

THE
ADVENTURES
OF
VALENTINE AND ORSON.
A TALE FOR YOUTH.

ORNAMENTED WITH EIGHT ENGRAVINGS.



BOSTON:
PUBLISHED BY R. P. & C. WILLIAMS,
No. 8, STATE-STREET.
1814.

FRONTISPIECE.



King Pepin attacked by Orson.

See page 13.

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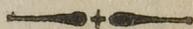
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VALENTINE AND ORSON.



THE renowned Pepin, king of France, had a sister named Bellisant, who was exceedingly beautiful, and whose hand was demanded in marriage by several kings and princes. The lady Bellisant's choice fell on Alexander, emperor of Constantinople, who came to the court of king Pepin to espouse the princess. Great rejoicings were made on the occasion throughout France; and shortly after the marriage, the emperor took leave of king Pepin, and conducted his lovely bride with great pomp and triumph to the city of Constantinople.

The emperor's prime minister and greatest favorite was an arch priest, a selfish and cruel man, who completely governed the emperor, and tyrannized over his subjects. The arch priest observing the gentleness and sweetness of the new empress, began to fear that she would acquire too much influence over the emperor, and wickedly resolved to seek the destruction of the innocent lady. The emperor was of a credulous and suspicious temper, and the arch priest soon

found means to infuse into his mind suspicions of the empress. One day when the emperor was alone, the arch priest entered the apartment and, prostrating himself at the emperor's feet, said, "High and mighty king, may heaven guard your majesty from the base attempts of the wicked and treacherous ! I am a holy priest and may not seek the death of any man ; nor may I reveal the name of the criminal who has intrusted to me, in the way of confession, a dreadful secret ; but, in the most solemn manner, I conjure your majesty to beware of the designs of your empress ; for that beautiful and dissembling lady is faithless and disloyal, and even now is planning your death. O mighty emperor ! my heart swells with indignation, to think that a lady so unparalleled in beauty and wisdom, and the sister of a great king, should become so dishonorable and wicked."

The emperor, giving implicit faith to the arch priest's tale, could no longer restrain his fury ; and abruptly leaving the arch priest, he rushed into the apartment of the empress, and in the most fierce, rude, and unmanly manner, dragged the fair Bellisant about the chamber by her long and beautiful hair.

"Alas ! my dear lord," she cried, "what moves you to this outrage ?"

“Base despicable wretch !” he exclaimed, “I am but too well informed of your infamous proceedings ;” then dashing her with violence against the ground, he left her speechless.

The attendants of the empress finding her bleeding and senseless upon the floor, uttered loud screams, which presently brought all the nobles of the court into the chamber of the empress. Every one pitied the sufferings of their amiable queen ; and the state councillors demanded an audience of the emperor, to represent to him the wrongs he had done to an honorable lady, in whom no one had ever perceived a fault. But the emperor was mad with passion, which the arch priest continued artfully to inflame, and to the reprehensions of his state councillors, he answered, “Let no man presume to defend her who has basely betrayed me. She shall die ; and they who interfere in her behalf shall partake the dreadful punishment that awaits this wretched and disloyal woman.”

The empress being recovered from her swoon, then fell on her knees, and, with tears, thus addressed the emperor :

“Alas ! my lord, take pity on one who never harbored an evil thought against your person or dignity. I shall soon become a mother, and I implore your compassion in behalf of my child:



Let me be imprisoned in some tower till the time of its birth ; and then, if your anger be not appeased, do with me what pleaseth you ; but, oh ! save my child.”

The hard-hearted emperor, bewitched with the false tales of the insidious priest, answered, “Perish thou and thy child, basest of women ! Thy child will be to me no joy, but rather great dishonor.”

The courtiers, perceiving nothing could mitigate the rage of the emperor, removed Bellisant from his presence. Her faithful servant Blandiman, now threw himself at her feet, exclaiming, “Ah ! madam, quit this barbarous monarch, and suffer me to conduct you to your brother, the

good king Pepin. Innocent and noble lady, follow my counsel; for if you stay here, the emperor will bring you to a shameful death."

"No, Blandiman," the queen replied, "I must not follow thy advice: should I steal privately from the court, it might be said I had fled knowing myself to be guilty. Believe me, I had rather die the most cruel death, than bear the blame of that of which I am innocent."

