
THE

CASTLE OF ENCHANTMENT;

OR, THE

MYSTERIOUS DECEPTION.

ON a sultry day, at the beginning of autumn, just as the sun began to decline towards the horizon, a violent tempest surprised a meanly apparelled traveller, in a region to which he was an entire stranger, and compelled him to seek shelter from the storm. The natural obscurity of a thick forest of lofty trees, heightened by the heavy clouds, buried all the surrounding objects in so deep a night, that without the frequent flashes of lightning, he would have been unable to see twenty paces before him. Happily, by this dreadful illumination, he discovered an old half-ruined tower, that rose above some thick wood on a small eminence, and offered him a sufficient defence from the violence of the tempest. This sight imparted a ray of joy to him, that was succeeded by rapture, when, by a flash of uncommon splendour, he discovered that, among the ruins of the castle, three turrets still remained uninjured. "At length," cried he, in a voice of transport, "I have found the termination of my troubles, since it is impossible that Læris would deceive me, and this is certainly the spot he has indicated as the period of my miseries." He perceived a narrow path that led through the thicket to the tower, at which he arrived in a few minutes. These three towers were all that the destructive hand of time had spared of a spacious and magnificent castle, the fragments of which, overgrown with moss and shrubs, lay for a vast extent scattered about.

The heavy rain did not permit him to contemplate these awful ruins, and he hastened to gain the interior of the tower, the entrance of which was open, and he found himself in a large vaulted hall, which, at various apertures, admitted the lightning sufficiently to display a winding ascent, that led to the top of the building. His heart throbbed, while he groped his way up to the dark ascent, and

winding thrice round the tower, terminated in a small anti-chamber, so feebly illuminated, that he could discern nothing but a bench of stone placed against one of its walls, and the passage to another apartment, from which issued the little light that glimmered in the former room. He looked through the entrance, and the first glance gave such certainty to his expectations, that he drew back, and seated himself on the bench to recover his composure. He observed his dress, and, for the first time, was ashamed of his appearance, which was not calculated to justify his intrusion into an apartment like that before him. Recollecting, that by favour of this appearance he had passed unhurt through various provinces and kingdoms, he resolved to proceed a little longer with it, however ill accordant to the magnificence of the apartment he was about to enter.

He stepped in, and seemed to tread in the chamber of a monarch. The floor was covered with cloth of gold, the walls were hung with green silk tapestry, bordered with festoons of artificial flowers, that rivalled the productions of nature. A bed in the form of a pavillion, with hangings of blue satin, stood on one side the apartment, which received all its light from a lofty arched window of crimson glass, that threw a rich glow over the room, at once solemn and cheerful. However unexpected all these particulars in such a wilderness might be, and in a ruinous castle, he was still more surprised, instead of the object he was in search of, to find a young man reclining on the bed, who raised himself at his approach, and regarded him with a serious but serene look, without the least sign of alarm at the abrupt appearance of a person, whose figure was so little adapted to impress any one in his favour.

The youth was wrapped in a large scarlet mantle; his eyes were sunk in his head, his complexion was pale and sickly, and on his whole person there was an impression of tender sadness. He began an apology for his intrusion, which the youth did not suffer him to finish. "You seem by your appearance," said he, "little favoured of fortune; if you are unhappy, you are my brother, and welcome to me."

"I am a stranger," answered he, "the native of a distant land. A tempest, that surprised me in this forest, drove me for refuge to this tower, which is the same, that for some weeks I have been seeking in this kingdom."

The youth raised his eyes, and observed the stranger with greater attention; and though his appearance was rather hideous than alluring, the sound of his voice was so engaging, as to gain him the heart of the youth, who strove in vain to reconcile so uncouth a figure with an accent that excited in him such pleasing emotions. He bade the old man seat himself on the bed, and he produced some bread and fruits, and a flask of wine. "This liquor," said he, "has remained untouched many days: I cannot expend it better than on thee, who seemest to need somewhat to refresh thee. I have lived for more than a month on bread and water, and shall probably never indulge on better food."

