour of Old England.'—'O my friend, I can consider nothing, but my desire to avoid this danger; so once more I beg.'—'Enough said, enough said.' Then going upon deck, 'Well, my lads, our owner does not chuse this brush, while the lady is on board; so we must about ship; but as we come back, Soup Maigre shall pay for it.'—And saying this, he obeyed the desire of his owner as faithfully as if it had been his own, only not with the same appearance of pleasure, not being able to avoid ejaculating, damn fear, at every turn of the tune he whistled, as he walked the deck the rest of the day.

He had so punctually observed his owner's instructions in getting a good ship, that we were soon out of sight of the Frenchman; nor did we meet with any thing disagreeable the remainder of the voyage.

The day after this affair, when they had all recovered their good humour, my master addressed his owner thus—'Now, owner, while the sky is clear, and we have nothing else to do, I had better give you an account of your money. Here is the log-book, which you may overhaul at your leisure, though the sooner the better. This is the time; there is no taking a good observation in a storm, as may happen by and by; you'll find all as fair as a new cable; but I must give you one point to direct your reckoning by, and that is this; you bade me buy a ship, and freight her, and so forth, and she and the cargo should be my own, after I had done your job this trip. Now, owner, it is very true, that a less vessel than this might have

made the run; but then you seemed so desirous to be safe, that I thought it best to take a bargain of this stout ship, which I knew to be as good a sea-boat as ever turned to windward, and able to go, hank for hank, with any thing that swims the sea, as we shewed when we run the Frenchman out of sight yesterday; though it went against my heart to do it; but no matter for that now; the ship is yours, and you have a right to be obeyed. However, there is the account, and here is the rest of your money, of which I did not lay out one shilling that I could avoid, but one guinea, which I gave to my old messmate, Will Crosstree, whom I met on Tower-hill in distress; and one I gave Black Moll of Wapping to heave down; and I could not well avoid those either, for Will was an old messmate, and I owed Moll for many a good turn in her way; but all this signifies nothing to you; they can be stopped on account; and here is a damned guinea too, that would not go; I believe it has been in the hospital till it was fluxed off its legs.

'And now, owner, as you may think this ship costs too much, and that the cargo is too good, I will not keep you to your bargain; she is your own, and all that is in her, only pay the men; as for me, I am satisfied with having got out of that damned Inquisition, and leave the rest to yourself. If you think that I have deserved any thing, well and good; if not, I do not fear bread, while the sea flows round Old England: all that grieves me is, that you would not let us set fire to the Inquisition, and cut the Inquisitor's throat.' If my master's bluntness in the affair of the French ship gave offence to his owner, the honesty of this speech restored him to his warmest esteem; and made Pheron, who was present, cry out in rapture, 'Thank heaven, there is still some honesty among mankind.'—'Honesty! aye, (replied my master) a little among the tars of Old England! a little.'

The Inquisitor having by this time recovered from the astonishment, into which such nobleness of soul threw him, returned the account unopened, with these words: 'I am convinced your account must be just; and I freely make you a gift, not of this ship and cargo, for they are justly your own already, but of the rest of the money which is in your hands.'—'What all, owner! all!'—'All, my friend; if it were as many times so much, you justly merit it.'—'But then, owner, had not you better sign the account if you please, for fear of after reckonings with your executors; for I hate the law damnably, ever since I lost a year's pay for hindering our boatswain's mate's brother to beat his wife. The brimstone swore I beat her husband, and so I paid for meddling; but it was the lawyer's fault that set her on. Damn all lawyers, say I.'—'Well, then, my honest worthy friend, there is a receipt; and I wish you success equal to your merit; and you cannot have more.'—'Enough said, owner; enough said; I thank you; I thank you.'

The remainder of our voyage was one continued scene of happiness. My master landed his passengers at Alexandria, from whence they soon set out for Pheron's country; and at his taking leave of them, advised them to be careful how they ventured in any of the ships of those countries, which he assured them were not better than bum-boats, nor did their mariners know any more of the sea than a Thames waterman.

Having finished this, his first business, he proceeded to dispose of his cargo, for which he met so good a market, and made so profitable a return from thence home, that as soon as he arrived, his landlady's daughter at Gosport, whom he had been in love with for many years, but never dared to speak so till now, readily consented to marry him. One thing though I must not omit, and that was, that he kept a constant look out all the voyage home, for the Frenchman whom he had fled from so sore against his will; and was greatly concerned that he could not meet him, to have a brush for the honour of Old England.

I did not remain with him to be a witness of his happiness; he gave me to a Jew pedlar for a pair of fine sleeve buttons, to present to his mistress the morning before his marriage.

THE DEAN OF BADAJOZ.

BY THE ABBE BLANCHET.

The Dean of the Cathedral of Badajoz was more learned than all the Doctors of Salamanca, Coimbra, and Alerla, united. He understood all languages, living and dead, and was perfect master of every science, divine and human; except that, unfortunately, he had no knowledge of magic, and was inconsolable when he reflected on his ignorance in that sublime art. He was told, that a very able magician resided in the suburbs of Toledo, named Don Torribio. Immediately he saddled his mule, departed for Toledo, and alighted at the door of no very superb dwelling, the habitation of that great man.

Most reverend magician, said he, addressing himself to the sage, I am the Dean of Badajoz. The learned men of Spain all allow me their superior, but I am come to request from you a far greater honour; that of becoming your pupil. Deign to initiate me in the mysteries of your art, and doubt not but you shall receive a grateful acknowledgment, suitable to the benefit conferred, and your own extraordinary merit.

Don Torribio was not very polite, though he valued himself on being intimately connected with the best company in hell. He told the Dean he was welcome to seek elsewhere for a master in magic; for that, for his part, he was weary of an occupation which produced nothing but compliments and promises, and that he would not dishonour the occult sciences, by prostituting them to the ungrateful.

To the ungrateful! cried the dean; has then the great Don Torribio met with persons who have proved ungrateful! and can he so far mistake me as to rank me with such monsters? He then repeated all the maxims and apophthegms which he had read on the subject of gratitude, and every refined sentiment his memory could furnish.

In short, he talked so well, that the conjurer, after having considered a moment, confessed he could refuse nothing to a man of such abilities, and so ready at pertinent quotations. Jacintha, said he, calling to his old woman, lay down two partridges to the fire; I hope my friend, the dean, will do me the honour to sup with me to-night. At the same time he takes him by the hand, and leads him into his cabinet; there, he touches his forehead, muttering three mysterious words, which I must request the reader not to forget, *Ortobolan, Pistafrier, Onagriouf*; then, without further preparation, he began to explain, with all possible perspicuity, the introductory elements of his profound science.

His new disciple listened with an attention which scarcely permitted him to breathe; when, on a sudden, Jacintha enters, followed by a little man, in monstrous boots, and covered with mud up to the neck, who desired to speak with the dean on very important business.

This was the postilion of his uncle, the Bishop of Badajoz, who had been sent express after him, and had galloped quite to Toledo, before he could overtake him: he came to bring him information that, some hours after his departure, his grace had been attacked by so violent an apoplexy that the most terrible consequences were to be apprehended. The dean heartily cursed (inwardly that is, and so as to occasion no scandal) at once the disorder, the patient, and the courier, who had certainly all three chosen the most impertinent time possible. He dismissed the postillion, telling him to make haste back to Badajoz, whether he would presently follow him: after which he returned to his lesson, as if there were no such things as uncles or apoplexies.

A few days after, he again received news from Badajoz, but such as were well worth hearing. The principal chanter and two old canons came to inform the dean, that his uncle, the right reverend bishop, had been taken to heaven to receive the reward of his piety; and that the chapter, canonically assembled, had chosen him to fill the vacant bishopric, and humbly requested he would console, by his presence, the afflicted church of Badajoz, now become his spiritual bride.

Don Torribio, who was present at this harangue of the deputies, endeavoured to derive advantage from what he had learned, and taking aside the new bishop, after having paid him a well turned compliment on his promotion, proceeded to inform him, that he had a son, named Benjamin, possessed of much ingenuity and good inclination; but in whom he had never perceived either taste or talent for the occult sciences; he had, therefore, he said, advised him to turn his thoughts towards the church, and had now, he thanked heaven, the satisfaction to hear him commended, as one of the most deserving divines among all the clergy of Toledo; he, therefore, took the liberty, most humbly, to request his grace to bestow, on Don Benjamin, the deanery of Badajoz, which he could not retain together with his bishopric.

I am very unfortunate, replied the prelate, apparently very much embarrassed; you will, I hope, do me the justice to believe, that nothing could give me so great a pleasure, as to oblige you in every request. But, the truth is, I have a cousin, to whom I am heir, an old ecclesiastic, who is good for nothing but to be a dean; and, if I do not bestow on him this preferment, I must embroil myself with my family, which would be far from agreeable. But, continued he, in an affectionate manner, will you not accompany me to Badajoz? Can you be so cruel as to forsake me just at the moment when it is in my power to be of service to you? Be persuaded, my honoured master; we will go together: think of nothing but the improvement of your pupil, and leave me to provide for Don Benjamin; nor doubt but, sooner or latter, I will do more for him than you expect. A paltry deanery, in the remotest part of Estremadura, is not a benefice suitable to the son of such a man as yourself.

The canon law would, no doubt, have construed this offer of the prelate's into simony. The proposal, however, was accepted: nor was any scruple made by either of these two very intelligent persons. Don Torribio followed his illustrious pupil to Badajoz, where he had an elegant apartment assigned him in the episcopal palace, and was treated with the utmost respect by all the diocese, as the favourite of his grace, and a kind of Grand Vicar.

Under the tuition of so able a master, the Bishop of Badajoz made a rapid progress in the occult sciences. At first, he gave himself up to them with an ardour which might appear excessive; but this intemperance grew by degrees more moderate; and he pursued them with so much prudence, that his magical studies never interfered with the duties of his diocese. He was well convinced of the truth of a maxim, very important to be remembered by ecclesiastics, whether addicted to sorcery, or only philosophers and admirers of literature, that it is not sufficient to assist at learned nocturnal meetings, or adorn the mind with the embellishments of human science, but that it is also the duty of divines, to point out to others the way to heaven, and plant, in the minds of their hearers, wholesome doctrine and Christian morality.

Regulating his conduct by these commendable principles, the learned prelate was celebrated throughout Christendom, for his merit and piety; and promoted, when he least expected such an honour, to the Archbishopric of Compostella.

The people and clergy of Badajoz lamented, as may be supposed, an event by which they were deprived of so worthy a pastor; and the canons of the cathedral, to testify their respect, unanimously conferred on him the right of nominating his successor.

Don Torribio did not neglect so alluring an opportunity to provide for his son. He requested the bishopric of the new archbishop, and was refused with all imaginable politeness. He had, he said, the greatest veneration for his old master, and was both sorry and ashamed, it was not in his power to grant a thing which appeared so mere a trifle; but, in fact, Don Ferdinand de Lara, constable of Castile, had asked this same bishopric for his natural son; and, though he had never seen that nobleman, he had, he said, some secret, important, and, what was more, very ancient obligations to him. It was therefore, an indispensable duty to prefer an old benefactor to a new one; but that he ought not to be discouraged at this proof of his justice, as he might learn, by that, what he had to expect when his turn arrived; which it certainly would be the very first opportunity.

This anecdote, concerning the ancient obligations of the archbishop, the magician had the goodness to believe; and rejoiced, as much as he was able, that his interests were sacrificed to those of Don Ferdinand.

Nothing therefore was thought of, but preparations for their departure to Compostella, where they were now to reside. Though these were scarcely worth the trouble, considering the short time they were destined to remain there; for, at the end of a few months, one of the pope's chamberlains arrived, who brought the archbishop a cardinal's cap, with an epistle, conceived in the most respectful terms, in which his holiness invited him to assist, by his counsel, in the government of the Christian world; permitting him, at the same time, to dispose of his mitre in favour of whom he pleased.

Don Torribio was not at Compostella when the courier of the holy father arrived. He had been to see his son, who still continued a priest, in a small parish, at Toledo; but he presently returned, and was not put to the trouble of asking for the vacant archbishopric. The prelate ran out to meet him with open arms.

My dear master, said he, I have two pieces of good news to relate at once. Your disciple is created a cardinal, and your son shall—shortly be advanced to the same dignity. I had intended, in the mean time, to have bestowed on him the archbishopric of Compostella; but, unfortunately for him, or rather for me, my mother, whom we left at Badajoz, has, during your absence, written to me a cruel letter, by which all my measures have been disconcerted. She will not be

pacified, unless I appoint for my successor the archdeacon of my former church, Don Pablos de Salaza, her intimate friend and confessor; she tells me, it will occasion her death, if she should not be able to obtain preferment for her dear father in God; and I have no doubt but what she says is true. Imagine yourself in my place, my dear master—shall I be the death of my mother?

Don Torribio was not a person who would incite, or urge his friend to be guilty of parricide; nor did he indulge himself in the least resentment against the mother of the prelate.

To say the truth, however, this mother he talked off was a good kind of a woman, nearly superannuated, who lived quietly with her cat and maid-servant, and scarcely knew the name of her confessor. Was it likely, then, that she had procured Don Pablos his archbishopric? Was it not far more probable, that he was indebted for it to a Gallician lady, his cousin, a young widow, at once devout and handsome, in whose Company his grace, the archbishop, had frequently been edified, during his residence at Compostella? Be it as it may, Don Torribio followed his eminence to Rome. Scarcely had he arrived in that city before the Pope died. It is easy to imagine the consequence of this event. The conclave met. All the voices of the sacred college were unanimous in favour of the Spanish cardinal. Behold him, therefore, Pope!

Immediately after the ceremonies of his exaltation, Don Torribio, admitted to a secret audience, wept with joy, while he kissed the feet of his dear pupil, whom he saw fill with so much dignity the pontifical throne. He modestly represented his long and faithful services: He reminded his holiness of his promises; those inviolable promises which he had renewed, before he entered the conclave; hinted at the hat which he had quitted, on receiving the tiara; but, instead of demanding that hat for Don Benjamin, he finished, with most exemplary moderation, by renouncing every ambitious hope. He and his son, he said, would both esteem themselves too happy, if his holiness would bestow on them, together with his benediction, the smallest temporal benefit. Such as an annuity for life, sufficient for the few wants of an ecclesiastic and a philosopher.

During this harangue, the sovereign pontiff considered within himself how to dispose of his preceptor. He reflected that he was no longer very necessary; that he already knew more of magic than was sufficient for a pope; that it must be highly improper for him to appear at the nocturnal assemblies of sorcerers, and assist at their indecent ceremonies. After weighing every circumstance, his holiness concluded, that Don Torribio was, only a useless and a troublesome dependant; and, this point decided, he was no longer in doubt what answer to return. Accordingly he replied in the following words: "We have learned, with concern, that, under the pretext of cultivating the occult sciences, you maintain a horrible intercourse with the spirit of darkness and deceit, therefore we exhort you, as a father, to expiate your crime, by a repentance proportionable to its enormity. Moreover, we enjoin you to depart from the territories of the church, within three days, under pain of being delivered over to the secular arm, and its merciless flames."

Don Torribio, without being disconcerted, immediately repeated aloud the three mysterious words, which the reader was desired to remember; and, going to the window, cried out, with all his force, Jacintha, you need spit but one partridge, for my friend the dean, will not sup here to-night. This was a thunderbolt to the imaginary pope: he immediately recovered from a kind of trance, into which he had been thrown by the three magic words when they were first pronounced, and perceived that, instead of being in the vatican, he was still at Toledo, in the closet of Don Torribio, and saw, by the clock, it was not yet a complete hour since he first entered the fatal cabinet, where he had been entertained with such pleasant dreams. In that short time, he had imagined himself a magician, a bishop, an archbishop, a cardinal, a pope, and, at last, found he was only a dupe, and a knave. All was illusion, except the proofs he had given of his deceitfulness, and evil heart. He instantly departed, without speaking a word, and, finding his mule where he had left her, returned to Badajoz, without having made the smallest progress in the sublime science in which he had proposed to become an adept.

THE SLIPPERS.

Bakarak, though a miser, was one of the richest merchants in Bagdad. Camels, laden with the most valuable productions of the east, constantly arrived at his warehouses, and the ocean wafted vessels to the harbour, but to increase his wealth; yet he had a treasure in his possession still more desirable than his ivory or his pearls; it was the enchanting Zelica, his only child, who, scarcely fifteen, and blooming like a Houri of Paradise, far outshone them all; but though so sweet a blossom, no one had yet proved sufficiently interesting to wind himself around her heart.

Going one morning to mosque, attended by her black slave only, an aged female, bending beneath the weight of years, murmured an entreaty for alms; while searching for a purse that was suspended at her girdle, she unintentionally let her veil drop aside, and as, with a benevolent smile beaming on her countenance, she was giving the supplicant a zechin, her eye caught a youth ardently gazing at her from a balcony above. An instant warned her of her negligence: hastily replacing her veil, and a deep blush suffusing her cheek, she proceeded, taking the heart of the handsome Karabeg with her, though not leaving him to bewail the loss, for, seizing his cloak, (so much had the momentary sight of her beauties, to which the action she was engaged in had imparted an additional lustre, inflamed him) he swiftly followed, keeping, however, at a distance, on account of the attendant. He saw her enter the mosque, and pressed forward; but the number of persons were too great to permit him to procure a place near her; however, he fixed his eyes on her, and followed her every movement, hoping his trouble would be rewarded by a kind look; but being deeply engaged in her devotion, she did not appear to regard him. Before the conclusion of prayers, he arose, and stationing himself at the grand entrance, waited for her; many people passed, and he began to be impatient—'Why,' he muttered to himself, 'should I be so foolish? I know her not; nay, perhaps I shall never see her again.'—The idea made him involuntarily sigh—he was angry at it—'Psha! I'll not suffer myself to be a captive by the glance of every bright eye—I'll be gone.'—He felt inclined to put his threat into execution—advanced a few steps—faltered—turned around—and all his resolutions fled, for Zelica again appeared;—with a salute of the head, he made way to let her pass, but in passing her hand touched his; the touch shot like fire through his veins—he trembled—she sighed.—'O that sigh!' thought he, and she seemed to hesitate; but, at that moment, the envious black was behind, and they proceeded. Karabeg again followed—in turning the street, a troop of janizaries were galloping towards the seraglio; a courser curvetted, plunged, and had nearly thrown his rider. Karabeg darted forward, for Zelica uttered a faint shriek, and was running back—'Be not alarmed, lady,' he exclaimed, 'I will protect you with my life.' He coloured for having expressed himself with such an emphasis—Zelica trembled too much either to answer or thank him—the black frowned—'My good fellow,' continued Karabeg, perceiving it, 'I surely know your face, Mesroud!'—'Ah, master,' cried Mesroud, 'tis you then—I thought so, and am quite happy!'—'You know, Mesroud, Sir?' faintly articulated Zelica.—'He once belonged to my father, did you not?'—'Yes, Sir, yes; *he* beat me—but you—oh how good, how kind *you* was!'—The little tumult the horse had occasioned was now over, and the troops passed on; but as the black had a friend, there was no opposition to Karabeg's accompanying Zelica further, they soon became intimate: and when they parted, each felt the pleasure of the other's company too much not to regret it. Already Zelica knew Karabeg's history; his father was the Cadi, and he—*her lover*. They had arrived at a portico; Karabeg was entering.—'Hold, master,' cried Mesroud: 'Lady, you forget *your father!*' It was enough—again Zelica sighed, and removing her veil, *intentionally now*, her eyes beamed hope on Karabeg's passion, while her lips thanked him for his gallantry!—They had both vanished, yet he remained some time on the spot, expecting, though Zelica might not reappear, to see Mesroud, but in vain.

The house in which Bakarak resided, was situated on the banks of the river. This Karabeg soon discovered: he rowed beneath the windows, and breathing in his flute, played a Turkish serenade. For once, however, his art was thrown away, all was silent; the air had once pleased him, but as it had failed to produce the intended effect, he now thought it dull, and throwing aside the instrument, he took part of the muslin which composed his turban, and rolling it into a body, cast it against a casement on the second story, trusting to chance for arousing the right person. He blest his lucky stars, for the fair Zelica soon appeared; but, alas! his pleasure lasted not long, as she motioned him to be gone. 'Oh, sweet Zelica, I cannot live in your absence.'—'You can't, hey!' cried a voice, 'then you must die in her presence, for if you stay disturbing people with your nonsense, you will certainly be killed.' 'Twas Bakarak at a lower casement who said this, and Karabeg now comprehended why his mistress warned him away. 'Oh, Sir,' said he, 'if you knew me better.' 'By Mohammed! but it strikes me I know you pretty well already. Are not you the son of old Mustapha the Cadi, who had me punished for throwing a slipper at him?' (Now the truth was, Bakarak had one night been breaking the laws of the prophet, by indulging in a little wine, which caused such a revolution in his head, not the strongest at any time, that seeing Mustapha pass, in his way home, he must needs quarrel with him, and giving him a *gentle* salutation on the cheek

with his slipper, wounded him so deeply, that he was under the necessity of giving Mustapha a sum of money to compromise the affair, as, had a trial ensued, and Bakarak's frailty been made public, no power could have protected him from the consequences of such a heinous crime.) 'You may tell him,' continued Bakarak, 'he cheated me out of my money, for his head is too thick for my slipper to have had the effect he represented, and at the same time take this console yourself,—When your father complained against me, he no doubt hoped *my slipper* would prove *my ruin*; now, when his hopes are *really* fulfilled, you shall have my daughter, and not before, by all the hairs that grace our prophet's beard!—So, set off directly, or dread a slipper at *your* head too.'—'Were you not the parent of so sweet a maid,' answered Karabeg, 'you should repent your threats.'—'By Alla! that reminds me; I had forgotten she is still in the balcony. Girl, go to your chamber instantly: a pretty thing for you to encourage this impudent fellow. Have you no shame on your father's account?—To make assignations by moonlight: do you not dread its beams?—To talk openly with a man too! are you not afraid of the prophet's vengeance!' 'Indeed, father,' said Zelica, beseechingly, 'the young man is so kind, so respectful; it was but this morning he preserved my life; nor on my honour have I spoke to him since.' 'But I dare say, if you've not spoken, you have made signs. Oh! you jade, I warrant you've not been wicked for want of means! Women have a thousand tricks at their finger's ends. I dare say you could contrive, on an emergency, to give this dog a signal of your love, by your veil, or your handkerchief.' Bakarak little knew how apt a pupil he had; still less did he suspect his precepts would have been so readily put in execution. The hint was certainly not a bad one, and true love soon caught at it. Taking the muslin Karabeg had thrown, which had caught in the iron work that inclosed the window, she put it to her lips, and folding it over her bosom, formed it in a knot over her left breast. Hearing her father, who, being below, had not perceived the action (though Karabeg's eyes were not so unwatchful) again repeated his command for her to retire, she left the balcony, motioning her lover away; who, kissing his hand, bowed in token of assent. Happily assured that Zelica did not hate him, he thought little of her father's enmity; but feeling perfectly pleased with the events of the evening, he seated himself in his bark, and soon lost sight of the mansion of Bakarak, though the whole scene again passed before him in his dreams, and in imagination he a second time beheld his Zelica assure him of her affection.