The emperor still loving his queen, could not bring himself to pronounce the sentence of her execution; yet as the base arch priest continually irritated his mind with false accusations against her, he resolved to banish her from his dominions, and immediately commanded her to quit Constantinople. At the same time he published an edict forbidding all persons on pain of death, to assist or succour the unfortunate lady, allowing her no other attendant than her servant Blandiman, whom she had brought with her from France.

Sentence being thus pronounced, the queen and Blandiman hastened away. As she passed through the city, she was met by multitudes of people, lamenting the loss of so good an empress. When she had left Constantinople, "Alas!" cried she, "in what unhappy hour was I born, to fall from so high an estate to so low a condition

as I am now in ? Woe is me ! Now all my happiness is fled : instead of cloth of gold, I am clad in mean attire ; my precious stones of inestimable value are all taken from me, and pearls of tears alone now adorn my garments. Ah ! my brother, what shouldest thou do with such a woful sister ?” As she was thus complaining and weeping with anghish, her servant said to her, “Alas, madam, be not discomforted, but trust in Providence, who will keep and defend you !” Having thus spoken, he espied a fountain, towards which he and his lady took their way.

After refreshing themselves at the fountain, they proceeded towards France. Many weary days and nights had they travelled, when, arriving in the forest of Orleans, the disconsolate empress was so much overcome with grief and fatigue, that she sunk down, and was incapable of proceeding further. Her faithful attendant gathered the fallen leaves and the moss to make a couch for her to rest on, and then hastened swiftly away to seek some habitation where he might procure food and assistance for his unfortunate mistress.

During Blandiman’s absence, the royal lady was delivered, in the dreary forest, of two beautiful sons. She pressed the lovely infants by turns to her bosom, and shed tears of joy over



them ; when, suddenly, a huge bear rushed upon her, and, snatching up one of the babes in its mouth, hastened into the thickest part of the forest. The wretched mother, distracted at the fate of her child, pursued the bear with shrieks and lamentations ; till, overcome with anguish and terror, she fell into a swoon near the mouth of the cave into which the bear had borne her infant.

It happened that king Pepin, accompanied by several great lords and barons of his court, was on that day hunting in the forest of Orleans, and chanced to pass near the tree where the other son of Bellisant lay sleeping on its bed of moss. The king was astonished with the beauty of the

child, who opened his eyes as the king stood gazing on him, and smiling, stretched out his little arms, as if to ask protection.

“See, my lord,” said king Pepin, “this lovely infant appears to solicit my favor. Here is no one to claim it, and I will adopt it for my own.” The king little imagined it was his nephew, the son of his sister Bellisant, that he now delivered into the hands of one of his pages, who took the babe to Orleans to be nursed, and gave it, by the king’s order, the name of Valentine.

Scarcely had the page rode away with the child when the king met Blandiman, and demanded with great surprise, what news from Constantinople. Blandiman, bending one knee to the ground, began to relate the disasters of the empress ; but upon king Pepin’s hearing that the arch priest had accused her of plotting the emperor’s death, he flew into the most violent rage against his innocent sister, and said, “Now, by heaven, I cannot believe the royal arch priest would bring a false accusation against any one, and I blame the emperor for sparing the life of his treacherous, disloyal queen : but let her beware how she comes within my power ; and hear me, nobles, henceforth it is death for any one to name her in my presence.” So say-

ing, he turned back and proceeded towards Orleans.

Blandiman, with a heavy heart, searched the forest for his injured mistress, and at length he espied her on the ground, tearing her dishevelled hair and uttering piercing cries of grief. "Ah! Blandiman," she exclaimed, "can there exist in the world a being more encompassed with grief and sorrow? But an hour since I was the joyful mother of two beautiful babes. A ravenous bear snatched one from my arms, and some other cruel beast of prey has doubtless devoured the other. At the foot of yonder tree I left it when I pursued the bear; but no traces of either of my children remain. They are gone! gone forever; and I, wretched mother, have nothing left but to die. Go, Blandiman, leave me here to perish, and tell the mighty emperor of Constantinople to what a horrible fate he, by listening to evil counsel, has destined his innocent wife and children."

