

THE HISTORY OF
Beauty and the Beast.

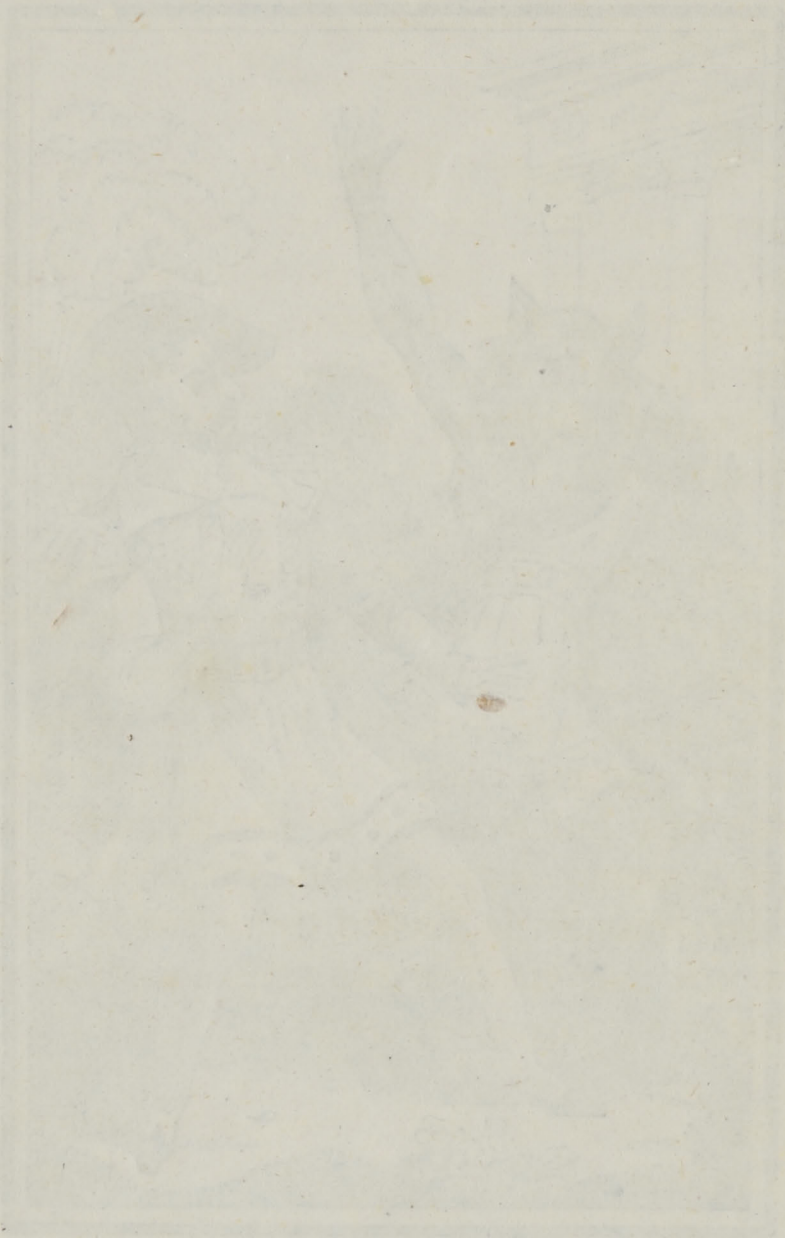


THE merchant, anxious to procure a rose—
(The trifling gift sweet Beauty did propose),
Gather'd some in the garden of the Beast,
Not thinking he was erring in the least:
“ Ingrate ! thou'st robb'd me of my darling store ! ”
The monster, springing from the shrubs, did roar ;
“ Prepare to die ! or quick the flow'rs restore ! ”

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FRONTISPIECE.





BEAUTY AND THE BEAST.

THERE was once a merchant, who possessed great riches ; he had six children, three boys and three girls, whom he liberally educated. The youngest girl was extremely pretty, insomuch that she obtained the name of Little Beauty, which created jealousy on the part of her less amiable sisters.

