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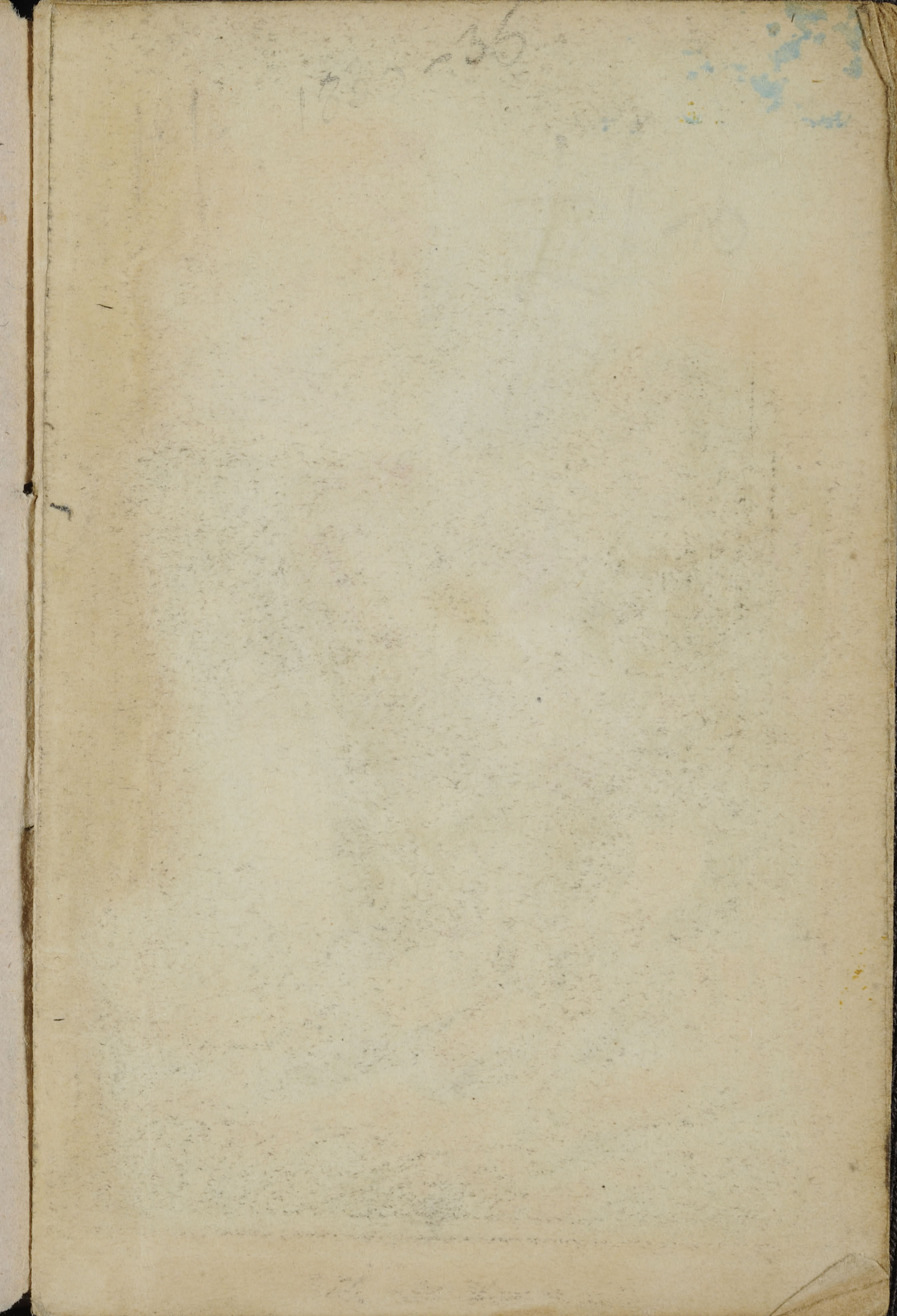
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Rianet with the Tuffi