Blandiman would not quit the unfortunate queen; and when she became more calm, he prevailed on her to take shelter in a retired monastery that stood on the borders of the forest of Orleans. After some time he communicated to her, his interview with her brother, and the unjust wrath of king Pepin against her: which re-

newed the sorrows of the hapless lady, and determined her to continue in the monastery, devoting the rest of her days to the exercises of religion.

The bear that had carried away the infant, bore it to her cave, and laid it down unhurt before her young ones. The cubs, however, did not devour it; but stroked it with their rough paws: and the old bear, perceiving their kindness for the little babe, gave it suck, and nourished it in this manner for the space of a whole year.

The child became hardy and robust, and as he grew in strength, began to range the forest, and attack the wild beasts with such fury that they used to shun the cave where he continued to live with the old bear, who loved him with extreme fondness. He passed this kind of life during eighteen years, growing to such wonderful strength that he was the terror of the neighboring country. The name of Orson was given him, because he had been nursed by a bear; and the renown of the wild man spread over all France. He went naked; and uttered no other sounds than a wild kind of a howl, to express either his anger or his joy.

King Pepin often entertained a great desire to see the wild man of the woods; and one day rode with his retinue into the forest of Orleans, in hopes of meeting him. The king, leaving his

train at some distance, rode on and passed near the cave which Orson inhabited. On hearing the sound of the horse's feet, the wild man rushed upon the king, and would have strangled him in an instant, but for a valiant knight, who galloped up and wounded Orson with his sword. Orson then quitted the king, and, running furiously upon the night, caught him in his arms, and overthrew him and his horse. The king being quite unarmed, could not assist the knight, but rode away to call the attendants to his rescue. However, before they arrived on the spot, the unfortunate knight was torn into pieces, and Orson had fled into the thickest part of the forest, where all their endeavours could not discover him. The noise of this adventure increased every one's terror of the wild man, and the neighboring villages were nearly abandoned by their inhabitants.

Valentine, in the mean while, had been educated in all kinds of accomplishments with the king's fair daughter Eglantine. Nothing could exceed the fondness of the young people for each other. Indeed, there never was a lovelier princess than Eglantine, or a more brave and accomplished cavalier than Valentine. The king, observing his inclination for arms, indulged with him armour and horses, and gave

him a command in the army that was preparing a march against the Saracens.

Valentine soon distinguished himself above all other leaders in battle. He fought near the king's side; and when his majesty was taken by a troop of the Pagans, Valentine rushed through their ranks, slew hundreds of them, and replacing the king on his horse, led him off in triumph. Afterwards, when the Saracen city was besieged, he was the first to scale the walls, and place the Christian standard on the battlements. By this means, a complete victory was obtained, and peace restored to France.

Valentine, having conquered the Saracens, returned to the court of king Pepin, and was received with loud acclamations by the people, and joyfully welcomed by the princess Eg-lantine. The distinctions and favors showered on him, raised the envy and hatred of Henry and Haufray, the king's sons, who plotted together to destroy Valentine. The same day king Pepin presented Valentine to his nobles, saying, "My lords, this brave youth saved my life, and rescued his country from the Saracens: I therefore now create him earl of Clerimont." Haufray and Henry were more and more irritated against Valentine by this new and honorable distinction, and

they determined to watch closely for some opportunity of effecting his destruction.

It happened very shortly after the return of Valentine from his victory over the Saracens, that a petition was presented to the king by a deputation of peasants, praying relief against Orson, the wild man of the woods; the fear of whom was now become so great that the peasants dared not go out to till their fields, nor the shepherds to watch their flocks. The king immediately issued a proclamation, saying, if any man would undertake to bring Orson, alive or dead, to the city, he should receive a thousand marks of gold.

“Sire,” said Henry, “I think no person is so proper to undertake this enterprise as the founding Valentine, on whom your majesty lavishes such great favor. Perhaps, if he conquers the naked savage with his sword, you will not think it too much to reward him with the hand of our sister Eglantine.”

To this the king replied with a frown, “Away! for thy speech betrays thy envy.”

Valentine, fixing a stern look on the malicious brother, said, “You give this counsel to encompass my death. Be it so. Know that I will not fail of victory here also. I will go without delay, and alone, to conquer the savage man.”