When a night's repose had cooled Karabeg's ideas, he began to consider, that Zelica's love could not conduct him to the temple of happiness, while those cursed slippers crossed the path. At sun-rise he paid his duty to his father, who, far from appearing enraged, when he frankly avowed his attachment, promised, that if his son should surmount Bakarak's dislike, he would not prove an obstacle to his felicity.

As Karabeg was returning home the preceding evening, a man had dropped lifeless in the streets, and not being known, was carried to the Cadi's house. A thought struck Karabeg, and going where the deceased lay, he took his slippers and placed them in his girdle.

The beams of the morning sun had scarce gilded the spires and minarets of the city, when Karabeg again sought the place that contained all his hopes and wishes. Though he waited long in the street, as it was early he did not fear being discovered. At length the door of Bakarak's house opened; he skipped behind the pillar of a large portico opposite, and anxiously fixed his eyes on it. Bakarak came out, and took the way to the public baths; Karabeg softly followed, and when Bakarak entered, he also went in, though concealing himself from observation. The old man, as was the custom, left his slippers at the entrance; *these* Karabeg quickly seized, and replacing them with *those* he had brought, soon regained his father's house.

When Bakarak left the bath, he in vain sought for his slippers; but seeing a pair so much handsomer in their place, (for, owing to his miserly disposition, the weight of his own had been increased by some few patches) went home contented with the exchange. In the course of the morning he was not a little surprised, when a troop of guards surrounded his doors, and demanded to conduct him instantly to the Hall of Justice. In vain he inquired their orders, expostulated, prayed, demanded; they forced him along, and he soon found himself in the presence of old Mustapha, the Cadi, and the judges of the city. Doubting whether he was well awake, he stared in astonishment; but his fear was increased, when accused of having murdered a man in the public streets; his teeth chattered, and he could not answer. At last, however, he gained breath to deny the charge, though in no very coherent manner. As a proof of guilt, his *slippers*, which had been found on the dead man's person, were produced. Bakarak cursed in his soul both the slippers, and those who held them; many declared having seen them in the court before, and the Cadi still remembered the weight of one of them on his cheek.

Those Bakarak had on were next examined: he was asked how he came by them? he explained his adventure at the baths that morning, and was laughed at. He was half mad with rage. The deceased had since been owned, and his brother came forward and declared, that the slippers Bakarak then wore were the *murdered* man's. He now really trembled for his

life. 'How,' said the Cadi, 'could a man who was found dead in the streets last night, go to the public baths this morning, and change a pair of slippers?' The case was clear; Bakarak had equivocated, and was guilty; all appeared lost, when a young man stepped forward and begged to be heard. Bakarak could not believe his eyes—it was Karabeg! He swore that at the time the man was found *murdered*, Bakarak had been in his own house. The old man breathed again. Assistance from whence he so little expected it almost overcame him. Karabeg therefore declared Bakarak was not the *murderer*. Bakarak seized his hand: he said more, that the murdered man was not murdered. Bakarak took him eagerly in his arms and hugged him. An examination ensued; no wounds appeared; and it was discovered by the surgeons, that the man had dropped down in a fit. Bakarak was acquitted on paying all the charges, and of course was happy to get off so well; for, on the first appearance of the affair, a coincidence of event seemed to forbode his destruction. The unfortunate slippers were delivered to him, and he returned home. All the way he went, he thought of what had passed; had it not been for Karabeg he probably would have lost his life; he felt almost inclined to bestow his daughter on the young man. But, when seated in his library, the affair assumed a different appearance; he examined every circumstance coolly, and began to suspect the truth. This irritated him more than ever against Karabeg, and cursing him and the slippers, he vented his rage in execrations. 'I see it all,' he exclaimed; 'I foolishly said, that when these confounded slippers proved my ruin, he should have Zelica, and it is thus the wicked dog wants to cheat me out of her; but by Mahommed he shall be baffled.' The library overhung the river; the casement was thrown up to admit the breeze; the slippers lay before him: Bakarak felt determined; he seized them in a frenzy, and cast them into the waters. "Thank heaven," ejaculated he, "I am now safe." The action had rather cooled him, and by night he was calm enough to give pretty loud symptoms that the events of the day had not disturbed his repose.

When Bakarak arose in the morning, he went as usual into his library; but who can conceive his astonishment, when he beheld the *slippers* lay before him? "Surely," he cried, gasping for breath, "some evil spirit must possess them, am I awake? I am certain yesterday's sun beamed on them in the river; it is incredible! but what is this smell?" He turned round, for the slippers had done more mischief than he at first imagined. The truth was, some fishermen came early that morning under Bakarak's windows, to draw their nets, and finding them heavy, conceived they had a good draught; but, in searching, all they discovered were the *slippers*; in a rage they jerked them away, and Bakarak's casement unfortunately happened to be the only one open, in they went, and striking a jar of odour of roses, for which the merchant had paid a large sum the day before, the force of the slippers broke it, and half the liquid had scented the floor. Bakarak, when he beheld the accident, fell on his knees: 'Oh Mahommed, deliver me of these slippers, or I shall indeed be ruined.' He called his slaves, to save what they could of the perfume, and rushing out, felt determined to get rid of his *curse*. He came to the sewer, which carried off the filth of the town; 'no fisherman shall drag ye out again now,' said he, as he threw the slippers in.

Karabeg, who had been watching that morning, saw Bakarak go out, and waiting till he was out of sight, boldly knocked at the door. Mesroud opened it: 'Ah, master,' cried he, my lady will be glad to see you again.' 'Will your lady be glad, Mesroud? you enchant me; conduct me to her instantly.' 'But then, if old Bakarak should return.' 'Never mind old Bakarak;' and Karabeg had nearly pushed him down, so anxious was he to make use of the opportunity. They were soon together, and the minutes flew away too fast. Zelica informed him of her father's rage being increased, and his suspicions, which he could not help uttering in her presence. Karabeg cursed his penetration. Mesroud, who had retired to watch for his master, in a short time warned him of his approach; but how Karabeg could escape without being perceived was a doubt. While they were debating, Bakarak arrived in the street, and no longer could they hesitate. The lover soon decorated himself in one of Mesroud's vests, and disguising his face as much as the time would permit, he passed off as dumb. Bakarak asked many questions, the pretended brother undertook to answer, and eyed Karabeg so closely that he almost thought the old man suspected.

Though all went on pretty well, Zelica and Mesroud felt confused, while Karabeg often wished himself out of the house. Bakarak had not broken his fast that morning, and the agitations of his spirits had almost thrown him into a fever; he unfortunately felt his appetite craving its usual allowance. "Mesroud," said he, "I wish you would go and order some fruit and ices to eat with my breakfast; they will be cooling." "I'll go, brother," quickly answered Karabeg, thinking 'twould be an opportunity to escape. "What," cried Bakarak, "the dumb opens his mouth at the mention of eating! this is a miracle I do not understand." The trio were now in a pretty situation, through the imprudence of the lover; however, as he found that a discovery must ensue, he put the best face he could on the affair, and rubbed off the cork. But nothing could pacify Bakarak, who threatened, if he did not directly leave the house, the bastinado should force him. As for poor Mesroud, he would have been happy to escape on the same terms, but was actually regalled with the punishment promised; he consoled himself, however, with the hopes of revenge at some future period.

Two days had passed, and Karabeg had not dared to make another attempt at seeing his mistress, when the whole city were alarmed by a stoppage of the water that supplied their houses; in vain the reason was inquired into, no one could solve the wonder, and at last it was deemed most advisable to examine the grand reservoir. After some labour and much expense, they broke open the works, and the cause of the stoppage was found to be—Bakarak's *slippers*. When he heard of it, his rage almost threw him into convulsions. 'Some genie, or some devil, possesses them to work my woe,' exclaimed he. He soon received a summons to appear, and it was demanded how he dared attempt such a treason to the state as closing the pipes. Bursting with vexation, he repeated what he had done to *make away* with the slippers, (though they had proved so diabolical, he almost feared *that* might cause a charge of murder to be brought against him) the breaking the perfume jar, and the putting them in the sewer, from whence they had been carried into the public reservoir. The judges felt inclined to laugh at his misfortunes; however, as the damage was unintentional, he was allowed to go, on repaying the treasury what it had cost them in pulling down and rebuilding. He scarcely found his way home, so stung was he by resentment, and so mortified by the loss of his money. He muttered, as he went along, 'Karabeg shall not have my daughter, though heaven seems to predict it.' His mishaps had made him more obstinate than ever, and when he arrived, Zelica was so much frightened at his appearance, that she retired in dismay to her chamber. He ordered a large fire to be prepared instantly, and throwing the slippers in, 'At last,' said he, 'I'm determined to see ye no more; when I cast you in the river, ye were fished out again; when I put you in the sewer, ye made the whole town suffer; but I'll defy any one to relieve ye now!' The *slippers* seemed as obstinate as Bakarak in giving him the lie, for the leather had imbibed the moisture to such a degree, that they would not burn. Bakarak found his anger useless, and that he must give up the idea of consuming them, till dry: a lead extended over the portico of the house, and placing them there he ejaculated, 'I see I must be plagued with ye some time longer, but I shall bless the hour the sun has sufficiently hardened ye, that I may commit ye to the flames again: and, by Alla! when ye are destroyed, I will give a public rejoicing!'

The vexations Bakarak had endured, had prevented his visiting the mosque:—he now determined to go, and throwing on his cloak, went out; but as fortune, or rather fate, would have it, as he passed the threshold, the *slippers*, by some means, fell from the leads, and came tumbling on his head. Though the blow had confused his ideas a little, he managed to look up, hoping to find out who had done it, and saw a cat running along. He took the slippers from the ground, and sent them, one after another, at the animal's head; however, he missed his aim, and they went in at one of the windows. He was beginning to curse, and re-entered the house to stop the blood which issued from his nose, when a loud shriek pierced his ears; not knowing the reason, he ran quickly up to his daughter's chamber, and beheld her on the floor, with the slippers by her. She had fainted, and while Bakarak called her slaves, he attempted to revive her; but finding it in vain, began to tremble. 'Oh, merciful Alla,' cried he, 'protect your faithful Mussulman, and let not my daughter's blood sink on this head.' The attendants had now come, but their endeavours were also vain to bring Zelica to life; though no wound appeared, the cursed slippers had certainly struck her somewhere on the head; and Mesroud *consoled* his master, by repeated exclamations that she was *murdered*. 'You cruel man!' said he, 'it serves you properly; had you but united my poor, dear, beautiful *dead* mistress, to the man she loved, all would have been well: to be sure you did swear, that when those slippers ruined you, their marriage should take place, and though that has happened, (*for ruined he certainly is who kills his own daughter*), yet, alas! 'tis of no avail.'—Drops of perspiration stood on Bakarak's brow, his joints trembled, and he fell on his knees. 'Oh Mahommed, restore my Zelica, and I vow, by all my hopes of Paradise, since 'tis clearly your wish, that I will no longer oppose her union with Karabeg, the Cadi's son.' He arose. 'Oh! those cursed, cursed slippers, they have indeed proved my ruin, and I find 'tis impious to war against fate.' Zelica *now* began to recover, though slowly, (for know, gentle reader, though apparently dead, she was as much alive as you who honour these pages by a perusal, and my only fear is, that their contents may not have made you so merry as her father's vow made her): thinking it unnecessary to feign longer, she, in a short time, was perfectly revived, to Bakarak's great joy, who did not suspect the trick practised on him; for though, when Zelica saw the slippers enter her window, she was not touched by them, an idea struck her, that answered her purpose equally well. Bakarak's vow had been heard by Mesroud and the rest of the slaves, so that an attempt to deny would have been fruitless; he therefore sent for old Mustapha, who was too good a man to object to a reconciliation, and had his son's happiness too much at heart, to find obstacles to the proposed union. He soon prepared the necessary papers; nor had he reason to complain of his friend Bakarak, whose miserly disposition the late events had completely turned; and who, having promised to give a public rejoicing whenever he got rid of his *slippers*, performed his promise on the day that he saw the lovers united; for Karabeg joyfully accepted them as a remembrance of the means by which his marriage had been brought about, and, what was wonderful, long as he lived to enjoy the beautiful Zelica, he never beheld them but with gratitude, for the blessing they had been the humble instruments of Providence in bestowing on him.

THREE DEXTEROUS THIEVES.

Three rogues, in the vicinage of Lan, uniting the ingenuity of their talents, had, for a considerable time, put both monks and laymen under contribution. Two of them were brothers; their names Hamet and Berard. Their father, who had followed the same profession, had just finished his career at the gallows. The name of the third was Travers. They never robbed or murdered; but only pursued the business of pilfering and kidnapping; in which they arrived to an astonishing degree of ingenuity.

As they were walking together one day in the wood of Lan, and talking of their several feats of dexterity, Hamet, the eldest of the two brothers, espied, at the top of a tree, a magpie's nest, and saw the mother fly into it. "Brother," said he to Berard, "what would you say to a person that should propose to go and take the eggs from under that bird without alarming it?" "I should tell him," answered the younger brother, "that he was a fool, and proposed a thing impossible to be done." "Well, learn my friend, that he who cannot accomplish so practicable a theft, is but a booby in his profession. Observe me." This said, he immediately climbs the tree. Having reached the nest, he makes a hole in it underneath, receives softly in his hands the eggs, as they slip through the opening, and brings them down, desiring his companions to observe that not a single egg was broken. "By my soul," cries Berard, "I must allow you to be an incomparable thief; but if you would go and replace the eggs under the mother, as quietly as you have taken them from her, we shall acknowledge you our master."

Hamet accepts the challenge, and again mounts the tree: but his brother designed a trick upon him. The latter, as soon as he sees the other at a certain height, says to Travers, "You have just been a witness to Hamet's dexterity; you shall now see what I can do in the same way." He instantly climbs the tree, and follows his brother from branch to branch; and while his eyes were fixed upon the nest, entirely taken up with his design, and watching every motion of the bird, the slippery rogue loosens his trowsers, and brings them down as a signal of triumph. Hamet, in the meantime, contrives to replace all the eggs; and coming down, looks for the praise due to so clever an exploit. "O, you want to deceive us," said Berard, bantering him, "I'll wager that you have concealed the eggs in your trowsers." The other looks, sees that his trowsers are gone, and soon finds out the trick of his brother. "Excellent rogue," says he, "to outwit another."

As for Travers, he was lost in equal admiration of these two heroes, and could not determine which had the advantage. But feeling himself humbled at their superiority, and piqued at not being able to contend with them, cried, "Friends, you are too knowing for me. You would escape twenty times, when I should be the scape-goat. I perceive that I am too awkward to thrive in this business; so I shall go and follow my own trade. I renounce thieving for ever. I have good strong arms, and will return home and live with my wife. With the help of God, I shall be able to procure a subsistence." He fulfilled his declaration, and returned to the village. His wife loved him; he became an honest man, and set himself to work with so much industry, that at the close of a few months he had earned wherewithal to buy a hog. The animal was fattened at home. At Christmas he killed it; and having hung it in the usual way, against the wall, he went into the fields.

The two brothers, who had not seen him since their separation, came at this very time to pay him a visit. The wife was alone spinning. She told them, that her husband was just gone out, and that he would not return till night. With eyes accustomed to examine every thing, you may swear the hog could not escape their notice. "Oh, oh!" said they, on going out, "this fellow is about to regale, and did not think us worth inviting. Well, we must carry off his pork, and eat it without him." The rogues then laid their plot; and till night should enable them to act, they went and concealed themselves behind a neighbouring hedge.

At night, when Travers returned, his wife told him of the visit she had received. "I was much alarmed," said she, "at being alone with them; they had so suspicious an appearance, that I did not venture to ask either their names or business. But they searched every corner with their eyes; I don't think a single peg escaped their notice."—"Ah! it must have been my two queer companions," cried Travers in great trouble; "my hog is lost; and I now heartily wish I had sold him." "We have still a resource," said the wife: "let us take down the pork, and hide it somewhere all night. To-morrow morning you may consider what is to be done." Travers followed his wife's advice. He took down the pork, and laid it under the bread oven, at the opposite side of the room; after which he lay down, but not with his mind perfectly at ease.

Night being come, the two brothers arrived to accomplish their project; and while the eldest kept watch, Berard began to penetrate the wall in that part where he had seen the pork hanging. But he quickly perceived that nothing was left except the string by which it was suspended. "The bird is flown," said he; "we are come too late." Travers, whom his dread of being robbed kept awake, thinking he heard a noise, waked his wife, and ran to the oven to see if the pork was still safe.

He found it there; but as he was also apprehensive for his barn and stable, he determined to make the circuit of them; and went out armed with a hatchet. Berard, who had heard him go out, took the opportunity to pick open the door; and approaching the bed, and counterfeiting the voice of the husband, "Mary," said he, "the pork is removed from the wall. What have you done with it?" "Don't you remember, then, that we put it under the oven," answered the wife; "what, has fear turned your brain?" "No, no," replied the other, "I had only forgot. But stop, I will secure it." In saying which, he lifts the pork upon his shoulders, and runs off.

After having gone his rounds, and carefully visited his doors, Travers returned to the chamber. "I have got a husband," said the woman, "who, it must be confessed, has a curious head upon his shoulders; to forget one moment what he had done with his pork another." At these words Travers set up a cry. "I told you, they would steal it from me; it is gone, and I shall never see it more." Yet, as the thieves could not be gone far, he had still some hopes of recovering it; and instantly ran after them.

They had taken to a by-path across the fields, that led towards the wood, where they intended to hide their booty. Hamet went before, to secure the way; and the brother, whose load was a considerable impediment, followed him at a small distance. Travers soon came up with the latter. He saw him plainly, and recognised him. "You must be somewhat tired," said he, assuming the voice of the elder brother; "give me the load, and let me take my turn," Berard, who thought his brother was speaking to him, gave Travers the pork and walks on. But he had not proceeded an hundred yards, before, when, to his great astonishment, he falls in with Hamet. "Zounds!" cried he, "I have been ensnared. That rogue Travers has taken me in; but see if I cannot make amends for my folly."

He then strips himself, puts his shirt over his clothes, makes himself a kind of woman's cap, and in this trim runs as fast as he can by another path to the house of Travers, whose arrival he waits at the door. As he sees him approaching, he comes, appearing as his wife, to meet him, and asks, with a feigned voice, whether he had recovered the pork. "Yes, I have it," answered the husband. "Well, give it me, and run quickly to the stable, for I hear a noise there, and I fear they have broke in." Travers then throws the carcass upon the other's shoulder, and goes once more to make his rounds. But when he returns to the house, he is surprised to find his wife in bed, crying, and half dead with fear. He then perceives that he has again been cheated. Nevertheless, he was determined not to give out; and, as if his honour was concerned in the adventure, he vowed not to give up the contest, till by some means or other he came off victorious.

He suspected that the thieves this trip would hardly take the same road; but he knew the forest was the place they would make for, and accordingly went the shortest way to it. They had in fact already got there; and in their triumph and eagerness to taste the fruit of their dexterity, they had just lighted a fire at the foot of an oak, to broil a piece of the meat. The wood was green, and burnt but indifferently; so that, to make it blaze, they were obliged to go and gather some dry leaves and rotten branches.

Travers, whom the light directed to the thieves, takes the advantage of their distance from the fire. He strips himself entirely, climbs the oak, suspends himself by one arm, in the position of a man who had been hanged, when he sees them returned, and busy in blowing the fire, he roars out with a voice like thunder, "Unhappy wretches! you will come to the same end as me." The two brothers, in confusion, imagine they see and hear their father, and think of nothing but their escape. The other quickly snatches his clothes and his pork, returns in triumph to his wife, and gives an account of his recent victory. She congratulates him with a kiss, on so bold and well executed a manoeuvre. "Let us not yet flatter ourselves with too much security," said he; "these queer fellows are not far off, and as long as the pork subsists, I shall not think it out of danger. But boil some water, we'll dress it; and if they return, we shall see what method they will devise to get hold of it again." The one then made a fire, while the other divided the carcass, and put it piece by piece into the kettle; they both then seated themselves to watch it, one on each side of the fire-place.

But Travers, who was almost exhausted for want of rest, and fatigued by the operations of the night, soon began to shew a propensity to sleep. "Go, and lay yourself down," said the wife; "I will take care of the pot; all is fastened, there is nothing to fear. At all events, if I should hear a noise, I'll give you notice." On this assurance, he threw himself in his clothes upon the bed, and immediately fell fast asleep. The wife continued for some space of time to watch the cauldron; but drowsiness began to overpower her likewise; and at last she fell asleep in her chair.

In the meantime, our thieves, after recovering from their alarm, had returned to the oak; but finding there neither pork, nor man in chains, they easily unravelled the plot. They conceived themselves dishonoured, if in this conflict of stratagems Travers should finally have the advantage: So they returned to his house, resolved, for the last time, to strain their ingenuity to the utmost.