The stranger surveyed his host with a look of pity, and thanking him for his kindness, said, "As a proof of my wish to be grateful, I will shew myself in my own form, in which I may be more servicable than in my assumed one." With these words he divested himself of his dress, and revealed to the youth a young man of own age, and equal to himself in beauty, though he too seemed to have suffered from inward sorrow, as well as from the toils of his pilgrimage.

The youth of the tower gazed earnestly at his guest; when at length, unable to repress his emotions, he threw his arms about the stranger's neck, pressed him to his bosom, and washed his cheeks with tears.

The stranger, however, affected by this effusion of tenderness, could not but be surprised, and his astonishment was perceived by the youth of the tower. "Thou shalt learn the cause of all these wonders," said the latter; "but first swear never to desert me, but to reside with me here till death shall part us." "I do swear it," answered the stranger, "I vow never to quit thee, by the life of her for whom I breathe, whom I so long have sought in vain, and expected to have found in this tower."

"In this tower," exclaimed the other; "but I think you have already said so. There is something mysterious in thy discourse, in thy features, and in our meeting in this tower. Tell me, I conjure thee, who thou art, and whom thou seekest; I will return thy frankness, and confide to thy bosom a secret, that hitherto has been limited to mire, and on which depends the destiny of my life."

"How can I withhold any thing from thee, when I feel inclined to shed my life to testify my affection for thee. But expect to hear a strange and incredible history."

"It cannot be more marvellous than what I shall relate, when thou hast satisfied my curiosity."

During this discourse a couple of cavaliers, muffled up to the eyes, arrived at the tower, where they sought shelter from the storm. They left their steeds below, and ascended the stairs, but before they reached the anti-chamber, they perceived that others were arrived there before them. They stopped therefore, and seating themselves on the stone bench near the door, wrapped themselves in their mantles, and listened with greedy attention to every word that was uttered.

"The place of my birth," said the stranger, "is in Egypt, where Lasis, my father, is chief minister of the Soudan."

"What do I hear?" interrupted the youth of the tower; "Lasis thy father? and thou his son-Osmandy?"

"How!" cried the other, "and are you then acquainted with us?"

"Forgive me this interruption which shall not be repeated, and proceed with thy relation."

"As you seem not unacquainted with Egypt, it would be superfluous to mention in what manner the sons of our high priests are

educated. Suffice it to say, that when I had attained my seventeenth year, my father sent me, under the care of an aged priest, to complete my education in Greece, that I might be initiated in the Eleusinian and other mysteries. In this tour I employed two years; and learnt all that the several *mysteries* could teach me, and returned with the conviction, that I was equally ignorant of every valuable knowledge as at my departure from Egypt. My father received me with great kindness, and, finding me little elated by my acquisitions, conversed with me very freely on the insignificance of my attainments. 'To what,' said he, 'will all these high secrets avail thee? The true sage is not he who can talk of what few know, and none need or wish to be acquainted with; but he who knows how to render his life most agreeable to himself, and most useful to his fellows, who is versed in the powers of nature, and can operate things by their means, that to the ignorant appear miraculous or magical.' By such discourse as this, Lasis strove to inflame my curiosity, and excite me to diligence, that could alone, as he said, endow me with true knowledge. But fate has cut me off from the inheritance of his wisdom, by subjecting me to a passion, from which all his philosophy did not enable him to release me. This passion (the strangest and most irrational that ever tyrannised over a human breast) mastered me, and destroyed all my former plans of life, frustrated all my efforts to render myself worthy the cares of Lasis, and chained me languishing and inactive to the feet of a statue." "A statue?" exclaimed the youth of the tower, in a tone at once expressive of mirth and amazement:

"Hear me out," said Osmandy: "After my return from Greece, Lasis left his apartment at all times open to me, into which, previous to this, I had never entered but at his summons. Adjoining to this chamber was a cabinet, which no one in the family dared to open, though it was generally unlocked, and without any fastening; every one believing that the door was guarded by a terrific spirit, who would slay any one that presumed to invade this sanctuary. On me, a mere prohibition of my father would have been a greater restraint than the fear of this tremendous spirit. But as he had never imposed any restraint on me on this subject, curiosity impelled me to examine the contents of this mysterious cabinet; and one morning, when I was alone in the apartment, I entered it, when the first thing that caught my eye was a virgin of most divine beauty, who was sitting on a couch and playing with a dove, that seemed to nestle in her bosom. She was dressed in a long robe, which hung from her right shoulder, and was bound beneath her half-revealed bosom with a golden zone. Her arms and shoulders were bare, and the light vestment with which she was clothed, though in the Grecian manner, it afforded a complete covering to her limbs, delicately betrayed the beauty of their form and proportion. I was astonished to find so lovely a person in the cabinet of Lasis, whom his wisdom and his virtue elevated above suspicion; but though I had already seen how close an imitator art is of nature, I was deceived, and did not suspect this beautiful

form of being an image, till her remaining entirely motionless after some time made me suspect it.

"Words cannot express what took place in me at this instant, nor can any one conceive, who has not experienced it. I could not doubt that it was a lifeless image, and yet my heart persisted to think that it lived and breathed, and heard what I addressed to it. This delusion was so strong, that I remained a full half hour on my knee before it, uttering all that the most impassioned love could suggest, without venturing to touch it. Certainly, thought I, she can only be enchanted; she lives, though she does not breathe; she can hear me, though she cannot answer; she will not be ever insensible to the fervent love with which she has inspired me. I will move her by the ardour and constancy of my passion to return it; perhaps it is reserved for me to break the charms that confine her, and to become, by her possession, the happiest of men.

"So entirely, indeed, was I absorbed in this strange fantasy, that I at length seized her unresisting, but, alas! unapproving hand, and with wild, yet timid transport, pressed it with my lips.

"At this moment my father entered, and surprised me on my knees before the lifeless figure, with my face inclined on her hand. I rose at his entrance, expecting a severe reprimand; 'I see that you have become an enthusiast in the arts, Osmandy,' said he, smiling. 'I have never seen any thing in my life so adorable,' replied I, blushing. 'Adorable?' said Lasis, regarding me with attention. 'So admirable, I would have said,' stammered I.—'That may well be,' returned he; 'tis the work of a master;' and with this he terminated the conversation. However desirous I was of making a thousand enquiries about the statue, I did not presume to put any question to him; for so great was the awe of him in which I had been educated, that I was never wont to seek more of any subject than what he voluntarily communicated.

"I became every hour more confirmed in the opinion, that it was a real virgin under the power of enchantment. This belief fed my passion, and strengthened it to such a degree, that in a few days I was wholly absorbed by the thought of my statue, and was lost to every other idea.

"Meanwhile I conceive, though without discerning any affectation on his part, that my father contrived to leave me no opportunity of entering the cabinet. The consequences of this were so visible, that they could not have escaped his attention. I grew pale and melancholy, lost all appetite, and became quite changed. Lasis did not appear to notice the alteration; but at length allowed me an opportunity of passing several hours alone in the cabinet.

"The rapture with which I fell at the feet of my entranced virgin, when a second time I approached her; how fondly I embraced her; what I said to her, and how happy I felt myself, he only can conceive who has truly loved."