“No, Valentine,” said the king; “you shall not rush upon destruction to gratify the ill will of evil minded persons.”

“Pardon me, my liege,” replied Valentine: “it concerns my honor that I go. I will encounter this danger, and every other, rather than not prove myself worthy of your majesty’s favor and protection. To-morrow morning I will depart for the forest at the break of day.”

When the princess Eglantine heard of Valentine’s determination, she sought to divert him from his purpose; but finding him inflexibly resolved to attack the wild man, she adorned him with a scarf embroidered with her own hands, and then retired to her chamber, to pray for his safety.

At the first dawn of morning, Valentine arose; and putting on his armour, having his shield polished like a mirror, he departed for the forest; and being arrived there he alighted, and, tying his horse to a tree, penetrated into the thickest part of the wood in search of Orson. He wandered about a long time in vain; and being come near the mouth of a large cave, he thought that might be the hiding place of the wild man. Valentine then climbed up a high tree near the cave; and scarcely was he seated

among the branches when he heard Orson's roar in the forest.

Orson had been hunting, and came with a swift pace, bearing a buck, he had killed, upon his shoulders. Valentine could not help admiring the beauty of his person, the grace and freedom of his motions, and his appearance of strength and agility. He felt a species of affection for the wild man, and wished it was possible to tame him without having recourse to weapons.

Valentine now tore off a branch of the tree, and threw it at Orson's feet; who looked up and espying Valentine in the tree, uttered a howl of fury, and darted up the tree like lightning. Valentine as quickly descended on the other side. Orson seeing him on the ground, leaped down, and, opening his arms, prepared, in his usual manner, to rush upon and overthrow his antagonist; but Valentine holding up a polished shield, Orson suddenly beheld, instead of the person he meant to seize, his own naked, wild, and terror-striking figure. Upon Valentine's lowering the shield, he again saw his enemy, and with a cry of transport again prepared to grasp him in his arms. The strength of Orson was so very great, that Valentine was unable to defend himself without having recourse to his sword. When Orson received a wound from the

sword, he uttered loud shrieks of anger and surprise, and instantly tearing up by the roots a large tree, furiously attacked Valentine.

A dreadful fight now ensued between these two brothers, and the victory was a long time doubtful: Orson receiving many dreadful wounds from the sword of Valentine, and Valentine with great difficulty escaped from being crushed to death beneath the weighty club of Orson. Just at this time the bear who had nursed Orson, and who was now in the cave, hearing his cries of rage, came out to see what was the matter with her favorite. Valentine perceiving her approach, aimed a blow at her with his sword, which would probably have killed her on the spot, had not Orson rushed forward, and throwing one arm round the neck of the bear, he with the other hand supplicated for mercy for his old and only friend. Valentine was greatly affected with this generous action, and, laying aside his sword, made signs that he would not hurt the bear; and in token of kindness brought some grapes, and a little bottle of strong liquor, which he had deposited near for his own refreshment in case of need, and presented them to Orson.

Orson no sooner tasted the delicious flavor of the fruit, than he gave it to the bear, and afterwards let her drink the strong liquor, with both