Before they undertook any thing, Berard looked through the hole he had made in the wall, to see if the enemy was upon his guard. He saw on the one hand Travers stretched out upon his bed, and on the other the wife, whose head nodded from one side to another, with a ladle in her hand, while the pork was boiling in the cauldron. "They had a mind to save us the trouble of cooking it," said Berard to his brother: "and indeed it was the least they could do, considering what work they have given us already. Be steady, and rest assured that I will help you to some of it." He then goes, and cuts down a long pole, which he sharpens at one end. With this pole he climbs to the roof, and letting it down through the chimney, sticks it into a piece of pork, and raises it up.

Travers at that instant happened to wake. He saw the manoeuvre, and judged, that, with such expert enemies, peace was preferable to war. "Friends," cried he, "we are both to blame; you, in breaking through the roof of my house; and I, in not inviting you to partake of my pork. Come down, and let us feast together." He went and opened the door to them. They sat down together at table, and were heartily reconciled to each other.

NICOLAS PEDROSA.

Nicolas Pedrosa, a busy little being, who followed the trade of shaver, surgeon, and man-midwife in the town of Madrid, mounted his mule at the door of his shop in the Plazuela de los Affligidos, and pushed through the gate of San Bernardino, being called to a patient in the neighbouring village of Foncarral, upon a pressing occasion. Every body knows, that the ladies in Spain, in certain cases, do not give long warning to practitioners of a certain description, and nobody knew it better than Nicolas, who was resolved not to lose an inch of his way, nor of his mule's best speed by the way, if cudgelling could beat it out of her. It was plain to Nicolas's conviction, as plain could be, that his road lay straight forward to the little convent in front; the mule was of opinion, that the turning on the left down the hill towards the Prado, was the road of all roads most familiar and agreeable to herself, and accordingly began to dispute the point of topography with Nicolas, by fixing her forefeet resolutely in the ground, dipping her head at the same time between them, and launching heels and crupper furiously into the air, in the way of argument. Little Pedrosa, who was armed at heel with one massy silver spur, of stout though ancient workmanship, resolutely applied the rusty rowel to the shoulder of his beast, and at the same time, adroitly tucking his blue cape under his right arm, and flinging his skirt over his left shoulder *en cavalier*, began to lay about him with a stout ashen sapling, upon the ears, pole, and cheeks, of the recreant mule. The fire now flashed from a pair of Andalusian eyes, as black as charcoal, and not less inflammable, and taking the segara from his mouth, with which he had vainly hoped to have regaled his nostrils in a sharp winter's evening by the way, raised such a thundering troop of angels, saints, and martyrs, from Saint Michael, downwards, not forgetting his own namesake St Nicolas de Tolentino, by the way, that if curses could have made the mule to go, the dispute would have been soon ended; but not a saint could make her stir any other ways than upwards and downwards at a stand. A small troop of mendicant friars were at this moment conducting the host to a dying man.—"Nicolas Pedrosa," says an old friar, "be patient with your beast, and spare your blasphemies; remember Balaam."—"Ah! father," replied Pedrosa, "Balaam cudgelled his beast till she spoke, so will I mine till she roars."—"Fie, fie, prophane fellow," cries another of the fraternity. "Go about your work, friend," quoth Nicolas, "and let me go about mine; I warrant it is the more pressing of the two; your patient is going out of the world, mine is coming into it." "Hear him," cries a third, "hear the vile wretch how he blasphemes the body of God." And then the troop passed slowly on to the tinkling of the bell.

A man must know nothing of a mule's ears, who does not know what a passion they have for the tinkling of a bell; and no sooner had the jingling chords vibrated in the sympathetic organs of Pedrosa's beast, than bolting forward with a sudden spring, she ran roaring into the throng of friars, trampling on some, and shouldering others, at a prophane rate; when Nicolas availing himself of the impetus, and perhaps not able to control it, broke away, and was out of sight in a moment. "All the devils in hell blow fire into thy tail, thou beast of Babylon," muttered Nicolas to himself, as he scampered along, never once looking behind him, or stopping to apologise for the mischief he had done to the bare feet and shirtless ribs of the holy brotherhood.

Whether Nicolas saved his distance, as likewise, if he did, whether it was a male or a female Castilian he ushered into the world, we shall not just now inquire, contented to await his return in the first of the morning, next day, when he had no sooner dismounted at his shop, and delivered his mule to a sturdy Arragonese wench, than Don Ignacia de Santos Aparicio, Alguazil-mayor of the supreme and general inquisition, put an order into his hand, signed and sealed by the Inquisitor-general, for the conveyance of his body to the Casa, whose formidable door presents itself in the street adjoining to the square in which Nicolas's brazen basin hung forth, the emblem of his trade.

The poor little fellow, trembling in every joint, and with a face as yellow as saffron, dropt a knee to the altar which fronts the entrance, and crossed himself most devoutly: as soon as he had ascended the first flight of stairs, a porter habited in black opened the tremendous barricade, and Nicolas, with horror, heard the grating of the heavy bolts that shut him in. He was led through passages, and vaults, and melancholy cells, till he was delivered into the dungeon, where he was finally left to his solitary meditations. Hapless being! what a scene of horror! Nicolas felt all the terrors of his condition, but being an Andalusian, and, like his countrymen, of a lively imagination, he began to turn over all the resources of his invention for some happy fetch, if any such might occur, for helping him out of the dismal limbo he was in: he had not long to seek for the cause of his misfortune; his adventure with the barefooted friars was a ready solution of all difficulties of that nature, had there been any; there was, however, another thing, which might have troubled a stouter heart than Nicolas's—he was a Jew.—This, of a certain, would have been a staggering item in a poor devil's confession, but then it was a secret to all the world but Nicolas, and Nicolas's conscience did not then urge him to reveal it. He now began to overhaul the inventory of his personals about him, and with some satisfaction counted three little medals of the blessed Virgin, two Agnus Deis, a Saint Nicolas de Tolentino, and a formidable string of beads, all

pendant from his neck, and within his shirt; in his pockets, he had a paper of dried figs, a small bundle of segars, a case of lancets, squirt and forceps, and two old razors in a leathern envelope; these he had delivered one by one to the Alguazil, who first arrested him—"and let him make the most of them," said he to himself, "they can never prove an Israelite by a case of razors." Upon a closer rummage, however, he discovered in a secret pocket, a letter, which the Alguazil had overlooked, and which his patient Donna Leonora de Casafonda had given him in charge to deliver as directed.—"Well, well," cried he, "let it pass; there can be no mystery in this harmless scrawl; a letter of advice to some friend or relation; I'll not break the seal; let the fathers read it, if they like, 'twill prove the truth of my deposition, and help out my excuse for the hurry of my errand, and the unfortunate adventure of a damned refractory mule."—And now no sooner had the recollection of the wayward mule crossed the brain of poor Nicolas Pedrosa, than he began to blast her at a furious rate.—"The scratches and the scab to boot confound thy scurvy hide," quoth he, "thou ass-begotten bastard, whom Noah never let into his ark! The vengeance take thee, for an uncreated barren beast of promiscuous generation! What devil's crotchet got into thy capricious noddle, that thou shouldst fall in love with that Nazaritish bell, and run bellowing like Lucifer into the midst of those barefooted vermin, who are more malicious and more greedy than the locusts of Egypt? Oh! that I had the art of Simon Magus to conjure thee into this dungeon in my stead; but I warrant thou art chewing thy barley straw without any pity for thy wretched master, whom thy jade's tricks have delivered bodily to the tormentors, to be snort for these uncircumcised sons of Dagon." And now the cell door opened, when a savage figure entered, carrying a huge parcel of clanking fetters, with a collar of iron, which he put round the neck of poor Pedrosa, telling him, with a truly diabolical grin, whilst he was rivetting it on, "that it was a proper cravat for the throat of a blasphemer."—"Jesus Maria!" quoth Pedrosa, "is all this fallen upon me, for only cudgelling a restive mule?" "Aye," cried the demon, "and this is only a taste of what is to come," at the same time, slipping his pincers from the screw he was forcing to the head, he caught a piece of flesh in the forceps, and wrenched it out of his cheek, laughing at poor Nicolas, whilst he roared aloud with the pain, telling him it was a just reward for the torture he had put him to a while ago, when he tugged at a tooth till he broke it in his jaw. "Ah, for the love of heaven," cried Pedrosa, "have more pity on me; for the sake of Saint Nicolas de Tolentino, my holy patron, be not so unmerciful to a poor barber-surgeon; and I will shave your worship's beard for no thing as long as I have life." One of the messengers of the auditory now came in, and bade the fellow strike off the prisoner's fetters, for that the holy fathers were in council, and demanded him for examination. "This is something extraordinary," quoth the tormentor, "I should not have expected it this twelvemonth to come." Pedrosa's fetters were struck off; some brandy was applied to staunch the bleeding of his cheek; his hands and face were washed, and a short jacket of coarse ticking thrown over him; and the messenger, with an assistant, taking him each under an arm, led him into a spacious chamber, where at the head of a long table sat his excellency the Inquisitor-general with six of his assessors, three on each side the chair of state: the Alguazil-mayor, a secretary, and two notaries, with other officers of the holy council, were attending in their places.

The prisoner was placed behind a bar at the foot of the table, between the messengers who brought him in; and having made his obeisance to the awful presence, in the most supplicating manner, he was called upon, according to the usual form of questions, by one of the junior judges, to declare his name, parentage, profession, age, place of abode, and to answer various interrogatories, of the like trifling nature: his Excellency the Inquisitor-general now opened his reverend lips, and in a solemn tone of voice, that penetrated to the heart of the poor trembling prisoner, interrogated him as follows:

"Nicolas Pedrosa, we have listened to the account you give of yourself, your business, and connections; now tell us for what offence or offences, you are here standing a prisoner before us; examine your own heart, and speak the truth from your conscience without prevarication or disguise."

"May it please your excellency," replied Pedrosa, "with all due submission to your holiness and this reverend assembly, my most equitable judges, I conceive I stand here before you for no worse a crime than that of cudgelling a refractory mule; an animal so restive in its nature, (under correction of your holiness be it spoken), that although I were blessed with the forbearance of holy Job (for like him too I am married, and my patience hath been exercised by a wife); yet could I not forbear to smite my beast for her obstinacy, and the rather because I was summoned in the way of my profession, as I have already made known to your most merciful ears, upon a certain crying occasion, which would not admit of a moment's delay."

"Recollect yourself, Nicolas," said his Excellency the Inquisitor-general; "was there nothing else you did, save smiting your beast?"

"I take Saint Nicolas de Tolentino to witness," replied he, "that I know of no other crime, for which I can be responsible

at this righteous tribunal, save smiting my unruly beast." "Take notice, brethren," exclaimed the Inquisitor, "this unholy wretch holds trampling over friars to be no crime."

"Pardon me, holy father," replied Nicolas, "I hold it for the worst of crimes, and therefore willingly surrender my refractory mule to be dealt with it as you see fit; and if you impale her alive, it will be no more than she deserves."

"Your wits are too nimble, Nicolas," cried the judge; "have a care they do not run away with your discretion; recollect the blasphemies you uttered in the hearing of those pious people."

"I humbly pray your Excellency," answered the prisoner, "to recollect that anger is a short madness, and I hope allowances will be made by your holy council for words spoke in haste to a rebellious mule: the prophet Balaam was thrown off his guard by a simple ass, and what is an ass compared to a mule? If your Excellency had seen the lovely creature that was screaming in agony till I came to her relief, and how fine a boy I ushered into the world, which would have been lost but for my assistance, I am sure I should not be condemned for a few hasty words spoken in passion."

"Sirrah!" cried one of the puisny judges, "respect the decency of the court." "Produce the contents of this fellow's pockets before the court," said the president; "lay them on the table."

"Monster," resumed the aforesaid puisny judge, taking up the forceps, "what is the use of this diabolical machine?" "Please your reverence," replied Pedrosa, "*aptum est ad extrahendos foetus*"—"Unnatural wretch," again exclaimed the judge, "you have murdered the mother."

"The mother of God forbid!" exclaimed Pedrosa. "I believe I have a proof in my pocket that will acquit me of that charge;" and so saying, he tendered the letter we have before made mention of. The secretary took it, and by command of the court read as follows;

"Senior Don Manuel de Herrera,

"When this letter, which I send by Nicolas Pedrosa, shall reach your hands, you will know that I am safely delivered of a lovely boy, after a dangerous labour, in consideration of which I pray you to pay to the said Nicolas Pedrosa the sum of twenty gold pistoles, which sum his Excellency——"

"Hold," cried the Inquisitor-general, starting hastily from his seat, and snatching away the letter, "there is more in this than meets the eye: break up the court; I must take an examination of this prisoner in private."

As soon as the room was cleared, the Inquisitor-general, beckoning to the prisoner to follow him; retired into a private closet, where, throwing himself carelessly into an arm chair, he turned a gracious countenance upon the poor affrighted accoucheur, and bidding him sit down upon a low stool by his side, thus accosted him:—"Take heart, Senior Pedrosa, your imprisonment is not likely to be very tedious, for I have a commission you must execute without loss of time: you have too much consideration for yourself to betray a trust, the violation of which must involve you in inevitable ruin, and can in no degree attain my character, which is far enough beyond the reach of malice; be attentive, therefore, to my orders; execute them punctually, and keep my secret as you tender your own life; dost thou know the name and condition of the lady whom thou hast delivered?" Nicolas assured him he did not, and his Excellency proceeded as follows: "Then I tell thee, Nicolas, it is the illustrious Donna Leonora de Casafonda; her husband is the president of Quito, and daily expected with the next arrivals from the South Seas; now, though measures have been taken for detaining him at the port, wherever he shall land, till he shall receive further orders, yet you must be sensible Donna Leonora's situation is somewhat delicate: it will be your business to take the speediest measure for her recovery; but as it seems she has had a dangerous and painful labour, this may be a work of more time than could be wished, unless some medicines more efficacious than common are administered; art thou acquainted with any such, friend Nicolas?"—"So please your Excellency," quoth Nicolas, "my processes have been tolerably successful; I have bandages and cataplasms, with oils and conserves, that I have no cause to complain of; they will restore nature to its proper state in all decent time."—"Thou talkest like a fool, friend Nicolas," interrupting him, said the Inquisitor? "What tellest thou me of thy swathings and swaddlings? quick work must be wrought by quick medicine: hast thou none such in thy botica? I'll answer for it thou hast not; therefore, look you, sirrah, here is a little vial compounded by a famous chemist; see that you mix it in the next apocem you administer to Donna Leonora; it is the most capital sedative in nature; give her the whole of it, and let her husband return when he will, depend upon it he will make no discoveries from her."—"Humph!" quoth Nicolas within himself, "well said Inquisitor!" He took the vial With all possible respect, and was not wanting in professions of the most inviolable fidelity and secrecy.—"No more words, friend Nicolas," quoth the Inquisitor, "upon that score; I do not

believe thee one jot the more for all thy promises, my dependence is upon thy fears and not thy faith; I fancy thou hast seen enough of this place not to be willing to return to it once for all!" Having so said, he rang a bell, and ordered Nicolas to be forthwith liberated, bidding the messenger return his clothes instantly to him with all that belonged to him, and having slipt a purse into his hand well filled with doubloons, he bade him begone about his business, and not see his face again till he had executed his commands.

Nicolas bolted out of the porch without taking leave of the altar, and never checked his speed till he found himself fairly housed under shelter of his own beloved brass basin.—"Aha!" quoth Nicolas, "my lord Inquisitor, I see the king is not likely to gain a subject more by your intrigues: a pretty job you have set me about; and so, when I have put the poor lady to rest with your damned sedative, my tongue must be stopt next to prevent its blabbing: but I'll shew you I was not born in Andalusia for nothing." Nicolas now opened a secret drawer, and took out a few pieces of money, which, in fact, was his whole stock of cash in the world; he loaded and primed his pistols, and carefully lodged them in the housers of his saddle; he buckled to his side his trusty spada, and hastened to caparison his mule. "Ah, thou imp of the old one," quoth he, as he entered the stable, "art not ashamed to look me in the face? But come, hussy, thou owest me a good turn, methinks; stand by me this once, and be friends for ever! thou art in good case, and if thou wilt put thy best foot foremost, like a faithful beast, thou shalt not want for barley on the way." The bargain was soon struck between Nicolas and his mule, he mounted her in the happy moment, and pointing his course toward the bridge of Toledo, which proudly strides with half a dozen lofty arches over a stream scarce three feet wide, he found himself as completely in a desert in half a mile's riding, as if he had been dropt in the centre of Arabia Petræa. As Nicolas's journey was not a tour of curiosity, he did not amuse himself with a peep at Toledo, or Talavera, or even Merida, by the way: for the same reason he took a *circumbendibus* round the frontier town of Badajoz; and crossing a little brook, refreshed his mule with the last draught of Spanish water, and instantly congratulated himself upon entering the territory of Portugal. "Brava!" quoth he, patting the neck of his mule, "thou shalt have a supper this night of the best sive-meat that Estremadura can furnish: we are now in a country where the scattered flock of Israel fold thick and fare well." He now began to chaunt the Song of Solomon, and gently ambled on in the joy of his heart.

When Nicolas at length reached the city of Lisbon, he hugged himself in his good fortune; still he recollected that the inquisition had long arms, and he was yet in a place of no perfect security. Our adventurer had in early life acted as assistant-surgeon in a Spanish frigate bound to Buenos Ayres, and being captured by a British man of war and carried into Jamaica, had very quietly passed some years in that place as journeyman apothecary, in which time he had acquired a tolerable acquaintance with the English language. No sooner then did he discover the British ensign flying on the poop of an English frigate then lying in the Tagus, than he eagerly caught the opportunity of paying a visit to the surgeon; and finding he was in want of a mate, offered himself, and was entered in that capacity for a cruize against the French and Spaniards, with whom Great Britain was then at war. In this secure asylum Nicolas enjoyed the first happy moments he had experienced for a long time past, and being a lively good-humoured little fellow, and one that touched the guitar and sung sequidillas with a tolerable grace, he soon recommended himself to his ship-mates, and grew in favour with every body on board, from the captain to the cook's mate.

When they were out upon their cruize, hovering on the Spanish coast, it occurred to Nicolas, that the Inquisitor-general at Madrid had told him of the expected arrival of the president of Quito, and having imparted this to one of the lieutenants, he reported it to the captain; and as the intelligence seemed of importance, he availed himself of it, by hawling into the track of the homeward-bound galleons, and great was the joy, when at the break of the morning the man at the mast-head announced a square-rigged vessel in view. The ardour of a chase now set all hands at work; and a few hours brought them near enough to discern that she was a Spanish frigate, and seemingly from a long voyage: little Pedrosa, as alert as the rest, stript himself for his work, and repaired to his post in the cock-pit, whilst the thunder of the guns reeled incessantly over his head; three cheers from the whole crew at length announced the moment of victory, and a few more minutes ascertained the good news, that the prize was a frigate richly laden from the South Seas, with the governor of Quito and his suite on board.

Pedrosa was now called upon deck, and sent on board the prize as interpreter to the first lieutenant, who was to take possession of her.—He found every thing in confusion, a deck covered with the slain, and the whole crew in consternation at an event they were in no degree prepared for, not having received any intimation of a war. He found the officers in general, and the passengers without exception, under the most horrid impressions of the English, expecting to be butchered without mercy. Don Manuel de Casafonda, the governor, whose countenance bespoke a constitution far gone in a decline, had thrown himself on a sofa in the last state of despair, and given way to an effusion of tears: when

the lieutenant entered the cabin, he rose trembling from his couch, and with the most supplicating action presented to him his sword, and with it a casket which he carried in his other hand: as he tendered these spoils to his conqueror, whether through his weakness, or of his own will, he made a motion of bending his knee: the generous Briton, shocked at the unmanly overture, caught him suddenly with both hands, and turning to Pedrosa, said aloud,—“Convince this gentleman he is fallen into the hands of an honourable enemy.”—“Is it possible!” cried Don Manuel, and lifting up his streaming eyes to the countenance of the British officer, saw humanity, valour, and generous pity, so strongly charactered in his youthful features, that the conviction was irresistible. “Will he not accept my sword?” cried the Spaniard. “He desires you to wear it, till he has the honour of presenting you to his captain.” “Ah! then he has a captain,” exclaimed Don Manuel, “his superior will be of another way of thinking; tell him this casket contains my jewels; they are valuable; let him present them as a lawful prize, which will enrich the captor; his superior will not hesitate to take them from me.”—“If they are your Excellency’s private property,” replied Pedrosa, “I am ordered to assure you, that if your ship were loaded with jewels, no British officer in the service of his king will take them at your hands; the ship and effects of his Catholic Majesty are the only prize of the captors; the personals of the passengers are inviolate.”—“Generous nation!” exclaimed Don Manuel, “how greatly have I wronged thee!”—The boats of the British frigate now came alongside, and part of the crew were shifted out of the prize, taking their clothes and trunks along with them, in which they were very cordially assisted by their conquerors. The barge soon after came aboard with an officer in the stern-sheets, and the crew in their white shirts and velvet caps, to escort the governor and the ship’s captain on board the frigate, which lay with her sails to the mast, awaiting their arrival: the accommodation-ladder was slung over the side, and manned for the prisoners, who were received on the gang-way by the second lieutenant, whilst perfect silence and the strictest discipline reigned in the ship, where all were under the decks, and no inquisitive curious eyes were suffered to wound the feelings of the conquered even with a glance. In the door of his cabin stood the captain, who received them with that modest complaisance, which does not revolt the unfortunate by an overstrained politeness: he was a man of high birth and elegant manners, with a heart as benevolent as it was brave: such an address, set off with a person finely formed and perfectly engaging, could not fail to impress the prisoners with the most favourable ideas; and as Don Manuel spoke French fluently, he could converse with the British captain without the help of an interpreter; as he expressed an impatient desire of being admitted to his parole, that he might revisit his friends and connections, from whom he had been long separated, he was overjoyed to hear that the English ship would carry her prize into Lisbon; and that he would there be set on shore, and permitted to make the best of his way from thence to Madrid. He talked of his wife with all the ardour of the most impassioned lover, and apologized for his tears, by imputing them to the agony of his mind and infirmity of his health, under the dread of being longer separated from an object so dear to his heart, and on whom he doated with the fondest affection. The generous captain indulged him in these conversations, and being a husband himself, knew how to allow for all the tenderness of his sensations. “Ah, Sir,” cried Don Manuel, “would to heaven it were in my power to have the honour of presenting my beloved Leonora to you on our landing at Lisbon.—Perhaps,” added he, turning to Pedrosa, who at that moment entered the cabin, “this gentleman, whom I take to be a Spaniard, may have heard the name of Donna Leonora de Casafonda; if he has been at Madrid, it is possible he may have seen her; should that be the case, he can testify to her external charms; I alone can witness to the exquisite perfections of her mind.”—“Senior Don Manuel,” replied Pedrosa, “I have seen Donna Leonora, and your Excellency is warranted in all you can say in her praise; she is of incomparable beauty.” These words threw the uxorious Spaniard into raptures; his eyes sparkled with delight; the blood rushed into his emaciated cheeks, and every feature glowed with unutterable joy: he pressed Pedrosa with a variety of rapid inquiries, all which he evaded by pleading ignorance, saying that he had only a casual glance of her, as she passed along the Prado. The embarrassment, however, which accompanied these answers, did not escape the English captain, who, shortly after, drawing Pedrosa aside into the surgeon’s cabin, was by him made acquainted with the melancholy situation of that unfortunate lady, and every particular of the story as before related; nay, the very vial was produced, with its contents, as put into the hands of Pedrosa by the inquisitor.