The two eldest were extremely proud at being rich, and spoke to their inferiors with the greatest haughtiness : they gave themselves the most disdainful airs, and refused to visit other merchants' daughters ; nor would they indeed be seen with any but persons of the highest quality. They went every day to balls, plays, and public walks, and constantly jeered their youngest sister for spending her time in reading, or other useful and improving employments.

In the course of time, by some unexpected event, their father lost his whole fortune, being bereft of everything but a small cottage and a few acres of land. "My children," said the tender father, "in consequence of my misfortunes, we must now work and labour." The elder daughters were very ill-disposed at this sudden change from opulence to comparative poverty,

and obtained no pity from their neighbours, because of their pride; but every one sympathised with Little Beauty, whose engaging manners and affable disposition commanded respect.

When they removed to their cottage, the merchant and his three sons employed themselves in tilling and sowing the fields, and working in the garden, that they might have corn and vegetables for their support. Beauty rose by four o'clock, lighted the fire, cleaned the house, and got breakfast ready for the whole family. She at first found all this very fatiguing; but she soon grew quite accustomed to it. When she had done her work, she generally amused herself with reading, or playing on her harpsichord. The two eldest sisters, on the contrary, were at a loss what to do to pass away the time: they breakfasted in bed, and did not rise till ten, when they commonly walked out; and would frequently sit down under a shady tree, to lament the loss of their carriage and fine clothes; when they would say to each other, "What a mean-spirited, poor, stupid creature is our youngest sister, to be so content with our miserable situation!" But the father thought very differently: he admired the patience of this sweet young creature; for her sisters not only left the whole of the work of the house to her, but insulted her every moment.

In this rural state the merchant lived some time, when one day he was agreeably surprised by the news that one of his vessels (which he supposed was lost) had safely arrived. Elated with joy, the two elder daughters clung to their

father, when they learnt he was about to go and take possession of his property, and intreated him to bring them some trinkets and other useless baubles. Beauty felt an inward pleasure, on her father's prospects of being reinstated in affluence, yet concealed her ecstasy. "You ask me not for anything, Beauty," said her father; my child, what present shall I bring you?" She meekly replied, "I should like you, father, to bring me a ROSE, for we have none in our garden."

The merchant then departed; but on arriving at the port, some dishonest persons went to law with him about the merchandise; so, after a great deal of trouble, he was returning to his cottage as poor as he had left it. When he was within thirty miles of his house, thinking of the happiness he should enjoy in again embracing his children, he had the misfortune to lose himself in a thick forest, through which his road lay. It rained and snowed terribly, and the wind was so high as twice to throw him off his horse. Night being come, he fully imagined he should die of cold or hunger, or be torn in pieces by the wolves, which howled in every direction around him. The merchant, accidentally looking down a long avenue, discovered a glimmering light, at a distance, to which he hastened. He soon arrived at the gates of a palace, which he opened, and was greatly surprised to find no one in any of the outer yards. The merchant then tied up his horse, and walked towards the house, which he entered, and, to his great astonishment, saw not a living creature: he pursued his way to a large hall, in which was a good fire, and a table plentifully supplied with food.

As the snow, and rain had wetted him to the skin, he approached the fire to dry himself. "I hope," said he, "the master of the house or his servants will excuse the liberty I take, for it surely will not be long before they make their appearance." He waited a considerable time, and still nobody came; at length the clock struck eleven; and the merchant, overcome with hunger and thirst, helped himself to a chicken, and then to a few glasses of wine; all the time trembling with fear. He sat till the clock struck twelve, and not a creature had he seen. He now took courage, and began to think of looking a little farther about him: accordingly, he opened an apartment magnificently furnished, which he found opened into another, in which there was an excellent bed; and, being quite worn out with fatigue, he undressed himself, and got into it.