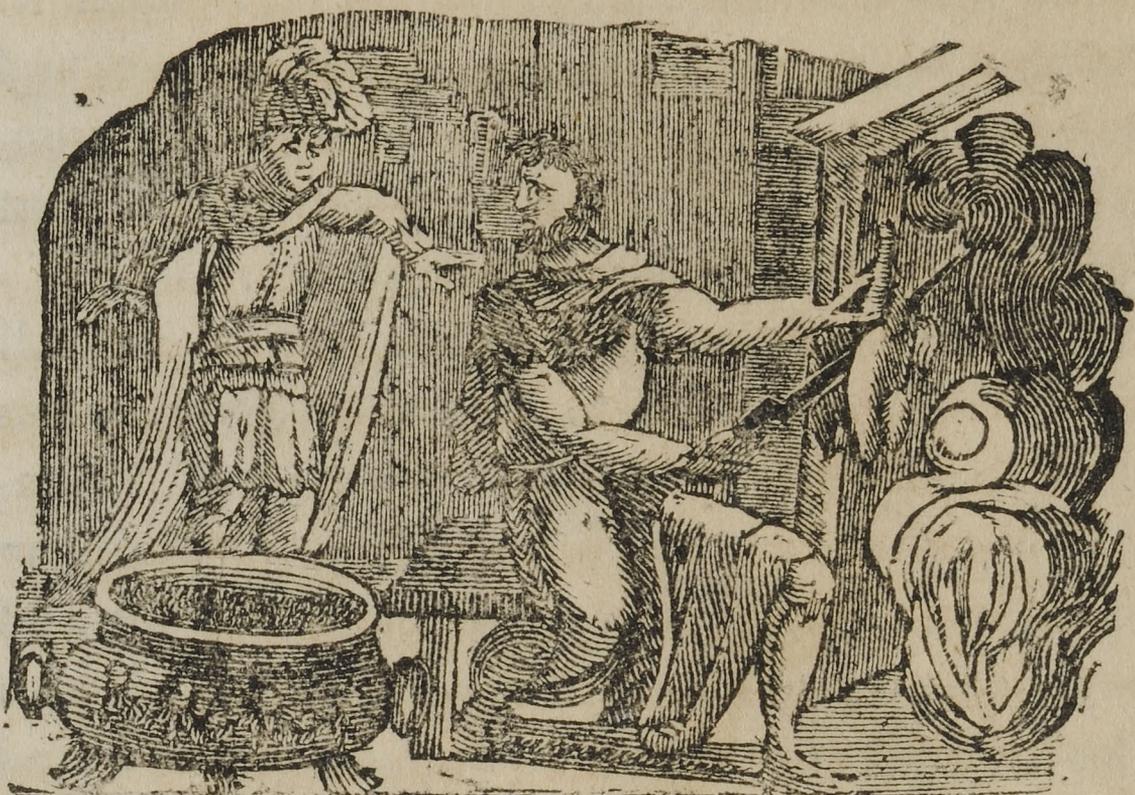
of which she seemed much pleased ; while Orson delighted to see her make such a plentiful repast, threw his arms round her and embraced her ; and the bear, desirous to testify her affection for him, stroked him with her huge paw, and uttered a gentle growl, as if to express her satisfaction in his caresses.

Valentine now made many signs to Orson, persuading him to go with him, where he should be fed and clothed, and treated with the greatest kindness : but Orson rejected all his offers with

anger and contempt, making signs that he would not quit his beloved bear, nor his wild life in the woods. But it happened that the strong liquor which the bear had drank so greedily from Valentine's bottle, caused her death; and soon after testifying her love of Orson in the manner we have described, she faintly howled, and fell dead on the ground.

Orson stood for a few moments motionless with alarm and amazement: then supposing his ancient friend might be only asleep, he stooped and endeavoured to rouse her; but finding all his efforts ineffectual, his grief is scarcely to be described. He threw himself upon the body, and uttered piercing shrieks of distress. At length he suddenly sprang up from the ground, and, approaching Valentine, made signs that he would now be his; and while the tears ran down his cheeks for the loss of his bear, he suffered Valentine to bind his hands, and unresistingly followed his conductor.

Valentine took his way towards Orleans; but wherever he passed, the people, perceiving the wild man, ran into their houses and hid themselves. On arriving at an inn where Valentine intended resting during the night, the terrified inhabitants fastened the doors, and would not suffer them to enter. Valentine made signs



to Orson, who placing his shoulder against the door, forced it open in an instant; upon which the people of the inn all ran out at the door, and would not venture to return. A great feast was in preparation, and there were plenty of fowls and good provisions roasting at the fire. Orson tore the meat off the spit with his hands, and devoured it greedily: and espying a caldron of water, he put his head into it and drank like a horse.

In the morning Valentine resumed his journey, leading Orson as before. On arriving at the city, the inhabitants shut their doors, and ran into the highest rooms to gaze upon the wild man. Being come to the outer court of king Pepin's palace, the porter in a great fright barred the gate with heavy chains and bars of

iron, and would not be prevailed on to open it. After soliciting admittance for some time, and being still denied, Valentine made signs to Orson, who tearing up one of the large stone posts that stood by, shattered the gate to pieces.