"This renewal of my pleasure operated so favourably on my health and spirits, that again I appeared another man. Lasis still took no notice of these revolutions; but for the ten succeeding days.

gave me opportunities to be in the cabinet, where I constantly pass one hour at the foot of my adored image. At some moments my infatuation was so entire, that I fancied she appeared affected with my addresses, and that her lips moved as if she would have said something to me. My persuasion that she was only under the influence of enchantment acquired by this delusion fresh force, and I could not refrain from declaring this belief to my father, as leaving no doubt in me. Lahiris listened patiently to me, and when I had finished, casting on me a severe look, said, 'There is indeed one enchanted, and that one is thyself. It is time, Osmandy, to terminate this ridiculous conduct: what thinkest thou thy love for a statue can avail thee?' The violence of my passion now overcame the restraints which awe of my father had opposed to it; I threw myself at his feet, besought his compassion and aid, and confessed that my love for this statue, however irrational it might be, would decide my life to happiness or misery.

"Lahiris heard me with patience, without being offended by the warmth and freedom with which I addressed him. He said every thing to me that affection for an only son could inspire, on the subject of so strange a delirium both of the head and heart.

"After this there was an interval of several weeks before we made any reference to this subject.

"Lahiris appeared particularly intent to seize every opportunity of procuring me the sight of the most beautiful virgins. Very opportunely for this purpose occurred the festival of Isis, as on that occasion all the young virgins of the city pass richly adorned in solemn procession before me. I saw some who were accounted of extraordinary beauty, though I did not admire, or even notice them. My father, after the ceremony was finished, asked me, 'whether, among all those lovely virgins, I had beheld the original of my admired statue?' No, answered I, not one who appeared to me worthy to be her slave. 'I am sorry for it,' returned Lahiris, 'since thou hast seen among them her whom I intend for thy consort.' My consort, exclaimed I, confounded at this declaration? 'She is the most amiable of all,' continued he, 'and-unless my eyes deceive me the most beautiful; at least, she is far more so than the lady of marble for whom thou hast conceived such a fancy.' That, cried I, is impossible! 'And if it were,' said Lahiris, 'a rational man is not determined in his choice of a companion by beauty; but as thou art not at present capable of a rational choice, I have employed my reason for thee.'

"This discourse overwhelmed me with fear and grief, and I cast myself at his feet. He listened patiently to me, and, seeing my emotions too violent to admit the operations of reason, left me for a while, desiring me to compose myself; that, when he returned, he might be informed of my determination on this subject.

"No sooner had he quitted the cabinet, than I threw myself at the feet of my beloved image, vowed eternal fidelity to it, though the misery of my life, or even a cruel death, should be the consequence. I now embraced her with the most rapturous passion, pres-

fed my heart to her marble bosom, covered her cold cheeks with tears and kisses, and was so little master of myself, as to fancy the acquired warmth and life from my touch.

"When *Lafiris* returned, he found me still more resolute and inflexible than before. My father, said I, I am convinced that there is something extraordinary in this statue. Either it is a real virgin reduced to this state by magic; or, if it be an inanimate mals, there exists somewhere the original of this beautiful form. In both cases my happiness hangs to this image: it will ever remain the idol of my adoration and love; and it will be impossible to tear my affections from it. Oh my father, let me be indebted to thee for my happiness! I am certain that the mystery of this lovely form is known to thee. I cannot longer sustain this state of suspense and anxiety. Tell me, I conjure thee, what I must do to obtain my beloved, and terminate my life and misery.

"Is this thy last resolve?" said my father.

"My last," answered I, unshaken.

"Then return to me to-morrow at sun-rise, and hear what I have to say to thee."

"Ere the day began to dawn, I repaired to the anti-chamber of my father; but I had yet to be tortured with an eternal hour of waiting. I counted a thousand pangs in every moment, while my eyes were fixed immoveably on that point of the heavens where the signal of my happiness was to appear. The sun at length ascended doubly luminous and welcome to me; the door of the apartment opened, and I entered: *Lafiris* said, in a placid and gracious tone, 'Since thou wilt have it so, *Osinandy*, we must part. A love, violent as thine, must be gratified or eradicated, and one or the other will be done by the means I shall suggest to thee. Dress thyself in these garments, and disguise thy face under this mask. They will give thee the appearance of a needy old man, will protect thee from violence, and procure thee pity and aid wherever thou shalt go. Here is a purse, in which thou wilt find as many drachmas as there will be days in thy pilgrimage. Go, my son, and may thy love animate thee to perieve in thy undertaking. Travel to the north-west till you reach Gaul, and seek for an old castle, of which, only three turrets remain undestroyed. There shalt thou find the term of thy wanderings, and the object of thy wishes.'