“Can there be such villany in man?” cried the British captain, when Pedrosa had concluded his detail; “alas! my heart bleeds for this unhappy husband; assuredly, that monster has destroyed Leonora; as for thee, Pedrosa, whilst the British flag flies over thy head, neither Spain, nor Portugal, nor inquisitors, nor devils, shall annoy thee under its protection; but if thou ever ventrest over the side of this ship, and rashly settest thy foot upon Catholic soil, when we arrive at Lisbon, thou art a lost man.”—“I were worse than a madman,” replied Nicolas, “should I attempt it.”—“Keep close in this asylum, then,” resumed the captain, “and fear nothing: had it been our fate to have been captured by the Spaniard, what would have become of thee.”—“In the worst of extremities,” replied Nicolas, “I should have applied to the inquisitor’s vial; but I confess I had no fears of that sort; a ship so commanded and so manned is in little danger of being carried into a Spanish port.”—“I hope not,” said the captain, “and I promise thee, thou shalt take thy chance in her as long as she is

afloat under my command; and if we live to conduct her to England, thou shalt have thy proper share of prize-money, which, if the galleon breaks up according to her entries, will be something towards enabling thee to shift, and if thou art as diligent in thy duty, as I am persuaded thou wilt be, whilst I live, thou shalt never want a seaman's friend."—At these cheering words, little Nicholas threw himself at the feet of his generous preserver, and, with streaming eyes, poured out his thanks from a heart animated with joy and gratitude.—The captain raising him by the hand, forbade him, as he prized his friendship, ever to address him in that posture any more; "thank me, if you will," added he, "but thank me as one man should another; let no knee bend in this ship but in adoration of God.—But now," continued he, "let us turn our thoughts to the situation of our unhappy Casafonda; we are now drawing near Lisbon, where he will look to be liberated on his parole."—"By no means let him venture into Spain," said Pedrosa; "I am well assured there are orders to arrest him in every port, or frontier town, where he may present himself."—"I can well believe it," replied the captain; "his piteous case will require further deliberation; in the mean time, let nothing transpire on your part; and keep yourself out of his sight as carefully as you can."—This said, the captain left the cabin, and both parties repaired to their several occupations.

As soon as the frigate, and her prize, cast anchor in the Tagus, Don Manuel de Casafonda impatiently reminded our captain of his promised parole. The painful moment was now come, when an explanation of some sort became unavoidable: the generous Englishman, with a countenance expressive of the tenderest pity, took the Spaniard's hand in his, and seating him on a couch beside him, ordered the centinel to keep the cabin private, and delivered himself as follows:—

"Senior Don Manuel, I must now impart to you an anxiety which I labour under on your account; I have strong reasons to suspect you have enemies in your own country, who are upon the watch to arrest you on your landing; when I have told you this, I expect you will repose such trust in my honour, and the sincerity of my regard for you, as not to demand a further explanation of the particulars on which my intelligence is founded."—"Heaven and earth!" cried the astonished Spaniard, "who can be those enemies I have to fear, and what can I have done to deserve them?"—"So far I will open myself to you," answered the captain, "as to point out the principal to you, the Inquisitor-general."—"The best friend I have in Spain," exclaimed the governor, "my sworn protector, the patron of my fortune: he my enemy! impossible."—"Well, Sir," replied the captain, "if my advice do not meet belief, I must so far exert my authority for your sake, as to make this ship your prison, till I have waited on our minister at Lisbon, and made the enquiries necessary for your safety; suspend your judgment upon the seeming harshness of this measure till I return to you again;" and, at the same time, rising from his seat, he gave orders for the barge; after leaving strict injunctions with the first lieutenant not to allow of the governor's quitting the frigate, he put off for the shore, and left the melancholy Spaniard buried in profound and silent meditation.

The emissaries of the inquisition having at last traced Pedrosa to Lisbon, and there gained intelligence of his having entered on board the frigate, our captain had no sooner turned into the porch of the hotel of Buenos-Ayres, than he was accosted by a messenger of state, with a requisition from the prime minister's office, for the surrender of one Nicolas Pedrosa, a subject of Spain, and a criminal, who had escaped out of the prisons of the inquisition in Madrid, where he stood charged of high crimes and misdemeanors.—As soon as this requisition was explained to our worthy captain, without condescending to say a word in reply, he called for pen and ink, and writing a short order to the officer commanding on board, instantly dispatched the midshipman, who attended him to the barge, with directions to make the best of his way back to the frigate, and deliver it to the lieutenant: then turning to the messenger, he said to him in a resolute tone, "That Spaniard is now borne on my books, and before you shall take him out of the service of my king you must sink his ship."—Not waiting for a reply, he instantly proceeded, without stopping, to the house of the British Minister, at the further end of the city: here he found Pedrosa's intelligence, with regard to the Governor, expressly verified, for the order had come down even to Lisbon, upon the chance of the Spanish frigate's taking shelter in that port: to this minister he related the horrid tale which Pedrosa had delivered to him, and with his concurrence it was determined to forward letters into Spain, which Don Manuel should be advised to write, to his lady and friends at Madrid, and to wait their answer before any further discoveries were imparted to him respecting the blackest circumstances of the case: in the mean time it was resolved to keep the prisoner safe in his asylum.

The generous captain lost no time in returning to his frigate, where he immediately imparted to Don Manuel the intelligence he had obtained at the British Minister's.—"This, indeed," cried the afflicted Spaniard, "is a stroke I was in no respect prepared for; I had fondly persuaded myself there was not in the whole empire of Spain a more friendly heart than that of the Inquisitor's; to my beloved Leonora he had ever shewn the tenderness of a paternal affection from her

very childhood; by him our hands were joined; his lips pronounced the nuptial benediction; and through his favour I was promoted to my government; grant, heaven, no misfortune hath befallen my Leonora! surely she cannot have offended him and forfeited his favour."—"As I know him not," replied the captain, "I can form no judgment of his motives; but this I know, that if a man's heart is capable of cruelty, the fittest school to learn it in must be the inquisition." The proposal was now suggested, of sending letters into Spain, and the governor retired to his desk for the purpose of writing them. In the afternoon of the same day, the minister paid a visit to the captain, and receiving a packet from the hands of Don Manuel, promised to get it forwarded by a safe conveyance according to the direction.

In due course of time, this fatal letter from Leonora opened all the horrible transaction to the wretched husband:

"The guilty hand of an expiring wife, under the agonising operation of a mortal poison, traces these few trembling lines to an injured, wretched husband. If thou hast any pity for my parting spirit, fly the ruin that awaits thee, and avoid this scene of villany and horror. When I tell thee, I have born a child to the monster, whose poison runs in my veins, thou wilt abhor thy faithless Leonora; had I strength to relate to thee the subtle machinations, which betrayed me to disgrace, thou wouldst pity, and perhaps forgive me. Oh agony! can I write his name?—The Inquisitor is my murderer—My pen falls from my hand—Farewell for ever!"

Had a shot passed through the heart of Don Manuel, it could not more effectually have stopt its motions than the perusal of this fatal writing: he dropped lifeless on the couch, and but for the care and assistance of the captain and Pedrosa, in that posture he had probably expired. Grief like his cannot be described by words, for to words it gave no utterance; 'twas suffocating, silent woe.

Let us drop the curtain over this melancholy pause in our narration, and attend upon the mournful widower, now landing upon English ground, and conveyed by his humane and generous preserver to the house of a noble Earl, the father of our amiable captain, and a man by his virtues still more conspicuous than by his rank. Here, amidst the gentle solitudes of a benevolent family, in one of the most enchanting spots on earth, in a climate most salubrious and restorative to a constitution exhausted by heat, and a heart nearly broken with sorrow, the reviving spirits of the unfortunate Don Manuel gave the first symptoms of a possible recovery. At the period of a few tranquillizing weeks, here passed in the bosom of humanity, letters came to hand from the British Minister at Lisbon, in answer to a memorial, that I should have stated to have been drawn up by the friendly captain before his departure from that port, with a detail of facts deposed and sworn to by Nicolas Pedrosa; which memorial, with the documents attached to it, was forwarded to the Spanish court by special express from the Portuguese premier. By these letters it appeared, that the high dignity of the person impeached, by this statement of facts, had not been sufficient to screen him from a very serious and complete investigation; in the course of which, facts had been so clearly brought home to him, by the confession of his several agents, and the testimony of the deceased Leonora's attendants, together with her own written declaration, whilst the poison was in operation, that though no public sentence had been executed upon the criminal, it was generally understood, he was either no longer in existence, or in a situation never to be heard of any more, till roused by the awakening trump, he should be summoned to his tremendous last account. As for the unhappy widower, it was fully signified to him, from authority, that his return to Spain, whether upon exchange or parole, would be no longer opposed; nor had he any thing to apprehend on the part of government, when he should arrive there. The same was signified in fewer words to the exculpated Pedrosa.

Whether Don Manuel de Casafonda will, at a future period, avail himself of the overtures, time alone can prove: as for little Nicolas, whose prize-money has set him up in a comfortable little shop in Duke's-place, where he breathes the veins and cleanses the bowels of his Israelitish brethren in a land of freedom and toleration, his merry heart is at rest, save only when, with fire in his eyes and vengeance on his tongue, he anathematizes the inquisition; and struts in the synagogue every Sabbath, with as bold a step and as erect a look, as if he was himself High Priest of the Temple, going to perform sacrifices upon the re-assembling of the scattered tribes.

LITTLE DOMINICK.

Little Dominick was born at Fort-Reilly, in Ireland, and bred no where till his tenth year; when he was sent to Wales, to learn manners and grammar, at the school of Mr Owen ap Davies ap Jenkins ap Jones. This gentleman had reason to think himself the greatest of men; for he had, over his chimney-piece, a well-smoked genealogy, duly attended, tracing his ancestry in a direct line up to Noah; and, moreover, he was nearly related to the learned etymologist, who, in the time of Queen Elizabeth, wrote a folio volume, to prove that the language of Adam and Eve, in Paradise, was pure Welch. With such causes to be proud, Mr Owen ap Davies ap Jenkins ap Jones was excuseable, for sometimes seeming to forget that a schoolmaster is but a man. He, however, sometimes entirely forgot, that a boy is a boy; and this happened most frequently with respect to Little Dominick.

This unlucky wight was flogged every morning by his master; not for vices, but for his vicious constructions: and laughed at by his companions every evening, for his idiomatic absurdities. They would probably have been inclined to sympathise in his misfortunes, but that he was the only Irish boy at school; and as he was at a distance from all his relations, and without a friend to take his part, he was a just object of obloquy and derision. Every sentence he spoke was a bull; every two words he put together proved a false concord; and every sound he articulated betrayed the brogue; but as he possessed some of the characteristic boldness of those that have been dipped in the Shannon, though he was only Little Dominick, he shewed himself able and willing to fight his own battles with the host of foes by whom he was encompassed. Some of these, it was said, were nearly twice his stature. This may be exaggerated; but it is certain, that our hero sometimes ventured, with sly Irish humour, to revenge himself on his more powerful tyrant, by mimicking the Welch accent, in which Mr Owen ap Jones said to him—"Cot bless me, you plockit, and shall I ever *learn* you English crammer?"

It was whispered in the year of our Dionysius, that our little hero was a mimick; and he was now treated with increased severity.

The midsummer holidays approached; but he feared that they would shine no holidays for him. He had written to his mother, to tell her that the school would break up on the 21st, and to beg an answer, without fail, by return of post: but no answer came.

It was now nearly two months since he had heard from his dear mother, or any of his friends in Ireland. His spirits began to sink under the pressure of these accumulated misfortunes: he slept little, ate less, and played none at all. Indeed, nobody would play with him on equal terms, because he was nobody's equal: his school-fellows continued to consider him as a being below, if not of a different *cast* from themselves.

Mr Owen ap Jones's triumph over the little Irish plockit was nearly complete, for the boy's heart was almost broken, when there came to the school a new scholar—O, how unlike the others!—His name was Edwards: he was the son of a neighbouring Welch gentleman; and he had himself the spirit of a gentleman. When he saw poor Dominick was persecuted, he took him under his protection; fought his battles with the Welch boys; and, instead of laughing at him for speaking Irish, he endeavoured to teach him to speak English. In his answer to the first questions Edwards ever asked him, Little Dominick made two blunders, which set all his other companions in a roar; yet Edwards would not allow them to be genuine bulls.

In answer to the question—"Who is your father?" Dominick said, with a deep sigh—"I have no father—I am an orphan—I have only a mother."

"Have you any brothers and sisters?"

"No! I wish I had; for, perhaps, they would love me, and not laugh at me," said Dominick, with tears in his eyes; "but I have no brothers *but myself*."

One day, Mr Owen ap Jones came into the school-room with an open letter in his hand, saying—"Here you little Irish plockit; here's a letter from your mother."

The little Irish blockhead started from his form; and, throwing his grammar on the floor, leaped up higher than he or any boy in the school had ever been seen to leap before; then, clapping his hands, he exclaimed—"A letter from my mother! And *will* I hear the letter?—And *will* I see her once more?—And *will* I go home these holidays?—O, then I will be too

happy!"

"There's no tanger of that," said Mr Owen ap Jones, "for your mother, like a wise woman, writes me here, that, py the atvice of your cardian, to hom she is coing to be married, she will not pring you home to Ireland, till I send her word that you are perfect in your English crammar at least."

"I have my lesson perfect, Sir," said Dominick, taking his grammar up from the floor; "*will* I say it now?"

"No, you plockit, you *will* not; and I will write your mother word, you have proke Priscian's head four times this day, since the letter came."

Little Dominick, for the first time was seen to burst into tears—"Will I hear the letter?—Will I see my mother?—Will I go home?"

"You Irish plockit, will you never learn the difference between *shall* and *will*?"

"And *will* I see him once again?"

And *will* I hear him speak?"

Many of the boys were, unfortunately, too ignorant to feel the force of the quotation; but Mr Owen ap Jones understood it, turned on his heel, and walked off.

Soon afterward, he summoned little Dominick to his awful desk; and, pointing with his ruler to the following page in Harris's Hermes, bade him read it, and understand it if he could.

Little Dominick read, but could not understand.

"Then read it aloud, you plockit."

Dominick read aloud—

"There is *nothing appears so clearly* an object of the mind, or intellect only, as the *future* does; since we can find no place for it's existence any where else; not but the same, if we consider, *is equally true* of the past—."

"Well, co on—What stops the plockit?—Cant you read English now?"

"Yes, Sir; but I was trying to understand it—I was considering, that this is like what they would call an Irish bull, if I had said it."

Little Dominick could not explain what he meant in English, but Mr Owen ap Jones *would* understand; and to punish him for his impertinent observation, the boy was doomed to learn all that Harris and Lowth have written to explain the nature of *shall* and *will*.—The reader, if he be desirous of knowing the full extent of the penance enjoined, may consult Lowth's Grammar, p. 52, ed. 1799; and Harris's Hermes, p. 10, 11, and 12, fourth edition.

Undismayed by the length of his task, Little Dominick only said—"I hope, if I say it all, without missing a word, you will not give my mother a bad account of me and my grammar studies, Sir."

"Say it all at first, without missing a word, and then I shall see what I shall say!" replied Mr Owen ap Jones.

Even the encouragement of this oracular answer excited the boy's fond hopes so keenly, that he lent his little soul to the task; learned it perfectly; said it at night, without missing one word, to his friend Edwards; and said it, the next morning, without missing one word, to his master.

"And now, Sir," said the boy, looking up, "will you write my mother?—And shall I see her?—And shall I go home?"

"Tell me, first, whether you understand all this that you have learnt so cliply?" said Mr Owen ap Jones.

That was more than his bond. Our hero's countenance fell; and he acknowledged that he did not understand it perfectly.

"Then I cannot write a coot account of you and your crammar studies to your mother; my conscience coes against it!" said the conscientious Mr Owen ap Jones.

No intreaties could move him. Dominick never saw the letter that was written to his mother; but he felt the consequence. She wrote word, that time, punctually *by return of the post*, that she was sorry she could not send for him home these holidays, as she had heard so bad an account from Mr Owen ap Jones, and she thought it her duty not to interrupt the course of his education, especially his grammar studies.

Little Dominick heaved many a sigh, when he saw the packings up of all his schoolfellows; and dropped a few tears, as he looked out of the window, and saw them, one after another, get on their Welch ponies, and gallop off towards their homes.

"I have no home to go to!"

"Yes, you have," cried Edwards; "and *our* horses are at the door, to carry us there."

"To Ireland? Me! the horses!" said the poor boy quite bewildered.

"No, the horses cannot carry you to Ireland," said Edwards, laughing good-naturedly; "but you have a home now in England. I asked my father to let me bring you home with me; and he said—"Yes," like a dear, good father, and has sent the horses—Come, let's away."

"But will Mr Owen ap Jones let me go?"

"Yes, he dare not refuse; for my father has a living in his gift, that Owen ap Jones wants, and which he will not have if he do not change his tone to you."

Little Dominick could not speak one word, his heart was so full.

No boy could be happier than he was, during these holidays: "the genial current of his soul," which had been frozen by unkindness, flowed with all its natural freedom and force.

Whatever his reasons might be, Mr Owen ap Jones, from this time forward, was observed to change his manners towards his Irish pupil. He never more complained, unjustly, of his preaking Priscian's head; seldom called him Irish plockit; and once, would have flogged a Welch boy for taking up this cast expression of the master's, but that the Irish blockhead begged the culprit off.

Little Dominick got forward rapidly in his studies: he soon surpassed every boy in the school, his friend Edwards only excepted. In process of time, his guardian removed him to a higher seminary of education. Edwards had a tutor at home. The friends separated. Afterwards, they followed different professions, in distant parts of the world; and they neither saw, nor heard any more of each other, for many years.

Dominick, now no longer Little Dominick, went over to India, as private secretary to one of our commanders in chief. How he got into this situation, or by what gradations he rose in the world, we are not exactly informed; we know, only, that he was the reputed author of a much admired pamphlet on India affairs; that the dispatches of the general, to whom he was secretary, were remarkably well written; and that Dominick O'Reilly, Esq. returned to England, after several years absence, not miraculously rich, but with a fortune equal to his wishes. His wishes were not extravagant: his utmost ambition was, to return to his native country, with a fortune that should enable him to live independently of all the world; especially, of some of his relations, who had not used him well. His mother was no more!

On his arrival in London, one of the first things he did, was to read the Irish newspapers. To his inexpressible joy, he saw the estate of Fort-Reilly advertised for sale—the very estate which belonged to his own family. Away he posted directly to an attorney's, in Cecil-Street, who was empowered to dispose of the land.

When the attorney had produced a map of the well-known demesne, and an elevation of the house in which he had spent the happiest hours of his infancy, his heart was so touched, that he was on the point of paying down more for an old ruin than a good new house would have cost. The attorney acted *honestly by his client*, and seized this moment to exhibit a plan of the stabling and offices; which, as sometimes is the case in Ireland, were in a stile far superior to the dwelling-house. Our hero surveyed these with transport. He rapidly planned various improvements in imagination, and planted certain favourite spots in the demesne! During this time, the attorney was giving directions to a clerk about some other business, when the name of Owen ap Jones struck his ear—He started.

"Let him wait in the front parlour; his money is not forthcoming," said the attorney; "and, if he keep Edwards in jail till he rots——"

"Edwards! Good heavens!—in jail!—What Edwards?" exclaimed our hero.

It was his friend Edwards!

The attorney told him, that Mr Edwards had been involved in great distress, by taking on himself his father's debts, which had been incurred in exploring a mine in Wales; that, of all the creditors, none had refused to compound, except a Welch parson, who had been presented to his living by old Edwards; and that this Mr Owen ap Jones had thrown young Mr Edwards into goal for his debt.

"What is the rascal's demand? He shall be paid off this instant," cried Dominick, throwing down the plan of Fort-Reilly: "send for him up, and let me pay him off on the spot."

"Had not we best finish our business first, about the O'Reilly estate, Sir?" said the attorney.

"No, Sir; d——n the O'Reilly estate!" cried he, huddling the maps together on the desk; and, taking up the bank-notes, which he had begun to reckon for the purchase-money—"I beg your pardon, Sir—If you knew the facts, you would excuse me—Why does not the rascal come up to be paid?"

The attorney, thunderstruck by his Hibernian impetuosity, had not found time to take his pen out of his mouth. As he sat transfixed in his arm-chair, O'Reilly ran to the head of the stairs, and called out in a Stentorian voice—"Here, you Mr Owen ap Jones, come up, and be paid off this instant, or you shall never be paid *at all*."