The queen, the princess Eglantine, and all their attendants, fled to hide themselves, when they heard that Orson was arrived; and Valentine had the greatest difficulty to persuade them to believe that Orson was no longer furious and savage as he had been in the woods. At length the king permitted him to be brought in: and the whole court soon gathered in a crowd in the apartment, and were much amused by his wild actions and gestures, although very cautious not to come near to him. On Valentine's making signs, he kissed the king's robe, and the hand of the princess Eglantine: for Orson had now become so attached to Valentine that he would obey him in all things, but would suffer no other person to attempt to control him. If Valentine went for a moment out of his sight, he would utter cries of distress, and overturn every one that stood in the way, while he ran about the palæe in search of him. And he slept at night in Valentine's chamber upon the floor; for he could not be prevailed on to lie on a bed.

Very soon after the capture of Orson, a herald appeared at the court of king Pepin, from the duke of Aquitain, summoned all true knights to avenge the cause of the lady Fezon, daughter to the noble duke, who was held in cruel captivity by Agramont, the green knight: the herald proclaiming, that whoever should conquer the green knight should receive the hand of the lady Fezon in marriage, together with a princely drowry.

This green knight was so famous for his cruelty and his victories, that the young lords of the court all drew back and seemed unwilling to enter the lists; for it was known that he was defended by enchantments, and that it was his practice to hang upon a tree all the knights whom he had defeated. Valentine, however, offered himself without hesitation, and engaged to get ready and depart the next morning.

The princess Eglantine secretly resolved, if possible, to prevent the destruction of her beloved Valentine, by combating the green knight herself. She had been accustomed to fence and ride, and was greatly accomplished in all the manly exercises. She contrived to steal away the armour of Valentine while he slept, and equipping herself in it, mounted a fiery courser; and, attended only by her favorite maid, in quality of

a page, she proceeded to the castle which the green knight inhabited, and where he kept the lady Fezon a prisoner.

Valentine mean while missing his armour when he arose at the dawn of day, and learning that the princess had taken it and was gone on this perilous enterprise, was almost distracted with his terrors for her safety. He ordered his horse to be prepared; and, followed by Orson, set out in search of the princess.

Haufray and Henry, disappointed in their former purpose, now resolved to waylay and kill Valentine. Accordingly, in a narrow alley of a dark wood, they sprang upon him and seized him before he had power to draw his sword. Orson chanced to be a little way behind; but on hearing Valentine's voice, he rushed upon Henry, who was about to stab Valentine in the back, and seized him in his arms. Orson's grasp almost crushed Henry to death, and Valentine would have killed Haufray; but first tearing the masks from their faces, and seeing they were the king's sons, he left them to the shame and disgrace their base conduct would bring upon them. He had some difficulty to prevail on Orson to let them live; but having prevailed, they left the wicked brothers in the wood, and continued their journey, fortunately arriving at



the castle of Agramont the green knight, just as the princess Eglantine was almost overpowered in the combat.

Valentine now rushed with dreadful fury upon the green knight, and the fight was long and equal. At length Agramont demanded a parley. "Knight," said he to Valentine, "thou art brave and noble. Behold yonder, hang twenty knights whom I have subdued and executed;—such will be thy fate, I give thee warning."

"Base traitor," replied Valentine, "I fear thee not: come on; I defy thee."

"First," rejoined the green knight, "fetch me yonder shield; for, in pity to thy youth, I tell thee, unless thou can'st remove that shield, thou

ne'er canst rescue the lady Fezon, or conquer me."

Valentine approached the shield ; but, in spite of all his efforts, he could not loosen it from the tree, though it appeared to hang but on a slender branch. Valentine, breathless with his exertions to pull down the shield, stood leaning against the tree, when Agramont, with a loud laugh exclaimed, "Fly and save thyself, fair knight ; for, since thou canst not move the shield, thou art not destined to be my victor. Further, know, there is no one living who can subdue me, except he be the son of a mighty king, and yet was suckled by a wild beast." Valentine started on hearing these latter words, and ran to Orson, who had been all this time employed in gazing with looks of delight and admiration on the beautiful lady Fezon. Valentine led him to the enchanted shield ; which on Orson's raising his arm towards it, dropped instantly from its place. A loud blast of wind now rushed through the trees, the ground rocked beneath their feet, and the green knight trembled and turned pale ; then gnashing his teeth, he seized his sword, and attacked Orson with desperate fury. At the first blow Agramont's trusty sword broke in pieces upon the enchanted shield. Next he caught up a battle axe, which as instantly snap-