RIQUET

WITH

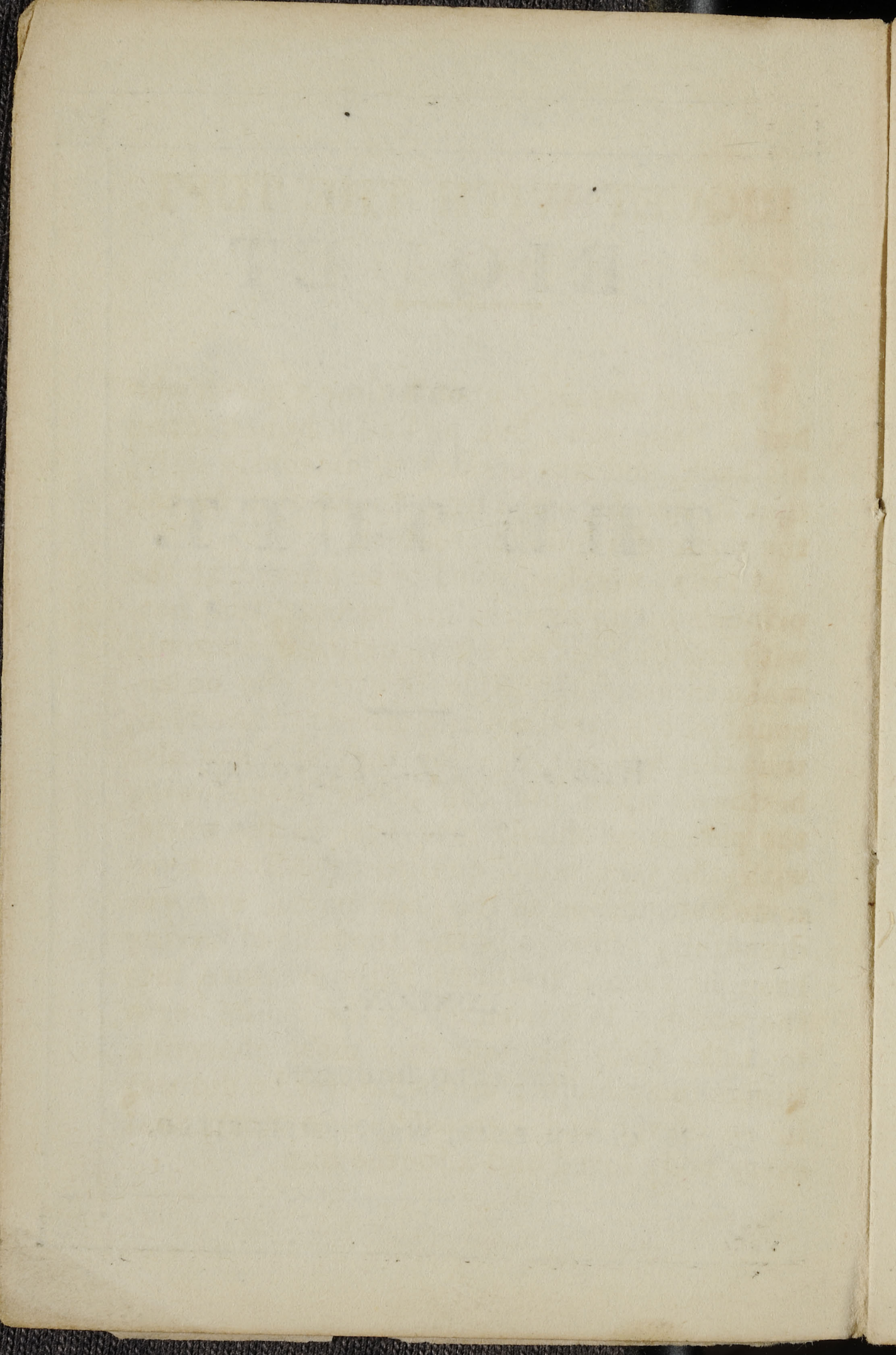
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RIQUET WITH THE TUFT.

THERE was once upon a time a queen who had a little son ; but he had a hunch upon his back, and was besides so hideously ugly, that it was for some time doubted if he had the form of a human creature.

A fairy, who happened to be present at the prince's birth, assured his parents, that notwithstanding his excessive ugliness, he would make himself agreeable to every one on account of his great wit and talents : she added, that this was not all : for that she had also bestowed upon him the power of endowing the person he should love best in the world, with the very same qualities. All this was some consolation to the poor queen, who was dreadfully afflicted at the thought of having brought such a frightful little creature into the world. It is true, no sooner did he begin to talk, than he said the most charming things imaginable ; and whatever he did was in so clever and agreeable a manner, that every body loved and admired him.