Up stairs hobbled the old school-master, as fast as the gout and Welch ale would let him—"Cot pless me, that voice!" he began—

"Where's your bond, Sir?" said the attorney.

"Safe here, Cot be praised!" said the terrified Owen ap Jones; pulling out of his bosom, first a blue pocket-handkerchief, and then a tattered Welch grammar, which O'Reilly kicked to the farther end of the room.

"Here is my bond," said he, "in the crammer," which he gathered from the ground; then, fumbling over the leaves, he at length unfolded the precious deposit.

O'Reilly saw the bond, seized it, looked at the sum, paid it into the attorney's hands, tore the seal from the bond; then, without looking at old Owen ap Jones, whom he dared not trust himself to, he clapped his hat on his head, and rushed out of the room. He was, however, obliged to come back again, to ask where Edwards was to be found.

"In the King's Bench prison, Sir," said the attorney. "But am I to understand," cried he, holding up the map of the O'Reilly estate, "am I to understand that you have no farther wish for this bargain?"

"Yes—No—I mean, you are to understand that I am off," replied our hero, without looking back—"I'm off—That's plain English."

Arriving at the King's Bench prison, he hurried to the apartment where Edwards was confined—The bolts flew back; for even the turnkeys seemed to catch our hero's enthusiasm.

"Edwards, my dear boy! how do you do?—Here's a bond debt, justly due to you for my education—O, never mind asking unnecessary questions, only just make haste out of this undeserved abode—Our old rascal is paid off—Owen ap Jones, you know—Well, how the man stares:—Why, now, will you have the assurance to pretend to forget who I am?—and must I *spake*," continued he, assuming the tone of his childhood—"And must I *spake* to you again, in my old Irish brogue, before you will *ricollict* your own *Little Dominick*?"

When his friend Edwards was out of prison, and our hero had leisure to look into the business, he returned to the attorney, to see that Mr Owen ap Jones had been satisfied.

"Sir," said the attorney, "I have paid the plaintiff in this suit, and he is satisfied; but, I must say," added he, with a contemptuous smile, "that you Irish gentlemen are rather in too great a hurry in doing business: business, Sir, is a thing

that must be done slowly, to be well done."

"I am ready, now, to do business as slowly as you please; but when my friend was in prison, I thought the quicker I did his business the better. Now, tell me, what mistake I have made, and I will rectify it instantly."

"Instantly!—'Tis well, Sir, with your promptitude, that you have to deal with, what prejudice thinks so very uncommon—an honest attorney.—Here are some bank-notes of yours, amounting to a good round sum!—You have made a little blunder in this business; you left me the penalty instead of the principal of the bond—twice as much as you should have done." "Just twice as much as was in the bond; but not twice as much as I should have done, in my opinion!" said O'Reilly: "but, whatever I did, it was with my eyes open. I was persuaded you was an honest man; in which you see, I was not mistaken: and as a man of business, I knew that you would pay Mr Owen ap Jones only his due. The remainder of the money I meant, and now mean, should lie in your hands for my friend Edward's use. I feared he would not have taken it from my hands, and therefore left it in yours. To have taken my friend out of prison, merely to let him go back again to-day, for want of money to keep himself clear with the world, would have been a blunder indeed! but not an Irish blunder: our Irish blunders are never blunders of the heart."

PERVONTE, OR THE WISHES.

Astolpho, King of Salernum, was the handsomest prince of his time. None of his loyal subjects ventured to contest the superiority in point of beauty with him, whatever might have been the secret opinion of some courtiers, when contemplating their own features in the looking-glasses of the anti-chamber. The king was fond of this piece of furniture; it presented to him a figure of which he had a very favourable opinion. He arrived, however, imperceptibly, at a period of life when his faithful looking-glasses did not do their duty so much to his satisfaction as they had done formerly. It was his comfort that one remained, which reflected all his youthful charms. His daughter, the charming Vastola, seemed, in the opinion of all the courtiers, to be cast in the same mould with her father. Her beauty subdued the proudest hearts; none of the most distinguished princes and knights had approached her with impunity; but none of them were handsome enough to make an impression on the haughty princess. She indeed permitted them to draw her triumphal ear till they were out of breath; and being desirous to preserve the number of her admirers undiminished, she bestowed, now and then, by turns, a little smile on each of them; but this smile was always allayed with a coldness that deprived of its effect, and nipped the rising hopes in the bud. The king, who was not partial to the name of grand-papa, permitted his daughter to enjoy the delights of maiden cruelty; and, till her twentieth year, this goddess of Salernum, though surrounded with love-sick youths, who melted in the rays of her beauty, continued to be cold and obdurate in the midst of the flames.

A singular event, which happened about this time, calls our attention from the court to a neighbouring forest. On a fine summer-morning, a young hind entered this wood, in order to gather a bundle of faggots. I wish I could borrow the pencil of nature, to draw a faithful picture of one of her roughest crudities. Standing by his bundle, in the most lazy posture imaginable, he scratched his big head, divided by a vast mouth into two hemispheres. Short red bristles covered his head, and seemed to blaze round his temples; his ears were of an extraordinary length; but his nose being exceedingly flat, shewed hardly any thing but a pair of wide nostrils; a short neck seemed to sink between two very broad shoulders; and two short bandy legs supported the beautiful structure. With such a sort of figure, he was yet one of those strange beings who seldom fail meeting with extraordinary turns of good luck: for fortune, whatever reason you and I may have to complain of her, is generally equitable in taking particular care of mortals of this cast, by making amends for the niggardness of nature. Pervonte (this was the name of our hero) was son and heir to a good woman, who for many years past had earned a scanty subsistence for herself and her son by spinning. Contented with her humble lot, she worked very hard, and knew scarce any other pastime but the music of her wheel. She thought herself sufficiently happy, when she saw, at noon, her little pot of broth on the fire, and when she had fuel enough to keep the winter's cold out of her cottage. Her only cause of grief was, the impossibility to make any thing of her son, whose stupidity baffled every attempt of his mother to teach him any useful occupation. There appeared no marks of curiosity, fancy, or reflection, in him; he did not take to any work, and spent the whole day stretched lazily on a couch of straw near the fire-side; his eyes were usually half shut, and he amused himself with sucking his short fingers. Whenever his mother attempted to rouse him, he complained of pains in his limbs; yet now and then he would, with many a groan, carry a few logs of wood into the kitchen; or, he would, at his mother's repeated request, drive, very calmly, the geese out of the garden, where they eat up the cabbage. This was all the good woman's rhetoric was able to obtain from him. Otherwise, he was a very harmless creature, undisturbed with the desire of prying into other's secrets, far from being quarrelsome, and interested in only one single concern, that of satisfying, no matter with what sort of food, the cravings of his stomach. He perfectly resembled that great philosopher in Horace, who, careless for what purpose the gods have created this beautiful universe, sees, without alteration, the sun and moon dart their bright rays on distant worlds; and who, wrapt up closely and warmly in the cloak of dullness and apathy, has neither the heart to love or to hate, nor the sense to blame or to approve.

On that morning, when Pervonte attracts our notice, his mother happened to have no fuel in her cottage. Her indolent son sat, with his usual tranquillity, eating, with great satisfaction, a large luncheon of bread for his breakfast: 'Pervonte,' said his mother, 'be for once good for something; thou seest this pot will never boil without fire; get up, my boy, take thy hat, and away to the forest; the storm has beat down a great many branches last night; thou wilt have easy work to-day; go, and bring me a large bundle of faggots.' Pervonte happened to be in a good humour; he accordingly gave himself the rousing shake, and sauntered towards the wood. He stopped more than once to gaze about, as if he had never been there before, and seemed to be surprised that there were so many trees in the forest. At length he fell to work, and got a tolerable bundle of faggots together. When he had done, he made a long pause, to rest himself. 'What a fine thing it would be now,' thought he, 'if somebody were to carry this burden home to my mother!' However, nobody came to do him this good office, and he was obliged to lift the bundle on his own broad shoulders, and to walk off with it. He had just cleared the bushes, and came into the open field, when the sun began to be very powerful. He stopt again; and, as he

happened to cast his eyes about, he saw three women asleep, lying on the grass, exposed to the heat of the sun-beams: they were young, and exceedingly beautiful. Pervonte went near, examined them with great attention, shut his little eyes for pleasure, and gazed again. The magic of beauty soon humanises even the most unfeeling brute. 'What a pity,' said Pervonte to himself, 'that these comely young creatures should lie in the heat of the sun, without any shelter! The bushes are not far off, what if I went back and cut some boughs to serve them for a screen?' He executed this resolution immediately. He cut off six branches, fixed them in the ground as well as he could, and drew a green umbrella about the sleeping beauties. To render the shelter more complete, he spread his jacket on the top of the boughs.

No work had ever prospered more in Pervonte's hands than the present. Pleased with his own dexterity, he burst out into a loud horse laugh, so loud indeed, as to wake the beautiful nymphs from their slumber. 'Art thou the kind mortal,' said one of them to Pervonte, 'who made us this shelter?' Pervonte, however inwardly gratified by this question, did not answer a single word, but grinned graciously at the ladies, twirling his old hat about his thumb, in the same manner as a wheel turns about its axle. 'Thy good-nature shall not go unrewarded,' continued the lady, 'know, Pervonte, we are fairies; and though there are people who find fault with us, thou shalt be convinced that, at least, we do not want gratitude. Ask whatever boon thou wilt, thy request shall be immediately granted.' At these words the fairies disappeared, Pervonte kept his eyes still rivetted on the deserted spot; and when he was at length convinced they were gone, he cried—'Fine ladies, I warrant ye! What sweet words and looks they gave me? I thought I should have had a bag full of gold and silver; and now, after all, their promises turn out to be no more than air!' Honest Pervonte now returned to his faggots, lifted up his burden with great reluctance, and at length placed it on his shoulders. He was very sensible of its weight: 'How hard it is,' cried he, 'that I should take the trouble to carry these faggots! would to God they would carry me!' The word had no sooner escaped his lips, when, on a sudden, an animal life seemed to penetrate the wood; the bundle slipped gently between his legs, and making a seat softer than a cushion, lifted him up from the ground, and ran away as the best horse could have carried him, 'Bravo!' cries Pervonte, 'you fairies are as good as your word: I said it in joke, and you take it in good earnest; but if you will have it so, I have no objection.—So go on, my horse, the straight way to my mother's.' The shortest way went through the city, close by the palace. Imagine to yourselves the noise and laughter such a singular piece of horsemanship occasioned in the streets! At every step, the throng, the astonishment, and the shouts of the populace, increased. Pervonte, perfectly at his ease in the midst of all this bustle, rode on with great unconcern: the bundle, when the people crowded too much on the rider, dealt out hearty blows to the right and to the left, and cleared its way through every obstacle. When our hero arrived at the square before the palace, the princess and her ladies opened the windows, to look at the strange rider; but as her highness happened to be in a perverse humour that morning, the general mirth gave her the spleen. 'Nonsense!' she cried, 'to make such a noise about that ugly monster: the horse is wretched enough in conscience, yet a thousand times too good for the moon-calf that rides on it.' Unluckily for the princess, Pervonte was just passing under the window as she spoke. Though his other senses were far from being acute, he had a pair of large and quick ears, which did not lose a syllable of the compliment her Royal Highness paid his person. He was nettled at her contempt. 'So, my proud lady,' said he to himself, 'you call me a monster! a moon-calf! if I was even ten times uglier, I could wish you might have a couple of twins by me, and be turned out of doors to beg your bread; and then, it is ten to one, we should see you caress and flatter me as much as you scorn me now.'

With these words Pervonte galloped away; and in a few minutes he lost sight of the city, forgot his anger, and arrived safely at the cottage, to the great consternation of his good mother. This good woman asked him a thousand questions concerning his strange expedition; but her ingenuous son had but little to say about it: he told his mother nothing but incoherent nonsense, and so entangled himself in bundles, bushes, and princesses, that he could not find the cue of the labyrinth. His mother's patience was at length tired: she left off questioning, and he blundering, and the accident was soon entirely forgot. Pervonte remained exactly what he had been; he continued to vegetate without thought or care; he had still no other desire, but that of eating and lolling on his couch. By this manner of living he got very healthy blood, preserved an excellent digestion, and no trouble or vexation interrupted his tranquillity.

But, alas! the case was very different with the princess. Four months had scarce elapsed since the wooden trot of Pervonte, when the taylor of her Highness received secret orders to enlarge the measure of her petticoats. It is true, she was still equally cruel to her admirers; none of them could boast of the slightest favour from her; yet, in spite of her prudery, her shape acquired every day a more visible rotundity. In short, at the end of nine months, this haughty beauty was brought to bed, in perfect good health, of two girls. This surprising event was ushered in by the severe comments of all the matrons, and by very significant shrugs of the courtiers. His majesty's rage, and the princess's shame, were equally great; the latter took it very ill, that the babies should bear witness against her pure unsullied reputation. The young lords gave themselves very important airs on the occasion: each of them hinted, that he had particular reasons to

conceal his own share in this event; while, in secret, every one cursed his entire innocence of the fact, and endeavoured, with malicious curiosity, to find out the favoured culprit. To complete the picture of what passed at court, and in the city, figure to yourselves the profound silence which reigned in the anti-chamber, the eloquent nods, the whispers behind the fan, the indignant ejaculations of the grave citizen ladies, the fear of all the young prudes to be visited with a similar dropsy, the ingenious jests of the wits, and the deep researches of the learned academicans. These gentlemen succeeded, indeed, in proving, in a series of dissertations, that the reality of this strange phenomenon implied its possibility. They accounted for the fact, by suggesting, that her Royal Highness must have picked up by chance a couple of ready-prepared atoms floating in the air, and conveyed to her by a Zephyr, which, by a gradual evolution, had at length acquired such a state of maturity, as to assume the size and the form of the very pretty daughters of which the princess had been lately delivered. The light so plentifully diffused over this intricate subject was, however, not quite satisfactory to the King, whose anger continued unabated; and who was too strongly prejudiced in favour of the vulgar theory of human propagation, to be convinced by the system of his philosophers. He pursued his enquiries a different way, but without success. The Princess, who was at least as much concerned in the affair, and might have been supposed to have had the best information, made oath, that she could not account for what had happened; and it was necessary to acquiesce, for the present, in this declaration.

In the meanwhile, the twins, begot by a mere wish, grew up. They were exceedingly handsome; and, might, perhaps, in due time, have turned out very amiable, had there been no nurses, governesses, and chambermaids, at the court of Salernum. When they were about six years old, the Lord Chancellor, a man of great sagacity, happening to converse with the king on the birth of his grand-daughters, bethought himself of a method to discover their father, which he communicated with great confidence to his royal master. 'Sire,' said the learned lord, 'I have read long ago, in a school-book, I believe it is Terence, that there is an innate instinct in children, by the force of which they will discover their true father among a whole legion of men; so great a classic author cannot be mistaken. We have nothing to do but to introduce all the lords of the court to the young ladies, and nature will soon point out their father.' The king was much pleased with the doctrine of instinct, and resolved to try the experiment without loss of time. He gave orders that, on the next court-day, every nobleman should not fail to attend, on pain of his majesty's heaviest displeasure. On the appointed day, the beautiful twins were seen, for the first time, in the drawing-room, to the great surprise of the court: but the reason of their appearing in public was kept a profound secret. All the noblemen of Salernum were directed to pass in review before the children, but without effect; not the least trace of instinct manifested itself in them. After the drawing-room was over, the Chancellor, not at all disconcerted by the failure of the experiment, maintained to the King, that it was now certain that none of these noblemen had the honour of being the father to his grand-children; but that the truth of the doctrine of instinct was not the least affected by this disappointment. 'What if your majesty,' continued he, 'should condescend to give a ball to the citizens; perhaps—' 'You don't mean to insinuate,' interrupted the king in a passion, 'that a citizen should be the author of my disgrace? No, it is impossible my daughter should have degraded herself so low!'—'I humbly beg your majesty's pardon,' replied the chancellor; 'to be sure, it is very improbable; yet we must allow, that much stranger things than this have happened. "Opportunity makes thieves," says the proverb. "The sex is frail, and love is blind," says my friend Terence.'—'There your friend is in the right,' said the King. 'Well, then, you shall have your will; a ball shall be given to the citizens, and I myself will dance with some of these city-beauties. They have often fine eyes, and fresh complexions; and a stomach relaxed by dainties longs sometimes for less refined dishes.' This unexpected invitation to a ball at court, brought together whatever belonged to the city beau monde. The king had his dance; but the secret purpose of this festival was again defeated. The two sister graces, superbly dressed, and sparkling with lace and jewels, were very conspicuous in the crowd; but mother Nature never spoke a syllable to their tender souls in favour of any city relation. 'Now, Sire,' said the positive chancellor, 'there remains yet a third experiment to clear up this mysterious affair; a general entertainment to all ranks and conditions.'—'With all my heart,' replied the king; 'only take care that my honest subjects may have plenty of victuals and sport.' The festival was immediately proclaimed by the sound of trumpets; provisions were brought together by numberless waggons; an enormous pile of turkeys, fowls, rabbits, pheasants, venison, and puddings, was raised in a public place, for which the populace were to scramble on the great day of the feast. This important day, expected with the utmost impatience by all ranks and ages, at length came on. Before sun-rise, every individual at Salernum was in motion; the sound of drums and trumpets, mingled with the joyful shouts of the populace; the windows which surrounded the square were filled with the busts of the fine ladies; and the people crowded towards the square from every street of the town. A thousand eager eyes were fixed on the pyramid of eatables, and marked out their hoped-for prey: they could scarcely refrain from pillage, till the signal for the general attack should be given.

Pervonte's mother, who could not remain ignorant of the general agitation, said to her son—'Why dost not thou go too, my

boy? Thou canst not fail of getting, at least, a ham or a fowl in the scramble: run thither, and make what haste thou canst.' The hope of such a reward made Pervonte obey with uncommon alacrity; and he set out from his mother's at a moderate gallop, a thing which he was never known to do before. In the mean while, the court, who on this occasion (probably to enhance the pleasure their appearance was to give) suffered the good people to wait very long for their coming, had at length taken their places on an amphitheatre built for that purpose. Every body was charmed to see the pretty children, wearing fine caps in the newest fashion, sit near the foot of the large pyramid. Two long rows of youths and handsome girls were already formed, in order to begin a grand dance; when our clown, conspicuous by the burning red of his hair, arrived in the midst of the crowd; and, wonderful to tell! the children no sooner perceived him making up to the pile, dirty as he was, in a ragged jacket, with uncombed hair, and without shoes, than they ran eagerly towards him with open arms, and every mark of filial affection. The spectators were lost in amazement. 'Was I not in the right now?' said the lord chancellor to the king: 'is not now my doctrine of instinct clearly proved?'—'Cursed instinct!' cried the king, in a violent rage: 'Must I live to suffer such a disgrace? Must I have grand-children begotten by such an ugly wretch? Tortures and death cannot sufficiently punish such a vile profanation of majesty!' The unfortunate princess, not conscious of any guilt, begged hard to be heard; but her father threatened her with instant death, if she dared to utter a word in her defence. Luckily for her, he cast his eyes on a large cask which stood near the pile, filled, according to custom, with very indifferent wine, destined to rejoice the hearts of his majesty's loyal subjects. The king ordered the bottom to be knocked out, and sentenced the delinquents to be put into this cask, and to be thrown into the sea. The merciless command was immediately put in execution. The crying children, the innocent princess, and honest Pervonte, who was now no longer doubted to be the happy lover, were crammed up in this dismal place of confinement, and abandoned to the mercy of the waves.

Imagine now to yourselves, our Vastola, a princess, and a first-rate beauty, degraded at once from the highest eminence of grandeur and admiration, abandoned to the rage of the angry ocean, in a moist cask, with twins she cannot acknowledge, and for whom she yet feels all the tenderness of a mother; and, what aggravated the distress, and might have also tempted her to become another Medea, confined with such a paramour! and this charming companion, this Adonis, with the figure and the elegance of a muleteer, publicly declared the father of her daughters! It must be owned, the situation was novel and insupportable; especially if you consider, that the space which contained the princess, the clown, and the two children, was so narrow, that, by every motion of the waves, their legs and arms were unavoidably more and more entangled: his nose often touched the thin gauze which covered her graceful neck; and frequently half an inch was the whole interval between her delicate lips and his immense mouth. All these sufferings, put together, would have been too much for the haughtiest of her sex; but, in a scene of complicated distress, which would have driven vulgar minds to despair, the high spirit of Vastola displayed all the magnanimity of her princely nature. By the silent scorn, with which her looks annihilated Pervonte, she shewed that her misfortunes only raised her soul higher. 'How unjust is the suspicion,' she exclaimed at length, in the bitterness of indignation, that I should owe my daughters to the embrace of such a wretch!'—'Faith,' replied Pervonte, very quietly, 'you may be sure that I don't like this joke a bit better than yourself, to be locked up with you, and to dance on the waves in this moist cask! You think, perhaps, it is a vast pleasure to me to pass for the father of your little bastards there; you know, probably, much better than I, how you came by them.'—'How should I have had them by thee,' answered the princess, 'who never saw thee in all my life-time?'—'As to that, Madam Vastola, you might pay a little more regard to truth.'—'Alas! now I think of it, surely I recollect thee by thy burning red hair and thy vast mouth: art thou not the fellow, who, about seven years ago, rode on a bundle of sticks over the square before our palace?'—'The very same; I remember that ride as well as if it had happened but yesterday: I can't forget how you tossed up your nose, and called me pretty names, such as monster! and moon-calf! I own it vexed me; and I wished, saving your worship's presence, you might be with twins by me, in order to see whether you would then treat me still so haughtily. I meant it only for a joke; you know best how you made earnest of it, but that about that time the fairies had promised me to fulfil all my wishes.'—'How!' cried the princess, 'hadst thou ever such a gift from the fairies?'—'To be sure I had; my riding on a bundle of faggots was owing to them.'—'Perhaps thou art still in possession of this gift?'—'Not that I know of.'—'And hast thou never tried it?'—'There was no occasion for my trying it; there was always broth enough in my mother's pot, and wood enough to boil it; what else could I have wished for?'—'What a philosopher have we got here!' cried Vastola; 'I see that stupidity, as well as necessity, can form a cynic: but, I hope, friend, that now, when every wave threatens us with unavoidable death, you will have the good sense to try whither the fairies have still a mind to fulfil your wishes; you cannot but see, that the assistance of the fairies could not come in better time.'—'Why should I give myself the trouble of wishing,' said Pervonte, 'perhaps for your sake? You have called me monster, silly fellow, and philosopher: now it seems you have found out, forsooth, that I am good enough for wishing.'—'What, my good friend, are you in your senses? I meant no offence: pray, good Sir, let me intreat you to make

the trial.'—'So, Madam, now you are in distress, you can give me fair words—I thought it would come to this; but let me tell you, sweetheart, that Pervonte can be as obstinate as any of you; my mother's son shall not surrender to you for less than a good hearty kiss.'