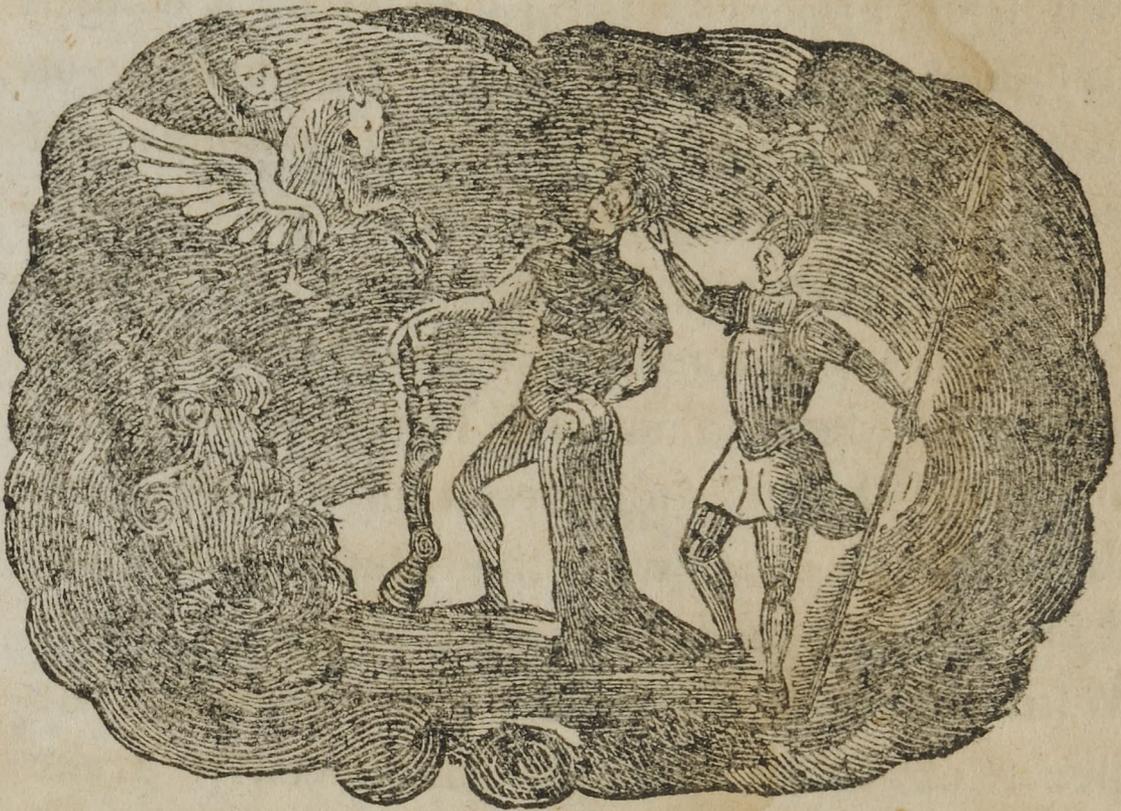
ped in two. He then called for a lance, which shivered to atoms in the same manner. Furious with these defeats, he threw aside his weapons, and trusting to his wonderful strength, attempted to grasp Orson in his arms; but Orson, seizing him as if he had been a mere child, dashed him on the ground, and would have instantly destroyed him, had not Valentine interposed to save his life. Orson continued to hold him down till some chains were brought; when, in despite of the furious struggles of the green knight, Orson bound him in fetters, to lead him away a prisoner.