It was ten o'clock the next morning before he thought of rising: when he was about to dress himself, he discovered a suit of new clothes in the room of those which had been drenched with the rain on the preceding evening. "No doubt," he ejaculated, "this palace is the residence of some good Fairy, who, perhaps, commiserates my hapless situation." He then returned to the hall, where he found a sumptuous banquet, consisting of almost every delicacy. After partaking of a hearty repast, he repaired to the stable in which he had placed his horse. As he passed by one of the arbours, (which was bedecked with roses) he gathered a bunch of them for his daughter, Beauty; at this instant he saw a hideous beast approach him, who, with a horrible grin, exclaimed, "Ungrateful man! I

sheltered you and preserved your life from the pitiless storm, and in return you ungratefully steal my roses, more valuable to me than the whole of these possessions—for this nefarious deed you shall immediately die.”

The merchant fell on his knees to the Beast, and, clasping his hands, said, “My lord, I humbly entreat your pardon: I did not think it could offend you to gather a rose for one of my daughters, who desired to have one.” “I am not a lord, but a Beast,” replied the monster; “I do not like compliments, but that people should say what they think: so do not imagine you can move me by your flattery. You say, however, that you have daughters; I will therefore pardon you, on condition that one of them shall come hither and die in your stead: do not attempt to argue with me, but go; and if your daughters should refuse, swear to me that you will return in three months.” The merchant acceded. “But,” added the Beast, “it is my will that you go not empty away: in the chamber where you slept, you will find an old empty chest—fill it with whatever valuables you choose, and I will get it conveyed to your cottage.” The Beast retired, and left the merchant to ruminate:—“If I must die, I may as well leave my children some provision.” Accordingly, he loaded the chest with gold. Mounting his horse, he left the palace of enchantment with no less grief than he entered it with joy.”

The horse of itself took a path across the forest, and in a few hours they reached the merchant's house. His children gathered round

him, as he dismounted from his horse; but the merchant, instead of embracing them with joy, could not, as he looked at them, refrain from weeping. He held in his hand the bunch of roses, which he gave to Beauty, saying, "Take these roses, Beauty: but little do you think how dear they have cost your unhappy father;" and then gave an account of all that happened in the palace of the Beast. "Well, father," said Beauty, "as the Beast will accept either you or one of your daughters, I will give myself up to his fury, as it is on my account you have been involved in this trouble. The merchant in vain endeavoured to reason with Beauty, for she was determined to go; at which the elder sisters, who were jealous of her amiable qualities, secretly rejoiced.

The affliction of the merchant was so great, that he forgot the promised treasure; but on retiring to rest, discovered the chest of gold by his bed-side: he, however, withheld the secret from his eldest daughters, imparting it only to Beauty.

When the three months were expired, the merchant and Beauty set out for the palace of the Beast; upon which occasion the two sisters rubbed their eyes with an onion, to appear as if they shed a great many tears; but both the merchant and his sons shed them in reality.

They reached the palace in a few hours, and entering an apartment, found a sumptuous feast prepared, of which they readily partook. Beauty was timorous; but a rectitude of conduct gave her courage."

Just as they had finished supper, the Beast entered. The monster asked if she came willingly. She tremblingly faltered out, "Y-e-s, y-e-s." "You are a good girl," he replied; "and I think myself much obliged to you." "He said to her father, "You may go from the palace to-morrow morning, and take care never to return to it again." He then withdrew.

The father and daughter now wished each other a sorrowful good-night, and went to bed, thinking it would be impossible for them to close their eyes; but no sooner had they lain down, than they fell into a profound sleep, from which they did not awake till morning. Beauty dreamt that a lady approached her, who said, "I am much pleased, Beauty, with the generous affection you have shown, in being willing to give your life to save that of your father, and it shall not go unrewarded." Beauty, as soon as she awoke, related this dream to her father: but though it afforded him some comfort, he could not leave his darling child, without shedding the bitterest tears.