The hand of fate pressed hard on poor Vastola; however distressing the choice between two evils may be in other cases, here was no alternative. Notwithstanding the opposition of her heart and her stomach, she saw she must comply, and thanked Heaven that the fellow did not ask a much greater favour. What would she not have done, rather than be devoured by sharks and lobsters? In short, as there was no other expedient to escape from imminent death, she kept her breath in, shut her eyes, and gave him the kiss she could not refuse. 'One more,' cried Pervonte, 'and then you may let me know what I shall wish for, before the leaky cask fills with water.'—'That the cask may be changed into a beautiful vessel, well provided with stores, manned with twenty stout sailors, and a pilot to steer it towards the shore of Bajar.' Pervonte, who did not trust to his faculties, desired her to repeat the words again, and he spoke every syllable after her. While he was yet speaking, the cask was converted into the most elegant bark the sun ever shone upon, since the river Cydnus beheld Cleopatra, beaming with unequalled beauty, glide down his current in her galley, when she intended to meet the great Anthony. Vastola thought her eyes deceived her, when she saw the silk streamers fluttering in the air like the wings of zepthers; when she saw the silver oars, the purple sails, the golden masts adorned with garlands of flowers; the sailors, dressed as for a dance, resembling animated pictures, who, without stopping, and in profound silence, plied the oars in harmonious cadence. In short, everything was in such a stile of perfection as might be expected from the workmanship of the fairies. The princess, who now saw realized what seemed to her a dream, began to consider Pervonte as a being of more importance than she had thought him before, and than he really was: but our hero remained as silly as before this metamorphosis; nor did he think higher of himself, on account of a faculty which sat as awkwardly on him, as the talent of preaching on the ass of Balaam. The impenetrable shield, which effectually secured him against the sting of curiosity, and against the attack of every doubt, was his implicit belief in the famous truth, that "things are what they are."—'The ship exists,' said he; 'and as it exists, I cannot doubt of its existence.' A sceptic would have suggested that it only seemed to exist; but Pervonte, who belonged to no set of philosophers, convinced himself, with eagerness and perseverance, of the reality of the eatables he found in the ship, unconcerned about their possibility, and satisfied that where there is good eating there is good living: while he, to whom nothing existed but what he had under his teeth, was rumaging the stores in the cabin; and while Vastola, who ceased to enjoy as soon as she possessed, was planning new wishes, the bark, imperceptibly, proceeded on her voyage with the fairest wind and weather, doubled a cape, and made land that very evening, on the most beautiful shore in the universe. Illumined by the rays of the setting sun, this shore seemed to be the favourite residence of the vernal deities; a landscape created by enchantment, and a thousand times more delightful than the romantic scenes of Tinian and Juan Fernandez. On a nearer view, this spot seemed to be a solitary valley, enclosed by gently sloping hills, and interspersed with woods, from whence silver rivulets, bordered with roses, rolled their meandering waters; and where choruses of nightingales sung undisturbed their sweetest notes to the fragrant grove. 'Let us land on this heavenly shore,' said Vastola to Pervonte; 'but, to live comfortably here, my good friend, we must trouble the fairies with another wish.'—'I understand you,' cries Pervonte! 'faith, nothing is more in time now than a new wish: what if I was to wish that these green branches might be hung with joints of roast meat and puddings?'—'Peace, you idiot!' said Vastola, reddening; 'must I ever blush for you? Before the fairies take a present from thee, of which thou so little knowest the use, resign the wishing to me, and be contented to speak my words after me. Let the ship be changed into the most beautiful palace human eyes ever beheld; let it be furnished with magnificence and elegance; let the ceilings and pillars be adorned with exquisite sculpture; let the walls be hung with the most costly tapestry, richly gilt; let there be the finest pictures, busts, statues, relievos, Etruscan vases, services of china and plate; in short, let there be every thing belonging to the furniture of a royal palace: and as it costs us only the trouble of wishing, let the palace be surrounded with delicious pleasure-grounds, in which blooming spring and living verdure reign for ever; let them exhale an atmosphere of the sweetest perfumes; in the most retired recesses of a grove, let there be a marble bath, handsome enough to invite Venus herself to take a plunge; let a lake, frequented by charming swans, spread itself over a part of the valley; let a crystal river, full of the finest fishes, wind gently through flowery meadows; let there be a farm, a poultry-yard, flocks, and cattle, and pretty shepherds and shepherdesses to take care of them; let me have a number of female attendants, as handsome as Leda's daughters, genteel pages, and servants; let——' 'Hold, hold, Vastola,' interrupted Pervonte, 'how can the fairies remember so many things?' But before Pervonte had spoken the last words, a magic palace rose before his eyes, on which the fairies exhausted all their art. The princess herself stood motionless, dazzled with the splendour of the magnificent fabric. The palace of her father, compared with this mansion, dwindled into a mean cottage. Pervonte gazed at the palace with the widest mouth that ever was opened. Vastola, leading her lovely daughters by the hand, entered the door in secret raptures. On the stair-case she was

welcomed by the harmony of the most delightful music. Pervonte found, among all the presents of the fairies, not a more substantial one than a table covered for four persons, and loaded with the most exquisite dainties. They sat down to it: Pervonte did ample justice to the entertainment, and seemed quite giddy with the meridian splendour which beamed forth from an hundred lustres hung up in a long suite of apartments. Sometimes he burst out in a loud laugh of joy; roared his thanks to the fairies, and toasted them in many a bumper. His spirits rose to such a pitch, that, at the dessert, he began to grow very familiar with the princess; who, being afraid of the too expressive tenderness of his rough hands, was obliged to draw her chair by degrees to the farthest corner of the table; it was now high time for Vastola to own to herself, what, in spite of her pride, she could not help perceiving, the catastrophe of the drama was drawing near. Disgusting as Pervonte was, with his big round head, his burning hair, and his clumsy figure, yet what could she do? The twins, the cask, and the palace, had unalterably decided her destiny: nothing remained now but the alternative of living like a vestal, or of taking Pervonte for her husband. It is true, a fortune such as he had to offer facilitated the choice; yet, on the other side, was such a vulgar, ill-shapen fellow, to be the husband of the delicate and accomplished Princess Vastola? It could not be, it was yoking an owl with a swan to draw the car of Venus. 'Pervonte,' said the princess, after some uneasy thoughts, 'your fairies have been very bountiful to you; yet something, my good friend, is still wanting. You have, probably, never seen your own figure in a looking-glass; pray, examine it a little, and be candid enough to own, that if it was changed from head to foot, you could not possibly be a loser by any metamorphosis.'—'What,' cries Pervonte, 'my figure to be changed! and for what purpose?'—'To be handsome.'—'Handsome! why, sweetheart, I would not stir a finger to become handsome. I was always very well satisfied with my figure; however, if it gives you pleasure, may I be from head to foot exactly as you wish me to be.'—'I do not wish thee too handsome neither,' thought Vastola to herself; 'mayest thou be somewhat of an Adonis, but yet strong as Millo; a little taller than myself; in short, less delicate than manly, and thou wilt be handsome enough for me.' Let us observe here, that Vastola did not think, much less speak openly, in this manner; it was only a half-rising thought, which scarcely ventured out of the inmost recesses of her heart. What was her surprize, when she saw Pervonte standing before her, completely and exactly bodied forth as her fancy had cut out his shape! It was a finished form, in which the charms of Antinous strove for pre-eminence with the strength of Hercules. Vastola screamed aloud, when she found herself taken at her word by the fairies, who had read in her breast a wish which she scarcely dared avow to herself. She blushed most immoderately down to her neck, and looked about in confusion and half-pleasing uneasiness. She would have given all the world to have played the prude a little longer, if it had not been for the fear of being guilty of the heinous sin of ingratitude. The best thing she could do was, to accept the charming husband in silence, and not to be ashamed of the bounty of the gods.

We will candidly confess, (provided our openness does not injure her reputation) that the young lady seemed rather to go too far in her gratitude. For three whole days, and we fear three nights too, every thought, and every moment of her time, was entirely devoted to her Corydon. She led him, with the eagerness of a child that had got a new doll, from one delightful spot in their new dominions to the other. Every where you saw the loving pair, arm in arm, walking through the green meadows, or sitting in shaded bowers, or reposing on the soft grass, counting the minutes only by their kisses, sufficient to each other's happiness, and forgetting the whole around them.

Pervonte, now called Prince Pervonte, had continued, throughout all these revolutions, as great a blockhead as at his mother's cottage. There is reason to believe, however, that his manner of loving was not the worse for this deficiency: it seemed impossible that he could, with the most refined wit, have entertained his bride more to her satisfaction than he had done hitherto. It is certain, that Vastola never once observed his want of understanding, till a whole week of their marriage had elapsed. At length, however, the arrows of Cupid were shot away. An Hercules, obliged to rest, loses the greatest part of its value; and an Adonis, who can shew nothing but an unmeaning face and a set of fine teeth, is but an indifferent substitute. The princess now perceived where the fault lay. 'I think,' said she to her husband, 'it is high time for you to beg a present of the fairies which you are greatly in want of.'—'And what can this present be?' said Pervonte. 'It is sense,' replied Vastola; 'a little more brains would vastly well become so beautiful a forehead.'—'A very useless wish,' exclaimed Pervonte; 'yet why should I ask for more? had I not always enough to find out my mouth, and——' 'Peace,' cried Vastola, and stopt his mouth for fear of hearing more nonsense; 'believe me, understanding is a most valuable commodity, and by no means burdensome; the more you have of it, the more easily you will bear it.'—'Well, then, I will be advised: tell me only what I must ask for.'—'Ask only for sense: this one word is sufficient.'—'Ye fairies,' cried Pervonte, 'grant me sense; and let it be good sense,' added he, 'for every thing that glitters is not gold.' You see, the fairies had heard him at the first word: indeed, they had bestowed on him a larger portion of understanding than was perhaps agreeable to Vastola. 'Madam,' said Pervonte to her, 'let us now have done with wishes. The bounty of the fairies to us has been very great; to importune them for more presents, would be covetous and ungrateful. We want nothing but content, a blessing which is entirely in our own gift. Let us now endeavour to deserve what we possess, by

the manner of our enjoying it. Let us love each other, dear princess, and let us bless every feeling being about us with a share of our own happiness: what else can we wish for? or what else can the partiality of the fairies bestow?

THE VIZIER'S DAUGHTER.

The kingdom of Cachemire was formerly governed by a prince named Aladdin. He was blessed with a daughter, who would have been acknowledged the most perfect beauty in the East, if the vizier's daughter had not disputed the prize with her. Nothing engrossed the conversation of the East, but the extraordinary charms of these princesses. Many sovereigns, upon the credit of report, longed for their alliance, and were ready to demand them in marriage.

It was difficult to determine which of these beauties was most accomplished. Yet, whether it was owing to partiality, or the manners of the vizier's daughter, which were much bolder than those of her rival, she had engrossed the public esteem in her favour, and was honoured with the preference.

The king's daughter was so immoderately chagrined at the preference paid Ghulnaz, for that was the name of the vizier's daughter, that she fell into a profound melancholy, which threatened her life. Her father, alarmed at her danger, applied to his physicians, who assured him, that the princess's illness was owing to some secret uneasiness.

The king was very importunate with his daughter to unbosom herself to him; and to prevail on her, assured her, with a solemn oath, that he would grant her every thing she would ask, were it half of his kingdom. The daughter of Aladdin, instead of disclosing the jealousy with which she was tortured to another, would, if possible, have hid it from herself. But melted with the tender caresses of her father, and the concern which he testified on her account, she could not refuse him any longer; but confessed to him, that Ghulnaz was the cause of her disorder, which would admit of no relief, till her rival was removed at some distance from her.

Aladdin endeavoured all he could to comfort his daughter, and assured her, it should not be long before she was rid of the object of her uneasiness.

In consequence of his promise, Aladdin sent for his vizier, and told him, 'That it was with some reluctance, that he insisted upon his selling his daughter; because he knew how much such a proposal must afflict him.—But,' added he, 'my daughter's life depends on it. I need not add any more, and I expect this sacrifice, as a mark of the attachment you have always professed for me.'

The vizier was shocked at the proposal, and was for some time divided between paternal love and duty to his prince. The latter, at length, got the ascendancy, and stifled the voice of nature. Some remains of affection prevented a public sale. For which purpose, he inclosed her in a coffer, and sending for the crier, said, 'You must sell this coffer for forty thousand *aspers*, with this condition, that the purchaser shall not be permitted to see what it contains, before he buys it.'

The crier endeavoured to execute the vizier's commission, in vain: the condition he exacted drove away all the buyers. A young fellow, who was a water-carrier, more venturesome than the rest, suspected that there was something mysterious in the affair, and resolved to run the risk; he borrowed the purchase-money of a merchant with whom he was acquainted, and, after paying it to the crier, carried the coffer home.

His surprise could be equalled by nothing but the joy he felt, when, opening the coffer in haste, he found in it a young lady of inexpressible beauty. 'Charming Hourì,' said he, 'for thou art certainly one of those celestial nymphs, which are formed for the pleasure of the elect in the next world, by what strange adventure hast thou been inclosed in this coffer?'

The vizier's daughter, being unwilling to discover who she was, replied, 'Thou seest an unhappy creature, who is the sport of misfortune. Fate has made me thy slave, and thou shalt find in me all the submission and fidelity, that are due to thee.'

The amiable Ghulnaz was too charming to be beheld with insensibility. Her possessor perceived this. For though she was his slave, and he could dispose of her in whatever manner he pleased; yet, in his amours, he had a delicacy far above those of his rank. His happiness, if it should proceed from compulsion, would have appeared defective to him, and he was therefore desirous of owing it entirely to love.

He formed a resolution, therefore, of giving Ghulnaz her liberty, and to unite himself to her afterwards in bonds of matrimony. But before he put this design in execution, he was willing to try, whether she was worthy of the fate for which he designed her.

He conducted her to his mother's, at a little village about a day's journey from Cachemire. 'Mother,' says he to her in

private, 'I have some intention of marrying this young slave, whom I commit to your care. Have a watchful eye on her behaviour, and try whether her understanding is equal to her beauty.'——He immediately took leave of his mother and Ghulnaz, promising that he would soon see them again.

The beautiful slave soon gained the affection of her patron's mother,—who was enchanted with her sweetness and complaisance; and in a short time she was dear to her as her own daughter. The good woman, though she had long endured the hardships of poverty, had supported them with patience; but after she was united to Ghulnaz, she was concerned to see her a partner in her miseries, and, for the first time, wished to be rich—but with no other view, than that of putting her into a condition more worthy of her virtues.

This amiable fair one, on her side, being affected with the distress of one who had shown her so much kindness, was employed in finding out some expedient to afford her comfort. She put into her hands a diamond, which she had concealed, when her cruel parent confined her in the coffer, and desired her to sell it for two thousand sequins. As the diamond was of the first water, the old woman soon met with a purchaser, and returned in raptures to Ghulnaz, whom she stiled her dearest daughter.

Ghulnaz hired a house, and furnished it very elegantly. She was now beginning to comfort herself in her misfortunes, and to be resigned to her lot, when new troubles rendered her a greater object of pity than she had yet been. Though she lived a very retired life, and very seldom went abroad, and even then not without her veil; yet, the fame of her beauty was spread abroad through the place in which she lived. A young man was enamoured with it, and had the boldness to declare his passion to her. His rashness not meeting with that success which he expected, his love was converted into rage, and he was resolved to be avenged of one who treated his love with disdain. He set out for Cachemire, and having found the water-carrier, 'I pity you,' said he, 'for maintaining, with so much pains, a wretch, who repays you with ingratitude; while you are sinking under the burthen of fatigue, she is swimming in a criminal affluence, which she has procured by amorous intrigues.'

The passions of the water-carrier being thus inflamed, without enquiring into the grounds of the information he had received, he set out with a resolution of revenge. The elegance of the house in which his mother lived, and the magnificence of the furniture, conspired to confirm him in the opinion of his being abused. He entered.—Ghulnaz, who had no suspicions, because she had nothing to reproach herself with, was preparing to meet him; but he prevented her, by plunging the dagger he had concealed under his gown into her bosom. Seeing that she did not fall with the first blow, he was preparing to give her a second, when Ghulnaz, in a fit of despair, jumped out of the window.

A Jew passing by, and seeing a young woman weltering in her blood, raised her up, and carried her to his own house. In the mean while, the water-carrier's mother, who was in an adjoining apartment, ran in on hearing Ghulnaz's shrieks.—She found her son, with his eyes rolling with fury, and the bloody dagger in his hand. 'What hast thou done, my son,' said she—'and what has become of Ghulnaz?' 'This weapon,' replied he, 'has just now avenged me of a perfidious wretch, who has abused me,'—'How much art thou mistaken!' cried the old woman in all the agony of woe; 'It will cost thee many a flood of tears!——Thou hast unjustly killed one of the most amiable, and most virtuous of women in the universe.'——She then informed him of the generous manner in which Ghulnaz had delivered her from distress.

At the recital of this circumstance, the water-carrier gave himself up to the most lively grief; he ran down into the street, hoping to find his dear Ghulnaz there. He beheld the traces of her blood, with streaming eyes, but she was not to be found. He ran through the whole city, without being able to gain the least intelligence of the place where she was gone to.

In this interval the Jew sent for a surgeon, who, after probing the wound of the vizier's daughter, assured him it was not mortal. He was not mistaken, and Ghulnaz in a short time recovered her health, together with her charms. The Jew could not behold them without being sensible of their efficacy, and declared his passion in terms, which shewed that he would be obeyed. Ghulnaz shuddered at the danger to which she was exposed. Being watched too narrowly to make her escape, she formed the resolution of throwing herself into the sea, which washed the walls of the house in which the Jew lived; esteeming the loss of life nothing, providing she preserved her honour. To put her design into execution, it was necessary that her lover should be absent: to procure which, she pretended to comply with his wishes, on condition that he should first bathe himself.

As soon as the Jew left the room, Ghulnaz opened the window, and flung herself into the sea: three brothers, who were fishing, near the place, saw her. As they were good swimmers, they caught her by the cloaths, and putting her into their boat, soon landed on the banks of a meadow, on the other side of the city.

The vizier's daughter, being recovered by their assistance, saw herself again exposed to a more terrible danger than she had escaped.—Her extraordinary beauty made an impression on the three brothers; they quarrelled who should have her. They were just coming to blows, when chance conducted a young cavalier to the spot, whom they pitched upon as an arbitrator.—'Chance, alone,' said the young cavalier, after he had been informed of the cause of their dispute, 'chance alone can decide your pretensions. I will shoot three arrows to three different places, and he who shall pick up one of the arrows first, shall be possessor of this beauty.' The proposal seemed so reasonable to the fishermen, that they acquiesced in it without the least reluctance. The cavalier drew his bow, and shot three arrows three different ways. The three brothers ran as swift as lightning, in hopes of gaining the prize. The cavalier, seeing them at a distance, dismounted, lifting Ghulnaz into the saddle, and setting spurs to his horse, went off at full stretch to the neighbouring town.

It was the fate of Ghulnaz to captivate every one that beheld her.—The cavalier had no sooner set her upon the ground, than he declared his passion. Ghulnaz, seeing that she could not elude this danger but by artifice, heard his declaration without the least traces of displeasure.—She went so far, as to feign herself won by it, and only conjured him to defer his happiness till night. 'A thought,' says the vizier's daughter, 'has just now come into my head, which, though somewhat ridiculous, may nevertheless contribute to mutual happiness. No one knows me in this place; lend me a suit of your clothes.—You may make me pass for a relation, who is returned from foreign parts. As no one can suspect my sex, you will be under no apprehension from rivals.'—When she had dressed herself in them, 'I am going to convince you,' said she, 'that I am no disgrace to the sex which I have assumed, and that few men can surpass me in horsemanship.' As she was uttering this speech, she vaulted into the saddle with great agility, and made the horse perform all his paces. While the cavalier was admiring her address, she drew off from him without his perceiving it, and clapping spurs to her horse, she set out at full gallop, and shot from the cavalier's sight like a flash of lightning. The apprehension of being pursued, made her travel the rest of that day, and all the night, without choosing any particular way.

The first rays of the sun, which appeared above the horizon, discovered a city to her. In the utmost uncertainty where she was, she turned towards the city. And how great was her astonishment, when she saw the inhabitants coming to meet her!—'Our king died this night,' said they to her, 'and he has left no heirs to succeed him to the throne. Being apprehensive of a civil war, he has ordered us, by his will, to raise the first person whom we shall meet with, on opening the gates, to that honour.' Ghulnaz received, with an air of majesty and affability, the homage of her subjects, who were far from suspecting her sex. She passed through the streets, amidst the acclamations of the people, as she went to take possession of the palace, the usual residence of the sovereigns belonging to that country.

When she had ascended the throne, she applied herself wholly to the government of her kingdom. She made choice of viziers, who were no less illustrious for their integrity than their abilities; and she was more than ordinarily solicitous to have justice dispensed without partiality. Her subjects admired the wisdom of her administration, and blessed the destiny which had assigned them a sovereign, more desirous of promoting their happiness than his own.