Agramont, finding himself entirely subdued, addressed himself to Valentine, and said, "This savage man is my conqueror; therefore there must be some mystery in his fate. Haste then to the castle of my brother Farragus, where you will find a brazen head that will explain to you who he is." Valentine having despatched a herald to acquaint the duke of Aquitain with the release of his daughter, sent the lady Fezon with the princess Eglantine to the court of king Pepin, while he and Orson proceeded to the castle of the giant Ferragus. This castle was guarded by two lions, who roared with rage against Valentine; but when Orson appeared they lay down and crouched beneath his feet. On entering the castle a little dwarf approached them,

and conducted them to a chamber abounding with gold, rubies, sapphires, and other precious stones; in the centre there were four pillars of jasper, two of which were as yellow as the finest gold, a third more green than grass, and a fourth more red than a flame of fire. Between these pillars was an emerald of amazing value; and in the midst the brazen head rested upon a rich pedestal. Before the pedestal stood an enormous giant, who lifted his club to forbid their approach; but Orson seized him by the middle, and bore him from the chamber to a dungeon, where he secured him. Valentine fixed his eyes upon the head, anxious to hear what it would say concerning his birth. At length, when Orson had returned, it spake thus:

“Thou, O renowned knight, art called Valentine the Brave, and art the man destined to be the husband of the princess Eglantine of France, thou art son to the emperor of Greece, and thy mother is Bellisant, sister to king Pepin of France. She was unjustly banished from her throne, and took refuge in a monastery, where she has resided these twenty years.

“The wild man who hath so long accompanied thee, is thy brother. You were both born in the forest of Orleans. Thou wert found and brought up under the care of king Pepin thy uncle, but



thy brother was stolen and nursed by a bear. Proceed, Valentine, to France, where thou wilt find the innocent empress, thy hapless mother: at the moment when she embraces thy brother, speech will be given to him. Away, and prosper! These are the last words I shall utter. Fate has decreed, that when Valentine and Orson enter this chamber, my power ends.”

Having thus spoken, the brazen head fell from its pedestal; thunder shook the foundation of the castle: they were surrounded with thick darkness; and when the light again burst upon them, they found themselves on an open plain, and no traces of the castle remained. The little dwarf, whose name was Pacolet, at the

same time appeared before them on a winged horse, and said, "Noble youths, I go before you to the court of king Pepin to prepare your royal parents who are already there, for your reception." And instantly Pacolet mounted into the air on his winged horse, and was presently out of sight. Valentine now fell upon the bosom of his brother Orson, and Orson upon his: they embraced each other with the utmost affection, and joyfully proceeded towards France.

While these transactions were passing, the emperor of Constantinople had lived in great affliction for the loss of his queen. The wicked arch priest continued to represent her as the vilest of women, and to abuse the emperor's confidence in him, till he was on his death-bed; when, repenting of his treachery, he sent for the emperor, and confessed before the whole court, that he had basely slandered the amiable empress.

Nothing could exceed the emperor's grief. He immediately set out with all his nobles for France, to implore king Pepin to assist him in searching for the injured Bellisant. In every town on his journey he caused her innocence to be proclaimed, and offered an immense reward to any one who should bring tidings of her to the court of king Pepin.

It happened that Blandiman, who was buying provisions for the monastery at Orleans, as the emperor passed through, heard the proclamation, and hastened with the tidings to his mistress. The empress, overjoyed to have her innocence made known, quitted the monastery and went to the palace of her brother, where she was received with shouts of triumph—king Pepin and the emperor both falling at her feet, to implore forgiveness for having believed so unjustly of her.

Scarcely had the reconciliation passed, and the empress related her sorrowful history, when the dwarf Pacolet appeared on his winged horse to announce the wonderful declaration made by the brazen head, and the approach of the royal brothers. At these tidings the empress thought herself the happiest of women; but the emperor could not forbear to shed tears, when he remembered all the dangers and sufferings he had caused to his amiable queen and his princely sons.

The noble youths now presented themselves to their parents; and no sooner had the empress Bellisant thrown her arms around the neck of her son Orson, than the faculty of speech was given to him, and he expressed his duty and affection to his parents and uncle, in terms of

such grace and propriety as at once astonished and delighted the whole court. The duke of Aquitain, having already come to the palace of king Pepin to congratulate his daughter on her deliverance from Agramont the green knight, now took the hand of Orson, and presented him to the lady Fezon as her future husband, king Pepin at the same time joining the hands of Valentine and the princess Eglantine. Splendid preparations were immediately made for the celebration of these nuptials; and during the whole month nothing was to be heard of throughout France but tilts and tournaments, feasts and balls, fire-works and illuminations, with every other kind of splendid magnificent entertainments.

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