Seven years after, the queen of a neighbouring kingdom was brought to bed of twin daughters: the one that was born first was more beautiful than the day; which caused the queen so much joy, that it was thought by those about her, that it would endanger her life. The same fairy who was present at the birth of little Riquet with the Tuft, was with the queen in her confinement; and to remedy the inconvenience her too great joy had occasioned, she assured her that the new-born princess should have no understanding at all, but that she should be as silly and stupid as she was handsome. This assurance grieved the queen very much: but in a few minutes she received a still greater disappointment; for the second princess, when born, was the ugliest little marmot ever beheld.

The fairy seeing the queen's distress, said to her: "I entreat your majesty, do not thus afflict yourself. Your daughter shall be endowed with so much wit, that nobody will perceive her want of beauty." "This would be a great comfort to me, indeed," replied the queen: "but would it not be possible to bestow a small portion of the same charming advantage on the princess who is so beautiful?" "This is not in my power," an-

swered the fairy; "I cannot meddle with her understanding, but I can do all I please with respect to her beauty; and therefore, as there is nothing I would not do for your satisfaction, I will bestow on her, for a gift, that she shall be able to make the person she loves as handsome as she pleases."

As the two princesses grew up, their perfections grew also, and nothing was talked of but the beauty of the eldest, and the wit and talents of the youngest. It is true, their defects increased in the same degree, for the youngest became every day more ugly, and the eldest more ignorant and stupid; she either did not reply to the questions that were asked of her, or spoke in the silliest manner possible. She was so extremely awkward too, that if she had to place half a dozen tea-cups on the chimney-piece, she was sure to break one of them; or if she attempted to drink a glass of water, she let half of it fall upon her clothes. Though beauty is a great advantage to a young lady, yet the youngest of the princesses was by every one preferred to the eldest. It must be confessed, that people first approached the eldest to see and admire her, but they soon left her to hear the clever and agreeable conversation of her sister—so that in less than a quarter of an

hour the eldest always found herself alone, while all strangers got as near as they could to the youngest. The eldest, though very stupid, observed all this, and would willingly have parted with her beauty to gain but half the wit of her sister. The queen, notwithstanding her good nature, could not refrain from reproving her now and then for her stupidity ; so that the poor princess was ready to die of grief.

One day, having retired to a neighbouring wood, where, without being seen, she might sit down and cry at her ease for the hard fate she was obliged to endure, she perceived a young man of small stature, and very ugly, coming near to her ; he was at the same time magnificently dressed. This was the young prince Riquet with the Tuft, who having fallen violently in love with this princess from the portraits he had every where seen of her, had left his father's kingdom to have the pleasure of seeing and conversing with her. Delighted at so unexpected an opportunity of meeting her alone, he addressed her with all imaginable respect. Observing, after the first compliments were over, that she appeared very melancholy, he said : " I cannot imagine, madam, how it is possible for a lady possessed of such beauty as your's to be

so unhappy as you appear ; for though I can boast of having seen a great number of handsome ladies, I can assure you, none of them could in the smallest degree be compared to you." " You are pleased to flatter me," replied the princess, without adding another word. " Beauty," continued Riquet with the Tuft, " is so great an advantage, that it supplies the place of every thing else ; and she who is endowed with so great a blessing ought to be insensible to every kind of misfortune." " I had much rather," said the princess, " be as ugly as you are, and possessed of wit, than have the beauty you praise, and be such a fool as I am." " Nothing, madam," replied the prince, " is a surer mark of good sense than to believe ourselves in want of it ; indeed, the more sensible we really are, the plainer we see how much we fall short of perfection." " I know nothing of what you are talking of," answered the princess ; " but I do know that I am very, very foolish, and that is the cause of the grief in which you see me." " If this is all that makes you unhappy, madam," said the prince, " I can very easily put an end to your affliction." " By what means ?" replied the princess. " I have the power," said Riquet with the Tuft, " to bestow as

much wit as I please on the person I am to love best in the world; and as that person can be no other, madam, than yourself, it depends only on your own will to be the wittiest lady upon the earth. I shall ask of you in return but one condition, which is, that you shall consent to marry me."

The princess looked at him with astonishment, but did not speak a word.