After the fair Ghulnaz had reigned some time, she caused a magnificent fountain to be made at the gate of the city. When it was finished, she sat for her picture; but without acquainting the painter with her reason for so doing, she ordered him to draw her in the character of a queen. The portrait was placed in the upper part of the fountain. The spies, which were placed about it, had orders to bring every one to her, who should fetch a sigh, or give the least signs of grief, on beholding the picture.

All this while, the water-carrier had been inconsolable for the loss of his dear slave; and searched many a city, in hopes of tracing her out.—He came to the fountain; and scarcely had he contemplated the features of the dear object, which was always present in his mind, than he fetched a deep sigh. The soldiers seized him immediately, and carried him before Ghulnaz, whom he was not able to discover under the disguise in which she then appeared. She ordered him, in a menacing tone, to acquaint her with the cause, that made him shed tears at the sight of the picture which hung up at the fountain. He related his misfortunes to her, with the agonies of fear, and Ghulnaz ordered him to be confined in prison.

Some days afterwards, chance brought the brothers, who were fishermen, to the same fountain. They discovered, in the picture which graced the place, the resemblance of her whom they saved from drowning; their flame, which was not quite extinct, revived at the sight, and they could not forbear sighing. They were carried before Ghulnaz; who asked them the same question she had asked the water-carrier, and committed them to prison likewise. The cavalier, and the Jew, came likewise to the fountain, and having shewn the same sensibility, met with the same lot.

When all the parties were thus secured together, the vizier's daughter ordered them to be brought before her. 'If the person, who is the cause of your sighs,' said she, with some emotion, 'should now appear before your eyes, would you

know her again?' She had scarcely pronounced these words, when she tore her robe open, and shewed herself to them in the dress of her sex. They all prostrated themselves at her feet, and begged pardon of her for the excesses they had been hurried into, by a passion too violent for restraint.

The vizier's daughter raised them up with an air of complacency, and taking the water-carrier by the hand, she placed him upon the throne, and ordered him to be cloathed in royal attire. Then, assembling the great officers of the state, she related her history to them, and begged them to accept of her master for their king. She married him a few days after, and the nuptials were celebrated with a magnificence worthy of their rank.

The Jew, the three fishermen, and the cavalier, were sent home loaded with presents; which, though considerable, did not prevent them from envying the lot of the water-carrier.

LITTLE HUNCH-BACK.

There was in former times at Casgar, upon the utmost skirts of Tartary, a taylor that had a handsome wife, whom he loved, and was reciprocally loved by her. One day as he sat at work, a little Hunch-back man came and sat down at the shop-door, and began to sing, and at the same time played upon a tabor; the taylor was pleased to hear him, and had a strong inclination to take him into his house to make his wife merry. 'This little fellow,' said he to her, 'will divert us'; in fine he invited him in, and he readily accepted of the invitation; the taylor shut up his shop, and conducted him home; the taylor's wife covered the table, they sat down to supper, and had a large dish of fish set before them; but as they ate heartily, unfortunately the crooked man swallowed a large bone, of which he died in a few minutes, notwithstanding all that the taylor and his wife could do to prevent it; they were much alarmed at the accident, especially since it happened at their house, and there was ground to fear that, if the justiciary magistrates came to hear of it, they would be punished as assassins. However, the husband found an expedient to get rid of the corpse; he remembered there was a Jewish doctor that lived just by, and he formed a project; in the execution of which his wife and he took the corpse, the one by the feet and the other by the head, and carried it to the physician's house; they knocked at the door, from which ascended a steep pair of stairs to his chamber; as soon as they had knocked, the servant-maid came down without any light, and opening the door asked what they wanted. 'Go up again,' said the taylor, 'and tell your master, we have brought him a man that's very bad, and wants his advice.' 'Here,' says he, putting a piece of money into her hand, 'give him that before hand, to convince him that we do not wish him to lose his labour.' While the servant was gone up to acquaint her master with the welcome news, the taylor and his wife nimbly conveyed the hunch-backed corpse to the head of the stairs, and, leaving it there, ran off.

In the meantime, the maid having told the doctor that a man and woman staid for him at the door, desiring he would come down and look upon a patient they had brought with them, and putting the money she had received into his hand, the doctor was transported with joy; being paid before hand he thought it was a good patient, and should not be neglected, therefore, without staying for the light, he went to the stair-head in such haste, that stumbling against the corpse he forced it down to the stair-foot.

At last the maid came with the light, and he went down stairs with her; but when he saw that the stumbling-block he had kicked down was a dead man, he was so terrified that he invoked Moses, Aaron, Joshua, Esdras, and all the other prophets. 'Unhappy man that I am,' said he, 'why did I offer to come down without a light! I have dispatched the man that was brought to me to be cured; doubtless I am the cause of his death, and unless Esdras's ass comes to assist me, I am ruined: mercy on me, they will be here out of hand, and drag me out of my house for a murderer.'

But, notwithstanding the perplexity and jeopardy he was in, he had the precaution to shut his door; he then took the corpse into his wife's chamber, upon which she swooned away. 'Alas,' she said, 'we are utterly ruined, unless we adopt some expedient to turn the corpse out of our house this night! Beyond all question, if we harbour it here till morning, our lives must pay for it. By what means did you kill this man?' 'That is not the question,' replied the Jew, 'our business now is, to find out a remedy for such a shocking accident.'

The doctor and his wife consulted together how to get rid of his corpse that night. The doctor could not think of any stratagem; but his wife, more fertile in invention, said, 'A thought strikes me, let us carry the corpse to the leads of our house, and put it down the chimney into the house of the Mussulman our next neighbour.'

This Mussulman, or Turk, was one of the Sultan's purveyors, for furnishing oil, butter, tallow, &c. and had a magazine in his house, where the rats and mice made prodigious havock.

The Jewish doctor approving the proposed expedient, his wife and he took the little Hunch-back up to the roof of the house; and putting ropes under his arm-pits, let him down the chimney into the purveyor's chamber so dexterously, that he stood upright against the wall, as if he had been alive; when they found he stood firm, they pulled up the ropes, and left him in that posture. They were scarce got down into their chamber, when the purveyor went into his, being just come from a wedding-feast, with a lanthorn in his hand; he was surprised, when, by the light of his lanthorn, he descried a figure standing upright in his chimney, and apprehending it was a robber, he took up a cane, and coming up to the Hunch-back, 'Ah,' says he, 'I thought it was the rats and mice that ate my butter and tallow, and it is you that come down the chimney and rob me? I question if ever you come back again upon this errand.' This said, he beat him severely with his cane; upon this the corpse fell down, and the purveyor redoubled his blows; but, observing the body not to move, and then perceiving it was a corpse, fear succeeded his anger. 'Wretched man that I am,' said he, 'I have killed a man! alas, I

have carried my revenge too far! accursed be the oil that gave occasion to my commission of such a criminal act.' In fine, he stood pale and thunder-struck; he thought he saw the officers already come to drag him to condign punishment, and could not think what resolution to take.

The Sultan of Casgar's purveyor had never observed the little man's hunch when he was beating him, but as soon as he perceived it, he uttered a thousand imprecations against him. 'Ah, you crooked Hunch-back,' cried he, 'would you had robbed me of all my oil, and I had not found you here; if it had been so, I had not been so perplexed as I now am, for the sake of you and your hunch.' As soon as he had uttered these words, he took the little crookback upon his shoulders, and carried him out of doors, to the end of the street, where he set him upright, resting against a shop, and returned home without looking behind him.

A few minutes before break of day, a Christian merchant who was very rich, and furnished the Sultan's palace with most articles, having sat up all night debauching, came out of his house to bathe. Though drunk he was sensible that the night was far spent, and that the people would quickly be summoned to prayers, that begin at the break of day, therefore he quickened his pace to get in time to the bath, lest a Turk meeting him in the way to the mosque, should carry him to prison as a drunkard; as he came to the end of the street, he stopped upon some necessary occasion, and leaned against the shop where the Sultan's purveyor had put Hunch-back's corpse; which being jostled, fell on the merchant's back; who, thinking it was a robber that came to attack him, knocked him down, and after redoubling his blows cried out thieves.

The outcry alarmed the watch, who came up immediately, and finding a Christian beating a Turk, (for Hunch-back was of that religion.) 'What reason, have you,' said he, 'to abuse a Mussulman in this manner?' 'He would have robbed me,' replied the merchant, 'and jumped upon my back with intent to take me by the throat.' 'If he did,' said the watch, 'you have revenged yourself sufficiently, release him.' At the same time he stretched out his hand to help little Hunch-back up; but observing he was dead, 'Is it thus,' said he, 'that a Christian dares to assassinate a Mussulman?' he seized the Christian, and carried him to the sheriff's, where he was kept till the judge was ready to examine him; in the mean time the Christian grew sober, and the more he reflected upon his adventure, the less could he conceive how the blows with his fist could kill the Turk.

The judge having heard the report of the watch, and viewed the corpse, interrogated the Christian merchant, who could not deny the crime, though he had not committed it; but the judge considering that Hunch-back was one of the Sultan's buffoons, would not put the Christian to death, till he knew his pleasure. To this end he went to the palace, and acquainted the Sultan with what had happened; and received from the Sultan this answer; 'I have no mercy to shew to a Christian that kills a Mussulman; go, do your office.' Upon this the judge ordered a gibbet to be erected, and sent criers over the city, to proclaim that they were about to hang a Christian for killing a Mussulman.

The merchant was brought out of goal to the foot of the gallows; and the hangman having put the rope about his neck, was going to turn him off, when the Sultan's purveyor, breaking through the crowd, made up to the gibbet, calling to the hangman to stop, for that the Christian had not committed the murder, but himself had done it; upon this the sheriff, who attended the execution, interrogated the purveyor; who told him every circumstance of his killing the little Hunch-back, and conveying his corpse to the place where the Christian merchant found him. 'You were about,' added he, 'to inflict death on an innocent person; for how can he be guilty of the death of a man who was dead before he came to him? My crime is sufficient in having killed a Turk, without loading my conscience with the additional weight of a Christian that is not guilty.'

The Sultan of Casgar's purveyor having publicly charged himself with the death of the little hunch-backed man, the sheriff could not avoid doing justice to the merchant. 'Let the Christian go,' said he, 'and hang this man in his stead, since it appears by his own confession that he is guilty.' The hangman then released the merchant, and put the rope round the purveyor's neck; but just as he was going to turn him off, he heard the voice of the Jewish doctor, intreating him to suspend the execution, and make room for him to throw himself at the foot of the judge.

When he appeared before the judge, 'My lord,' said he, 'this Mussulman you are about to hang is not guilty; all the guilt lies at my door. Last night a man and a woman, unknown to me, came to my door with a sick man, and knocking, my maid opened it without a light, and received from them a piece of money, with a commission to desire me in their name, to look at a sick person; while she was delivering her message, they conveyed the person to the stair-head, and then disappeared; I went down, without staying for my servant to light a candle, and in the dark, happening to stumble upon the sick person, threw him down stairs; in fine, I saw he was dead, and that it was the crooked Mussulman. My wife and I took the corpse, and after conveying it up to the leads of our house, shoved it to the roof of the purveyor's house, and let

it down the chimney into the chamber; the purveyor taking the little man for a thief, after beating him concluded he had killed him; but that it was not so, you will be convinced by my deposition, that I am the only perpetrator of the murder, and though it was committed undesignedly, I have resolved to expiate my crime by exculpating the Sultan's purveyor, whose innocence I have now revealed, therefore dismiss him, and put me in his place, for I alone am the cause of the death of this little man.'

The chief justice being persuaded that the Jewish doctor was the murderer, gave orders to the executioner to seize him and release the purveyor. Accordingly the doctor was just upon the point of execution, when the taylor appeared, desiring that he might make confession to the lord justice. Room being made, 'My lord,' said he to the judge, 'you have narrowly escaped taking away the lives of three innocent persons; but if you will have patience to hear me, I will discover to you the murderer of the crook-backed man; if his death is to be expiated by that of another, it must be mine. Yesterday, towards the evening, as I was disposed to be merry, the little Hunch-back came to my door half drunk, and I invited him to pass the evening; he accordingly accepted of the invitation. We sat down to supper, and I gave him a plate of fish; a bone stuck in his throat, and though my wife and I did our utmost to relieve him, he died in a few minutes; his death afflicted us extremely, and for fear of being charged with it, we carried the corpse to the Jewish doctor's house, and knocked at the door; the maid opened it, and I desired her to go up and ask her master to give his advice to a person that was sick; and to encourage him, I charged her to give him a fee which I had put into her hand; in the interim I carried Hunch-back up stairs, and laid him upon the uppermost step, and then my wife and I departed. The doctor, in coming down, threw the corpse down stairs, and therefore conceived himself to be the cause of his death. Now this being the case,' continued he, 'release the doctor, and let me die in his stead.'

The chief justice, and all the spectators, could not sufficiently admire the strange events that ensued upon the death of the little crooked man. 'Let the Jewish doctor go,' said the judge, 'and hang up the taylor, since he confesses the crime.' The executioner having dismissed the doctor, prepared for the execution of the taylor.

While they were making ready to hang the taylor, the Sultan of Casgar enquired for his crooked jester. 'The Hunch-back, Sir,' said one of his officers, 'whom you inquire after, got drunk last night, and contrary to his custom slipped out of the palace, and this morning was found dead; a man was brought before the chief justice, and charged with his murder; but when he was going to be hanged, up came a man, and after him another, who took the charge upon themselves and exculpated each other. The examination has continued a long time, and the judge is now examining a fourth man, that gives himself out for the real perpetrator of the murder.'

Upon this intelligence, the Sultan of Casgar sent a hussar to the place of execution, to bring the arraigned persons before him immediately; and withal to bring the corpse of Hunch-back, that he might see him once more. Accordingly the hussar went, and arriving at the place of punishment, just when the executioner was going to tie up the taylor, called upon him to suspend the execution. Now, the hangman knowing the hussar, untied the taylor; and then the hussar acquainted the judge with the Sultan's pleasure. The judge obeyed, went to the palace, accompanied by the taylor, the Jewish doctor, and the Christian merchant, and made four of his men carry the Hunch-back's corpse with him.

When they appeared before the Sultan, the judge threw himself at the prince's feet, and gave him a faithful relation of what he knew of the story of the hunch-backed man. The Sultan found the story so uncommon, that he ordered his secretary to commit it to writing; then, addressing himself to the audience; 'Did you ever hear,' said he, 'such a surprising story as this respecting my little crooked buffoon?' Then the taylor, after saluting him, spoke in the following manner: 'Most puissant monarch, I know a story, yet more astonishing than that you have now heard; if your majesty will give me leave, I will tell it you.' 'Well,' said the Sultan, 'I give you leave,' and the taylor went on as follows:

'A citizen of Damascus did me the honour two days ago, to invite me to an entertainment, which he was to give to his friends as yesterday; accordingly I went pretty early, and found there twenty persons.

'The master of the house was gone out upon some business, but in a short time he came home, and brought with him a young man, a stranger, very well dressed, and comely, but lame; when he came in, we all rose, and out of respect to the master of the house, invited the young man to sit down with us upon the sofa; he was going to sit down, but on a sudden, spying a barber in our company, he retreated towards the door: the master of the house stopped him; 'Where are you going?' said he, 'I bring you with me to do me the honour of being my guest, and you are no sooner in my house, than you run away.' 'Sir,' said the young man, 'do not stop me, I cannot without horror look upon that abominable barber; though he is born in a country where all the natives are whites, he resembles an Ethiopian; and his soul is yet blacker, and more

horrible than his face.'

'We were all surprised to hear the young man speak thus, and began to have a bad opinion of the barber, without knowing what ground he had for what he said; nay, we protested we would not suffer any one to remain in our company that bore so horrid a character. The master of the house intreated the stranger to tell us what reason he had for hating the barber. 'This cursed barber,' said the young man, 'is the cause of my being lame, and falling under most dire misfortune that can be imagined; for this reason I have made an oath to shun all places where he is, and even not to stay in the city where he dwells. It was for this reason that I left Bagdad, where he then was, and travelled so far as to settle in this city, in the heart of Great Tartary, a place where I flattered myself I should never see him. And now, contrary to my expectation, I find him here; this obliges me, against my will, to deprive myself of the honour of your company; this very day I leave your town, and will, if I can, conceal myself from him.' This said, he would have left us; but the master entreated him to stay, and to tell us the cause of his aversion for the barber, who all this while looked down and said not a word. We joined with the master of the house in requesting him to stay, which he at last consented to do; and, after turning his back on the barber, gave us the following account:

'My father's quality might have entitled him to the highest post in the city of Bagdad, but he preferred a retired life to all the honours he might deserve. I was his only child, and when he died I was of age to dispose of the plentiful fortune he had left me; which I did not squander, but applied to such uses that I was generally respected for my conduct.

'I had not been yet disturbed with passion, and was so far from being sensible of love, that I acknowledge, perhaps to my shame, that I cautiously avoided the conversation of women. One day I saw a great company of ladies before me, and that I might not meet them, I turned down a narrow lane, and sat down upon a bench; I sat over against a window, where there stood a pot with flowers, and I had my eyes fixed upon this, when suddenly the window opened, and a young lady appeared whose beauty was enchanting; immediately she cast her eyes upon me, and in watering the flower-pot, with a hand whiter than alabaster, looked upon me with a smile that inspired me with as much love for her as I had formerly aversion for all women. After having watered her flowers, and darted upon me a glance that pierced my heart, she shut the window, and left me in inconceivable anxiety.

'I dwelt upon these thoughts, till alarmed with a noise in the street; I turned my head, and saw it was the upper cady of the city, mounted on a mule, and attended by five or six servants; he alighted at the door of the house where the young lady had opened the window, and went in, from whence I concluded that he was the young lady's father.

'I went home in a different humour from that I brought with me, agitated by the most violent passion I had ever felt; in fine, I went to bed with a violent fever upon me. My relations began to despair of my life; when an old lady of my acquaintance came to see me; who, having more sagacity than the doctors, soon informed me she knew my complaint. On this I declared to her my unhappy state of mind, and unravelled all the circumstances of my adventure. The old woman fortunately knew the lady, and promised to interest her in my favour; and departed immediately on her embassy. The next morning she returned with good tidings; for she had made the lady promise to grant me an interview on the Friday following.

'This information was as good to me as manna from Heaven, for it almost instantly made me well. The day soon came, and early in the morning I dispatched a slave to call a barber who would do his business expeditiously. The slave brought me the wretch you see here, who, after saluting me, said, 'Sir, you look as if you were not well. Let me know what service I am to render you.' I informed him, I only wanted to be shaved, and desired him to do it quickly. He spent much time in opening his case and preparing his razors. Instead of putting water in his bason, he took a very handsome astrolabe out of his budget, and went into the middle of the yard to take the height of the sun: when he returned, 'Sir,' said he, with a formality that put me out of all patience, 'Mars and Mercury say that this day you run a great risk, not indeed of losing your life, but of an inconvenience which will attend you while you live. You only sent for a barber; but in my person you have the best barber in Bagdad, an experienced physician, a very profound chemist, an infallible astrologer, a finished grammarian, a complete orator, a subtle logician, a mathematician perfectly well versed in geometry, arithmetic, astronomy, and all the divisions of algebra; and a historian, fully master of all the kingdoms of the universe. Besides, I know all parts of philosophy. I have all the traditions upon my finger ends, I am a poet, an architect; nay, what is it I am not?'

'Thus he went on full an hour, till I grew into such a violent passion as almost choked me; but the more haste I was in, the less he made; he laid down his razor, and took up his astrolabe; then laid down his astrolabe, and took up his razor. He then began to shave me, prattling all the time in the most vehement manner, concluding by saying, it was his firm intention

to stay with me the whole of the day. This was too much for me to bear, and I arose in a violent passion and ran out of the house. The infernal barber followed me, shouting after me with all his might; and collected together a mob of at least ten thousand people. I reached the cady's house as I thought unobserved; and found an old woman waiting for me, who conducted me without delay to my mistress. The barber, however, saw me enter the house; and accompanied with the mob soon reached it. He then harangued the populace; asserting that I was sure of being murdered in that house, and desiring their assistance to rescue me. The barber and his associates immediately broke open the door; and in a body rushed in. The noise was tremendous, and in the confusion I concealed myself in a large trunk. Here the barber soon discovered me, and placing the chest on his head left the house. When I found myself in the street, I opened the lid, and leaped out; but sprained my ankle so much, that I have been lame ever since. This affair made so great a noise, that shame compelled me to leave the city for ever. So, gentlemen, you may perceive that I have reason to hate and shun this detestable barber as long as I live.'

'The young man then rose, and ran out of the house. We sat down to table, and were merry till afternoon prayers. When all the company parted, I went to my shop, till it was time for me to return home.

'It was during this interval that Hunch-back came half drunk, and stood before my shop, where he sung and played the tabor. I thought, that by taking him home with me, I should divert my wife, who gave us a dish of fish, and I presented Hunch-back with some, which he ate without taking notice of a bone. He fell down dead before us, and after having in vain essayed to help him, the trouble occasioned us by such an unlucky accident, induced us to carry the corpse out, and lodge it with the Jewish doctor. The Jewish doctor put it into the chamber of the purveyor, and the purveyor carried it forth into the street, where it was believed the merchant had killed him. This, Sire,' added the taylor, 'is what I had to say to satisfy your majesty, who must pronounce whether we are worthy of mercy or wrath, life or death.'

The Sultan of Casgar gave the taylor and his comrades their lives. 'I cannot but acknowledge,' says he, 'that I am more amused with the history of the young cripple than with the story of my jester; but before I send you away, and before we bury Hunch-back, I would see the barber, on whose account I have pardoned you; since he is in my capital, it is easy to satisfy my curiosity.' At the same time he sent a serjeant with the taylor to find him.

They went immediately and brought the barber, whom they presented to the Sultan: the barber was an old man of ninety years, his eye-brows and beard were as white as snow, his ears hanging down, and he had a very long nose. The Sultan could not forbear laughing when he saw him.