Beauty surveyed many parts of the palace, and at length came to a door, over which was written, "BEAUTY'S APARTMENT," where was an extensive library, furnished to illuminate the mind and cultivate the understanding: in addition to which were several exquisite pieces of music, whose chords vibrated through the vaulted rooms with more than usual melody. This gave Beauty a favourable opinion of the Beast, whom she before conceived hostile: she then opened the library, and perceived an elegantly bound book, in which was written in letters of gold:—

Beauteous lady, dry your tears,
Here's no cause for sighs or fears ;
Command as freely as you may,
Compliance still shall mark your way.

“Alas!” said she, sighing, “there is nothing I so much desire as to see my poor father, and to know what he is this moment doing;” when casting her eyes on a looking-glass that stood near her, she saw her home, and her father riding up to the cottage in the deepest affliction! Her sisters had come out to meet him, who, notwithstanding all their endeavours to look sorry, could not help betraying their joy.

At noon Beauty found every delicacy prepared for her; and at supper, when she was going to place herself at the table, she heard the Beast advancing, who said, “Will you allow me, Beauty, the pleasure of seeing you sup?” “That is as you please,” she replied, somewhat intimidated. Beauty, in the course of conversation, overcame her fears; but, when the Beast asked her if she would be wedded to him, she paused for a few moments, and then gave him an answer, which implied non-consent. The Beast, pitifully sighing, retired to give vent to tears.

Beauty felt for him the greatest compassion, and regretted his frightful appearance. One day she said to him, “You exceedingly distress me; but though I cannot love you, yet you shall ever be entitled to my esteem, for the attention and kindness which I here witness.” He then made her promise she would not totally quit him. In answer she said, “I will not; but I am desirous of seeing my father; and if you refuse me this request, I fear I shall die of grief and despair.” “Promise me,” said the Beast, “to return in a

week, and to-morrow morning you shall find yourself with him: when you wish to return, you have only to put your ring on a table when you go to bed." This said he bade her farewell.

When she awoke in the morning, she found herself with her father. A chest with a profusion of fine clothes, pearls, and diamonds, were also the gifts of the Beast.

Beauty awoke, put her ring on the table, and soon fell into a slumber again. In the morning she found herself in the palace of the Beast, and accordingly, as she dreamt, discovered him almost lifeless and extended on a grass plat. She recovered him with a little water. The Beast soon opened his eyes, and faltering said, "Beauty, you forgot your promise—I had resolved to starve myself to death, but the sight of you reanimates me." "Oh no, my Beast, you shall not die—you shall live to become my husband." Scarce had she pronounced those words, when the palace became suddenly illuminated: music, fireworks, and all kinds of harmonic sounds announced the most splendid rejoicings. All this change of scene had no effect upon the lamenting Beauty: but judge of her astonishment when, turning aside, she beheld at her feet a handsome prince, who thanked her for having broken his enchantment!

Beauty inquired of this handsome prince, what was become of the Beast? "You see him, Beauty, at your feet," said he: "a wicked Fairy had condemned me to wear the form of a beast, till a beautiful young lady should consent

to marry me, and had forbidden me, on pain of death, to show that I had any understanding. You alone, dearest Beauty, have had the generosity to judge of me by the goodness of my heart."

Beauty assisted the prince to rise, and they proceeded together to the palace; when her astonishment was very great to find there her father and all the family, who had been conveyed thither by the beautiful lady she saw in her dream. "Beauty," said the lady, (for she was a great fairy) "receive the reward of the virtuous choice you have made. You have preferred goodness of heart to sense and beauty; you therefore deserve to find these same qualities united in the same person. You are going to be made a queen; I hope a crown will not destroy your virtue. As for you, ladies," said the fairy to the elder sisters, "I have long been a witness to the malice of your hearts and the injustice you have committed. You shall become two statues; yet under that form you shall preserve your present reason; and you shall be fixed at the gates of your sister's palace. You will never recover your natural forms till you are fully sensible of your faults; and to say the truth, I much fear you will ever remain statues." At the same instant, the fairy, with a stroke of her wand, transported all who were present to the young prince's dominions, where he was received with transports of joy by his subjects. He married Beauty, and passed with her a long and happy life, because their actions were founded upon virtue.

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