"I see," continued Riquet, "that my proposal makes you uneasy, and I am not surprised at it; I will therefore give you a whole year to consider of your answer."

The princess was so very stupid and silly, and at the same time so much desired to be witty, that she resolved on accepting the offer made her by prince Riquet with the Tuft; she even thought a whole year a very long time, and would gladly have made it shorter if she could. She accordingly told the prince she would marry him on that day twelvemonth; and no sooner had she pronounced the words, than she found herself quite another creature: she said every thing she wished, not only with the greatest ease imaginable, but in the most natural and graceful manner. She immediately took her part in a lively and agreeable conversation with the prince, in which she showed

herself so extremely witty, that Riquet began to fear he had bestowed upon her more of the charming quality she had so much longed for than he had kept to himself.

When the princess returned to the palace, the whole court was thrown into the utmost astonishment at the sudden and wonderful change they observed in her; for every thing she now uttered they found to be as clever and entertaining as it had before been stupid and ridiculous. The joy at this event was the greatest ever known throughout the court: the youngest princess was the only person who did not partake of it: for as she had no longer the advantage of wit over the beauty of her sister, she could not but appear to every one the most ugly and disagreeable creature in the world.

The king now consulted his eldest daughter in the affairs of his government, and was even guided by her advice in matters of the greatest importance. And the news of this great change being every where talked of, it soon reached the ears of the neighbouring princes, who all hastened to present themselves at her father's palace, to gain, if possible, her favour, and demand her in marriage of the king. But the princess listened with equal coldness and indifference to all they had to

say; not one of them had wit enough to make her think for a moment of accepting his offer. As length there came a prince, so powerful, so rich, so witty, and so handsome, that she could not help feeling a great affection for him. The king, perceiving this, told her she had only to choose for a husband whom she liked best, and that she might be sure of his consenting to her marriage with him. As the most sensible persons are always the most careful in determining on such serious matters, the princess, after thanking her father, begged him to allow her time to consider what she should do.

Soon after, the princess chanced in her walk to wander towards the very wood in which she had met with Riquet with the Tuft; and wishing to be free from interruption while thinking of her new lover, she proceeded a good way into it. When she had walked about for some time, she heard a great noise under ground, like that of many persons running backwards and forwards, and busily employed on some affair of importance. After listening for a moment, she distinguished different voices; one said, "Bring me that kettle:" another, "Fetch the great boiler:" another, "Put some coals on the fire." At the same moment the

ground opened, and a spacious kitchen, filled with vast numbers of cooks, assistants, and scullions, together with all sorts of utensils fit for preparing a splendid dinner, appeared to the view of the astonished princess: some had rolling-pins, and were making the most delicate sorts of pastry; others were beating the syllabubs and turning the custards: and at one end of the kitchen she saw at least twenty men-cooks, all busily employed in trussing different sorts of the finest game and poultry imaginable, and singing all the time as merrily as could be.

The princess, in the utmost surprise at what she beheld, inquired of them, to whom they belonged? "To prince Riquet with the Tuft, madam," replied the head cook, "whose wedding dinner we are preparing." The princess, still more surprised than before, and instantly recollecting that this was exactly the day twelvemonth on which she had promised to marry prince Riquet, was ready to sink on the ground. The reason of her not recollecting this before was, that when she made the promise she was quite silly, and that the wit the prince had endowed her with, had made her forget every thing that had happened to her before. She tried to walk away from the place, but had not gone

twenty steps when Riquet with the Tuft presented himself before her, dressed magnificently in the gayest wedding suit that ever was seen.

“ You perceive, madam,” said he, “ that I have kept my promise faithfully, and no doubt you have come hither for the same purpose, and, by bestowing on me your hand, to make me the happiest of men.” “ I must frankly confess,” replied the princess, “ that I am not yet come to a resolution on that subject, and also that I fear it never will be in my power to consent to what you desire.” “ You quite astonish me, madam !” answered prince Riquet. “ That I can easily imagine,” continued the princess: “ and certainly I should be greatly perplexed what to say to you, if I did not know that you possess the best understanding in the world. Were you a silly prince, you would no doubt say to me, ‘ the promise of a princess ought not to be broken, and therefore you must marry me.’ But you, prince Riquet, who have so much more sense than any other, will, I trust, excuse me for what I have declared. You cannot have forgotten that, when I was but a silly stupid princess, I could not be prevailed on to consent to marry you ; how, therefore, now that I am endowed with un-

derstanding, and for that reason must naturally be the more difficult to be pleased, can you expect me to choose a prince I then rejected? If you really wished to marry me, you did very wrong to change me from the most silly creature in the world to the most witty, so as to make me see more plainly the faults of others."