The Sultan commanded them to tell him the story of the Hunch-back; which, when he heard, he shook his head, intimating that there was something under this which he did not understand. Truly, cried he, this is a surprising story; but I am willing to examine Hunch-back a little closely. He drew near him, sat on the ground, took his head between his knees, and after he had looked upon him steadfastly, he fell into so great a fit of laughter, and had so little command of himself, that he fell backwards, without considering that he was before the Sultan of Casgar. As soon as he came to himself, he said, 'If ever any history deserved to be written in letters of gold, it is this of Hunch-back.'

'Sire,' said the barber to the Sultan, 'I swear that Hunch-back is not dead: he is yet alive, and I shall be willing to pass for a madman, if I do not let you see it this minute.' Having said these words, he took out of a box wherein he had several medicines, a little vial with balsam, with which he rubbed Hunch-back's neck a long time; then he took out of his case a neat iron instrument, which he put between his teeth; and after he had opened his mouth, he thrust down his throat a pair of small pincers, with which he took out a large fish bone, which he shewed to all the people. Immediately Hunch-back sneezed, stretched out his arms and feet, and gave several other signs of life.

The Sultan of Casgar, and those with him who were witnesses of this action, were less surprised to see Hunch-back revive, than at the merit and capacity of the barber; and, notwithstanding all his faults, began to look upon him as a person of great skill. The Sultan ordered the story of Hunch-back to be entered on the records with that of the barber, that the memory of it might be preserved. Nor did he stop here; but that the taylor, Jewish doctor, purveyor, and Christian merchant, might remember the adventure, which the accident of Hunch-back had occasioned to them, with pleasure, he did not send them away till he had given each of them a very rich robe, with which he caused them to be clothed in his presence. As for the barber, he honoured him with a liberal pension, and kept him near his person.

THE HORNED COCK.

A man that bought poultry round the country to supply the markets of the metropolis, having got intelligence of a Virtuoso who built his pretensions to scientific fame on making collections of the anomalous frolics of nature, without ever attempting to investigate the wisdom and power displayed in the regular process of her works, resolved to turn it to his own advantage.

As soon as he found that he could bring his scheme to a probability of success, he waited on the Virtuoso, and giving notice that he had something curious to communicate, was immediately admitted to an audience in his museum, where he informed him, that he had received intelligence from a particular friend of his, a Scotch pedlar, that, in the farthest part of the Highlands, there was a most remarkable cock, with two surprising horns growing out of the back of his head, in the possession of an old woman, who was famous for the second sight; that, upon his admiring the creature, the woman had offered to sell it to him, for a pound of tobacco and a bottle of brandy; but he was afraid to meddle with it, as all the country said it was her familiar, though he had seen it himself scrape the dunghill and tread the hens, like any other cock: and that, upon hearing the news, he was come to inform his lordship of it, and offer his service to go all the way himself for the bird, and bring him up, if he would promise to re-imburse him the expenses of his journey; to shew that he had no design to impose upon him, he should go at his own risk, and desire nothing, if he did not succeed.

The first mention of such a curiosity threw the Virtuoso into the highest rapture; he embraced the fellow, conjured him not to lose a minute, nor drop the least syllable of the affair to any person living, till he brought him the cock; and, to secure his fidelity, he pulled out his purse, gave him ten guineas, with a promise of fifty more, the moment he should receive him. The man promised every thing he required, and went away, hugging himself in the success of his scheme. Accordingly he left that part of the country directly, and, taking care to keep beyond the reach of his lordship's enquiry, followed his business as usual, for the time that he might be thought to have spent in his expedition. In the mean while, the Virtuoso could not conceal the pride of his heart, on the prospect of so great an acquisition; but, in all the letters to his philosophical correspondents, gave mysterious hints of something immensely fine, rare, and unnatural, and assumed the importance due to the possession of such a treasure.

At length, the moment arrived that was to complete his happiness. About ten o'clock at night the man alighted at his lordship's gate, and sending in his name, was immediately shewn into the museum, where his lordship flew to meet him, in the utmost impatience. As soon as the man entered, all over spattered with dirt, and putting on every appearance of fatigue, 'Well, my good friend,' said the Virtuoso, with the greatest eagerness, 'what success? Where is the dear creature? Shall I be so happy as to see him in my possession?'—'My lord,' answered the man, 'I must beg your pardon for a moment, I am not able to speak: I am quite worn out, and then dropping upon a chair, as if he was just ready to faint, his lordship immediately rung for some cordial for him, which he took from the servant himself at the door, (for he would not admit any one living,) and gave it him with his own hand. When he was a little recovered, 'I beg your lordship's pardon,' continued he, 'but I could not hold out a moment longer; what with travelling all day, and watching all night, I am quite worn out.'—'But, where is the bird?'—'And then such offers as I have refused! well, to be sure, I trusted to your lordship's generosity, for I shall never have such another opportunity of making my fortune; for behold the thing had taken wind, and there was my Lord Duke's and Sir Thomas's men, and twenty more, riding for life, to try who should get him, but I had got the start of them, and was coming back, with the pretty creature in my bosom; but I let them all go on their fool's errand, and did not say any thing to them; for how did I know, but they might kill me to get him away from me?'—Having finished his speech, which the other did not chuse to interrupt, though he listened to it with the utmost impatience, the fellow opened his horseman's coat, and, with the greatest caution, produced the wonderful creature; the head and neck of which had been carefully thrust into a box made on purpose, for fear the coat should rub off the horns.

His lordship's rapture at the sight is not to be described. He instantly pulled out his purse, and paying down the promised price, took possession of him, and bid the man go and refresh himself for that night with the best in the house, and in the morning he would consider how he might make him a return more equal to his service, by procuring him some handsome place at court. But the fellow had other designs in his head, than ever to see his face more. However, he kept that to himself, and, retiring with many professions of gratitude, left the house directly, and took leave of that country for ever.

In the meantime, his lordship had notice that supper was served up; but though he had company of the first rank in his house, he was so wrapped up in the contemplation of his new acquisition, that he sent word he was taken suddenly ill, and could not possibly attend them: he then dispatched several servants express to his learned friends, to desire their

attendance next day, to see the most astonishing and beautiful composition nature had ever made in the animal world, and devoted the rest of the night to drawing up a proper description of this surprising horned cock, with a physical enquiry into the substance of his horns, and a philosophical attempt to account for such an extraordinary production. When this work of uncommon learning was finished, he indulged himself with taking another view of his darling bird, and then put him into a beautiful cage, from which he dislodged two Chinese pheasants, and placed him in his museum next to his favourite horned owl.

It was six in the morning before he retired to rest, when his head was so full of his new acquisition, that he lay dreaming of cows with wings, and cocks with horns, and such like wonderful works of nature, till the arrival of his learned friends at noon. As soon as their coming was announced, he arose directly, and without waiting to visit his cock, to whom he had given a sufficient quantity of provisions before he left him, went to meet them. After several impatient enquiries into the cause of so sudden and peremptory a summons, the Virtuoso, in all the mysterious importance, which so inestimable an acquisition gave him, produced his own learned labours of that morning, and, when they had sufficiently studied and examined them, introduced them to a sight of the unparalleled subject: 'There, gentlemen,' said he, in conscious exultation, 'there, my friends, behold the most uncommon, unnatural, and inestimable curiosity, that ever enriched the collection of a philosopher. There, behold an indisputable proof of their error, who assert that nature has placed an immoveable boundary between the quadruped and winged creation. There, behold a sufficient encouragement, to urge your indefatigable search for monsters, and to mix the whole animal creation in coition, for the production of mermaids, griffins, centaurs, harpies, and horned cocks, and that beautiful confusion, which yields such inexpressible delight to an inquisitive philosophic mind.'—

While he was making this harangue, the company approached the gilded cage, that contained this inestimable prodigy; and, stooping down to contemplate him, were surprized to find one of the horns had fallen off, and the other moved considerably from the situation in which it had been described to them: for doleful to relate! the cock, which was of the right game-breed, had unfortunately taken offence at the visage of the owl his neighbour, and, in his struggles to come at him through the bars of the cage, had rubbed off one, and displaced the other of his horns. When this deplorable misfortune was mentioned to the owner, it is impossible to describe his astonishment and confusion. He stooped hastily to be satisfied of the truth of it; and beholding the irreparable ruin of his pride, gave one dismal groan, and fell at his length on the floor, in a swoon.

While his servants, who were summoned upon the occasion, were fetching him to himself, one of the philosophers opened the cage, and, taking out the bird, they all entered into a discussion of so strange a phenomenon. After many learned and ingenious solutions, one of them declared, that it had always been his opinion, in which the present case abundantly confirmed him, that all cornuted animals cast their horns every year, like the stag, and that the present case was no more than that; of which he was perfectly convinced, as he could plainly feel, with his finger, the growing horn, which had thus thrust off the old one; so that, my lord, (said he, addressing himself to the owner, who by this time was recovered, and attending to their remarks,) 'instead of being vexed at such an event, you have reason to rejoice, as it explains a very difficult point, and you will now have an opportunity of tracing the growth of this beautiful prodigy.'

This sage solution administered some consolation to the Virtuoso, who immediately took the bird in his own hands, and feeling the lump of wax, which had fastened on the fictitious horn, was convinced of the truth of his friend's accurate observation; which he himself farther confirmed, by taking notice, that as no blood followed the avulsion, it was evident that the horn was of itself ready to fall off, without the assistance of the cock's struggling, (for they had caught him at that work,) and the dislocation of the other horn shewed, that it was not in the same state of ripeness, and therefore it had resisted that force. Consciousness of the sagacity of this remark in some degree restored his spirits, and he was going to proceed, when one of the company, who had taken up and examined the fallen horn, and had not given any opinion on the matter, interrupting him drily, said, that the hypothesis was certainly very ingenious, but he believed the affair might be solved a readier way; for, upon examination of the supposed horn, he found it was only a cock's spur, which had been fastened upon the creature's head with wax, as appeared evidently by the remains of the wax upon the end of the spur in his hand; and, if they would let him pull off the other, he would undertake that the imposture would be too plain to admit of any doubt.

The mention of this threw them all into confusion, as they had all given their opinions positively, of the honour of which it deprived them, and cut short many more, which they were ready to offer: they therefore stood looking at each other, till he stretched out his hand to pull off the other horn, when they all interposed, particularly the owner, and insisted that they must be better satisfied of what he had advanced, before they could admit so rash an experiment. But the bird himself cut

short the dispute; for, some of the company happening to have snuff in their fingers, it got into the cock's eyes, and made him shake his head with such violence, that off flew the horn in his owner's face. The person who had made the discovery, immediately took it up, and shewed such plain proof of the trick, that it could no longer be denied.

It is impossible to describe the shame and vexation, in every philosophic face present, at this lamentable event. The abused purchaser, in particular, was almost mad: however, after mature deliberation, it was agreed upon, for the credit of philosophy, to bear the ridicule of the unlearned, by seeking satisfaction from the cheat. As for the cock, he was immediately sacrificed to Æculapius, to avert the consequences which such a disappointment might have upon the health and understanding of the company, and to remove such an evidence of their disgrace. But all their caution was in vain; the person who had first detected the deceit, could not deny his vanity the pleasure of making his sagacity known; and the fellow, finding his trick passed over thus with impunity, could not avoid boasting of it; and to this day diverts his customers with the history of the horned cock.

THE HAUNTED CELLAR.

An old baroness in Germany, who had lost her lord and all her children, somewhat more than a century ago, resided in a solitary mansion, with only two domestics, a male and a female: for, though she possessed an ample fortune, she disdained to keep a numerous retinue of idle and dissipated domestics, for the sake of living in a luxurious state; but contented herself, in general, with one dish of substantial food at a meal. Her chief indulgence was a cup of generous wine, for the manufacture of which she had been long celebrated; but even this she never used to any sort of excess. What she saved by frugality she expended in charitable donations; and want was a stranger in her neighbourhood.

The baroness having lately changed her man-servant, a youth about twenty, and extremely giddy and inattentive to the duties of his situation, for a man of fifty, which was nearly the age of her woman-servant, who was what the world still calls a rigid old maid, she was suddenly alarmed by the report of several strange noises, which were said to be now nightly heard in the cellar.

As she was by no means free from the superstition of the age, though a woman in other respects of great discernment, she felt, at first, uncomfortable apprehensions; particularly, as her servants both agreed, that what they heard could not proceed from any thing short of some supernatural being.

The good old lady, however, determined to have the evidence of her own ears; and for this purpose, sat up with them till the awful hour of midnight.

No sooner had the clock sounded twelve, than the noise commenced; which certainly was of a nature to produce terror in almost any bosom. A general rummage of every thing below was succeeded by the deepest groans; and the old lady actually sunk under the influence of terror, fainting away on the top of the stairs, where she had ventured to listen.

In this state she was conveyed to her chamber; and, on coming to her senses, after a little reflection, desired her female servant to continue in the room for the remainder of the night, while her man sat up in the adjoining apartment.

Having made this arrangement, she soon closed her eyes, and appeared in a profound sleep. The perturbation of her mind, however, had in truth driven sleep from her eyes, which were now shut with much the same design as those of the sage Grimalkin, when she meditates a sudden interruption of the secret festivities in the subterranean haunts of the four-footed nocturnal depredators of the kitchen. In short, from the ill-counterfeited dread of her man and maid-servant, which had appeared more in their words than in their physiognomies, she felt a strong persuasion that there was some fraud in the business.

Having once entertained this idea, every circumstance which suggested itself, still stronger confirmed her suspicions; till, at length, what she at first only suspected, began now to impress her mind with all the conviction of certainty.

She reflected, that her squeamish old maid had always expressed a great dislike to the youth lately discharged, but did not seem remarkably pleased with his departure; that since her new man came, the favourite casks in the cellar; which before were sufficiently soon exhausted, had still faster grown sonorous; that more provisions than usual had also been devoured; and that, whatever ghosts there might be existing below, where no such beings had ever before been heard of, it was not likely that their insubstantial forms were supported by the gross foods of mortals, or even the exquisite spirituous contents of her casks.

From all these circumstances, she felt abundantly satisfied, that her female servant knew well enough of the existence of flesh and blood in the cellar.

While the baroness was occupied in these, and similar reflections, her old maid, who entertained not the smallest apprehension that her mistress could awake from such a state of deep somnolency, as that in which she seemed evidently locked for some hours at least, began to make preparation for quitting the room. She made a slight noise, as if by accident; carried a candle near the face of her mistress; and asked, with tolerable audibility, if she was awake, or would she be helped to any thing? Then, adjusting her head-dress at the toilet, with more attention than would have been necessary for an assignation with a ghost, she again repeated her questions, in a lower note; passed the candle at a little greater distance from her mistress's face; and, finding all still and silent, slowly tiptoed out of the chamber.

The baroness now heard her join her fellow-servant in the next room; and, sliding out of bed, perceived them, through

the key-hole, proceeding down stairs, with great glee, together.

She followed, in the dark, at a small distance; and saw them descending into the cellar, without any dread of ghosts or goblins. On the contrary, she heard a laugh of triumph, which seemed but little suppressed, and in which her ear quickly recognised a complete trio.

Being thus perfectly satisfied of the fact, which was as the old lady had suspected, she returned to her room; and, while dressing herself, determined how she would act.

She was a woman not only of great good sense, but of great good-nature; and, not seeing objects in the worst light, had, in her heart, already forgiven them the terror which they occasioned her, though she was resolved to punish them, for their audacity, a little in their own way.

With benevolence in her heart, and an arch smile of cheerful benignity on her countenance, she softly descended the cellar stairs, and perceived the furtive worshippers of love as well as wine, at their midnight orgies, near her favourite casks, in an intern vault. The mellow light of a large lanthorn, gave them completely to her view; and she found, as she had suspected, that the recently discarded young man was not now quite so disagreeable to her squeamish old maid, as he formerly was said to be!

After surveying this interesting scene for a few minutes, the baroness, retreating a step or two back, gave a great stamp with her foot. She now heard a general scream, and instantly advanced; but, though her two servants remained apparently petrified with apprehension and horror, the paramour of the old maid had instantaneously vanished.

The good old baroness suffered them to imagine that she knew nothing of any third person; but she sarcastically complimented their courage on thus venturing themselves in a haunted cellar; and expressed a wish, now they were there all together, that each hole and corner of the vault might be searched for the ghost.

At the mention of this design, a groan was suddenly heard, proceeding from a closet in a remote part of the cellar. The baroness, assuming great alarm, desired her man to look into that closet; which, with some reluctance, he at length did; but, though the groaning continued, he persisted that there was nothing to be seen. She then desired her woman also to look; and She too, affecting much terror, as the groaning was still audible, opened the door a little way, peeped in; and, returning, assured her mistress, as she well might, that no ghost was there!

The old lady now desired her man to take the hammer, and a few stout nails, from a basket in the cellar, and instantly to close up the door; being, as she observed, quite positive that the ghost must now be there, where she was resolved to keep him. Having made her man do this, and also completely block up the door-way with full casks and lumber, she drove before her, out of the subterranean paradise, the guilty pair of transgressors, and locked them up in their respective apartments.

In the morning she let them out, but would not permit any approach to the cellar; observing, that the parochial priest should first be sent for, that he might exorcise the imprisoned ghost, and lay him to rest till doomsday in the Red Sea.

The baroness accordingly dispatched her man in pursuit of the parson, enjoying the consternation into which she had thus thrown her plotting domestics, who had little conception of the coming catastrophe. The old maid wept with pretended contrition; but her tears, as her mistress well knew, flowed from a different cause.

When the priest arrived, the baroness took him aside, related to him the whole transaction, and made him acquainted with the rest of her design.

The baroness and priest now proceeded to the cellar, accompanied by the two trembling servants, each bearing two candles in their hands, which they were scarcely capable of holding.

On their arrival near the door of the closet, the baroness addressed the holy man, assuring him that there was certainly an unruly spirit in the house; and that she was very desirous that it should be fairly laid to rest by his pious interposition.

A basin of holy water was brought; the sacred book was opened; and the mystical aspersions were about to commence before the closet door, from whence the barrels and lumber were removed, previous to forcing it open; when the old maid, overpowered by her apprehensions, and unable longer to support the dread of complete detection, swooned away, and fell at her mistress's feet!

The attention of the priest was thus too powerfully arrested, for him to think more of the ghost; whose portion of holy water was now plenteously sprinkled on the old maid's face, with at least equally good effect; for she almost immediately revived, and entered into a complete confession of the clandestine conspiracy; acknowledging, as her mistress had suspected, that she entertained an affectionate regard for the young man; that she had secretly supported him, for some time in the cellar; and that the story of the ghost was a contrivance, not so much to alarm the baroness, as to deter her from ever visiting that part of the house.

The state of the lover, during these transactions, who was now to be let out from his place of confinement, is not so easy to be described. When the door was burst open, he fell on his knees before the baroness, implored her forgiveness, and assured her that he had a sincere regard for her servant, whom he wished to marry, notwithstanding the disparity of her years, as soon as he could by any means contrive to support her. She also threw herself on her knees to her mistress, and with tears, joined his petition for pardon.

The baroness, benignantly bidding them rise, took a hand of each, and, joining them together, told the priest to proceed with the instructions which she had before given him; when, to their unspeakable astonishment, they found, that a ring of the good and generous baroness's had been put into the hands of the priest, for the purpose of uniting them on the spot, in the bands of holy matrimony; an office which he immediately performed, to the satisfaction of all parties; and the worthy baroness, convinced that they would never more venture to deceive her, took the young man also again into her service; where he and his wife continued to live till the death of their mistress, who left them a considerable legacy, as the reward of their long-tried future fidelity.

FINIS.

Transcriber's Notes:

- Page 14, blue hair run ==> blue hare run
- Page 17, and stoping a moment ==> and stopping a moment
- Page 20, Golden Thumb! his heart ==> Golden Thumb! His heart
- Page 20, sorrowful supense ==> sorrowful suspense
- Page 24, and bh eld the white wand ==> and beheld the white wand
- Page 27, rise and me see. ==> rise and come see.
- Page 30, witches and and wizzards ==> witches and wizzards
- Page 38, robust as own ==> robust as his own
- Page 53, as if they were ==> as if there were
- Page 54, very much embarassed; ==> very much embarrassed;
- Page 55, Under the tution ==> Under the tuition
- Page 57, an indispensible duty ==> an indispensable duty
- Page 60, improper for for him ==> improper for him
- Page 62, more desirabile than ==> more desirable than
- Page 64, a a courser curvetted ==> a courser curvetted
- Page 66, old Mutapha ==> old Mustapha
- Page 67, vengeance!' 'indeed, father ==> vengeance!' 'Indeed, father
- Page 69, the proceeding evening ==> the preceding evening
- Page 73, fell on his kness ==> fell on his knees
- Page 93, the Inquisidor-general ==> the Inquisitor-general
- Page 98, the Inquisidor-general ==> the Inquisitor-general
- Page 99, the Inquisidor-general ==> the Inquisitor-general
- Page 99, the Inquisidor ==> the Inquisitor
- Page 103, the Inquisidor ==> the Inquisitor
- Page 103, well said Inquisidor ==> well said Inquisitor
- Page 103, quoth the Inquisidor ==> quoth the Inquisitor
- Page 104, my lord Inquisidor ==> my lord Inquisitor

Page 105, in a desart ==> in a desert
Page 105, and intantly congratulated ==> and instantly congratulated
Page 105, Estramadura ==> Estremadura
Page 120, had not not been ==> had not been
Page 123, slept little, eat less ==> slept little, ate less
Page 134, a contemtuous smile ==> a contemptuous smile
Page 135, bank-notes of your's ==> bank-notes of yours
Page 137, triumphal car till ==> triumphal ear till
Page 158, the cielings and pillars ==> the ceilings and pillars
Page 173, again expos- to ==> again exposed to
Page 179, they eat heartily ==> they ate heartily
Page 195, and and went ==> and went
Page 195, almost choaked me ==> almost choked me
Page 205, the unparalled subject ==> the unparalleled subject

[The end of *SELECT Comic Tales, From the BEST AUTHORS* by Unknown]