"If, madam," replied Riquet with the Tuft, "you would think it but reasonable in a prince without sense to reproach you for what you have declared, why should you think proper to deny me the same advantage, in an affair in which the happiness of my whole life is concerned? Is it just that persons of sense should be worse treated than those who have none? You, my princess, who are now so very clever, and so much wished to be so, can you really determine to treat me in this manner? But let us consider a little. Is there any thing in me besides my ugliness, that you dislike? Are you dissatisfied with my birth, my understanding, my temper, manners, or condition?" "With none of these," replied the princess; "I dislike in you only the ugliness of your person." "If that is the case," answered Riquet, "I shall soon be the happiest man alive, since you, princess, have the

power to make me as handsome as you please." "How can that be possible?" resumed the princess. "Nothing more is necessary," said Riquet, "than you should love me well enough to wish me very handsome: in short, my charming princess, I must inform you that the same fairy, who, at my birth, bestowed upon me the gift of making the lady I love best, as witty as I pleased, was present also at your's, and gave to you the power of making him you should love the best, as handsome as you pleased." "Since this is the case," said the princess, "I wish you with all my heart to be the handsomest prince in all the world, and as much as depends on me I bestow upon you the gift of beauty."

The princess had no sooner finished speaking, than Riquet with the Tuft appeared to her eyes the handsomest, best-shaped, and most agreeable person she had ever beheld.

Some people were of opinion that this surprising change in the prince was not occasioned by the gift of the fairy, but that the love the princess conceived for him was the only cause: and they also added, that the princess thought so much of the perseverance of her lover, of his discretion, and the many excellent qualities of heart and mind he pos

essed, that she no longer perceived either the ugliness of his face, or the deformity of his person.

The hunch on his back now seemed to her to be nothing more than the easy carriage in which men of quality indulge themselves, and his lameness a careless freedom in his gait, which appeared extremely graceful; the squinting of his eyes, in those of the princess, did but make them seem more brilliant and more tender: in short, his thick red nose, in her opinion, gave a warlike and heroic air to his whole face.

However this may be, the princess promised to marry prince Riquet with the Tuft immediately, provided he could obtain the consent of the king her father.

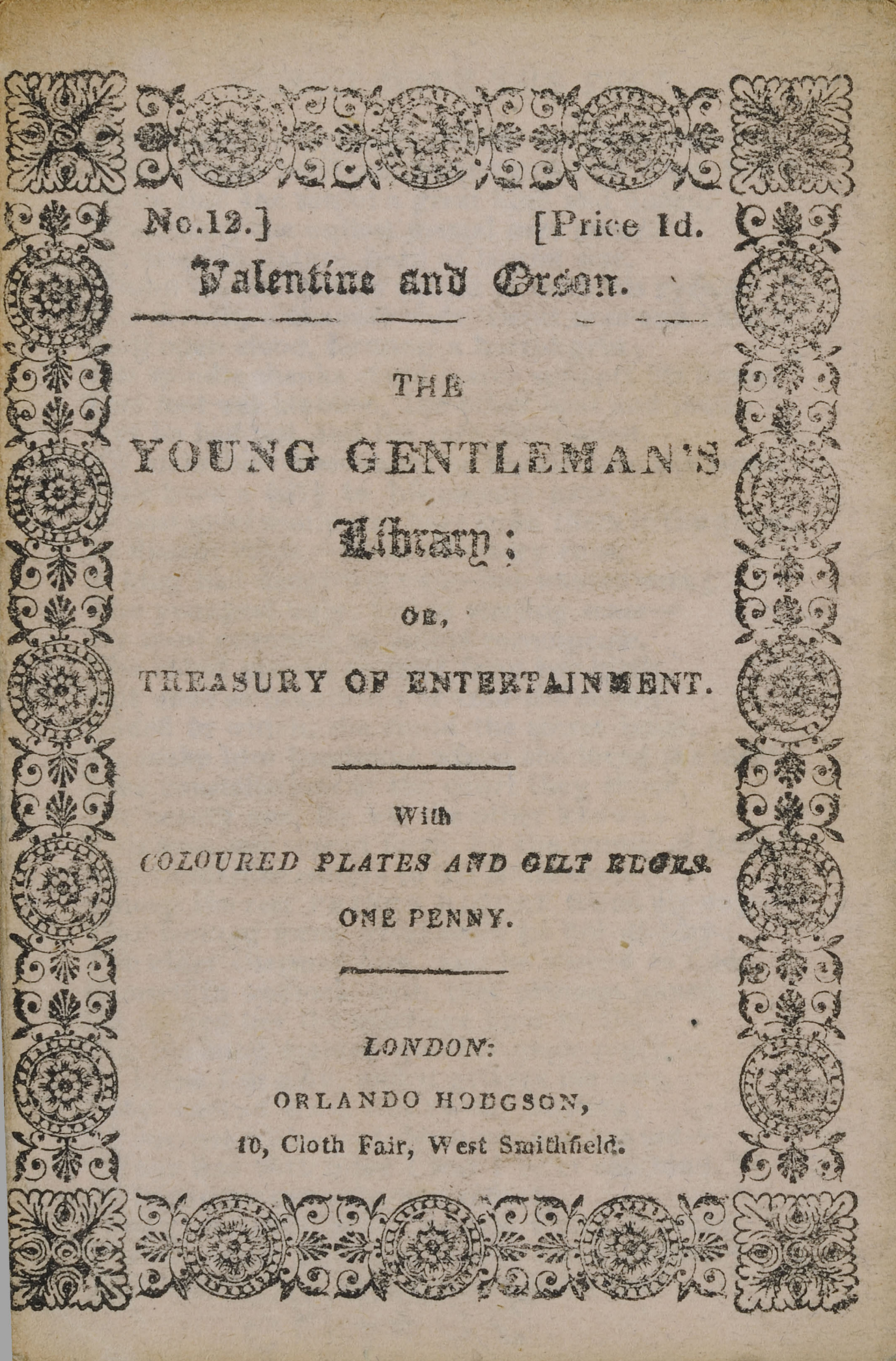
The king being informed that his daughter entertained a great esteem for prince Riquet with the Tuft, and having heard of the extraordinary qualities of both his heart and mind, received him with pleasure for a son-in-law; so that the following day, as the prince had long expected, proved to be that of the union with the beautiful and no less witty princess.

THE END.

RIQUET WITH THE TUFT.

PRINCES, by fortune's freaks, are often cuffed—
This chance befel our RIQUET WITH THE TUFT
Who tho' the son of a great king and queen,
Was, sure, the ugliest mortal ever seen:
Of smallest stature, head of largest size,
Hump on his back, a squint in both his eyes,—
His mouth, a channel wide 'twixt nose and chin,
Half open stood, forming a horrid grin;
His spindle shanks could scarce support his frame,
One foot was clubbed, the other bent and lame:
Yet he had wit, and the rare gift possest,
To make her wise whom he should love the best:
This boon a fairy to his parents gave,
Whose grief would else have sunk them in the grave.
In distant lands,—for so the story runs,
A king had daughters two—but wanted sons;
The youngest ugly, full of sterling sense—
By most esteemed an ample recompense.
The eldest proved an idiot from her birth,
But none so beautiful e'er trod the earth;
Added to which, she could the secret boast,
To make him handsome whom she loved the most
Like constellations at the court they shone,
For beauty one, for wit the other known:
This soon was spread forth, by the trump of fame,
And numerous suitors to the ladies came;
Among the rest PRINCE RIQUET found his way—
Tho' lacking form, great sense he did display:
The elder charmed him, and he wished to find
Himself in wedlock with that princess joined.
He offered her the marriage knot to tie,—
The blushing maiden quickly made reply,—
"I know I'm silly, and it grieves me sore,
"My want of sense I ev'ry day deplore;
"Your wit I like, yet deem me not unkind—
"Your fate with mine I fear I ne'er can bind."
If to my person only you object,
'Then,' RIQUET said, 'success I may expect;
'To me, sweet girl, you beauty can dispense,—
I, in return, can give you wit and sense.'

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