"*Lafiris* aided me to dress, and with his own hands bound on the mask, which fitted so closely, that none would have suspected that it was false. 'I see inquiries floating on thy tongue,' said *Lafiris*, 'but ask me no questions, only trust thyself to thy destiny. Do not desert thyself, and thy Genius will not abandon thee. My heart forebodes thy success. Farewell, *Osinandy*, we shall again see each other.'

"With these words he embraced me, and recommended to me to begin my journey.

"A year has revolved since I left my home. The difficulties and dangers that I have encountered would have probably subdued my constancy, and induced me to return, had I been in pursuit of

a diadem; but what I sought could not in the estimation of my heart be purchased too highly. I should be rewarded by attaining the original of my charming statue.

This morning I had expended my last draehma, and the tower had yet eluded my search. Unexpectedly I lighted on it during the storm, and in it on a friend, whom I had not hoped for; but, alas! the object of my wishes——”

“Is nearer, perhaps, than thou thinkest,” interrupted the youth. “At least you have reason to hope so, since hitherto every thing has corresponded to the predictions of thy parent. Would to heaven I had no greater cause for despair than you! Thou canst not be more happy in the arms of thy beloved image, than I have been, and might still be, had not my own folly—for why should I accuse destiny?—by depriving me of her, whom alone I love, rendered me the most unhappy of mortals.”

Ofmandy was so affected by the grief of his friend, that he forgot his own. He approached him, caught his hand, pressed it with affectionate warmth, and remained sometime silent beside him. The lovely youth did not remain long insensible to the sympathy of his new friend; and he seemed ashamed of his weakness. When Ofmandy perceived him more composed, he said, “it is sometimes an alleviation for an oppressed heart to unlace his cares into the bosom of a friend. If thou thinkest thyself able to sustain the pain of recollection, reveal to me the subject of the sorrow that consumes thee.

“Hear my tale,” answered the youth, “and judge if my case be not hopeless.

“Nature has endowed me with a tender and susceptible heart, and an inclination rather to seek my happiness in an ideal world of fancy’s creation, than in the narrow circle of human existence. My education fostered this tendency, I was brought up in solitude, and among other consequences, when I arrived at manhood, I took aversion to the female part of the creation. About this time, among a collection of curious manuscripts made by my father, I found some which treated of the *habitants of the several elements*; a race of beings between men and angels, who, when I became acquainted with them, had quite other charms for me than the residents of this gross, impure earth. When I had learnt the possibility of arriving at the closest intimacy with this sublime order of beings, was any thing more natural than that I should form the resolution (which I did in my sixteenth year) of renouncing all commerce with the daughters of men, and by a consecration of myself, to attain the exalted happiness of being beloved by a Sylphid. My mother, a woman of great beauty and virtue, and my only sister, the exact copy of the former both in mind and person, were alone excepted from my general aversion to the sex. The accounts which I had heard of the depraved manners of the women who resided in the cities around me, nourished my contempt and aversion for the sex, and threw me entirely into the contemplation of the invisible world. My father, when he became acquainted with my capricious dislike of women,

highly disapproved it, and laboured by every means to overcome it. My sister too seized every occasion of laughing at my insensibility; but neither reason nor raillery, effected any change in my sentiments.

"Nine weeks have now past since, in a lonely ramble among these regions, a white dove of uncommon beauty rose from a bush before me. Her flights were so short and low, and she so often suffered me to approach almost within reach of her, that I did not despair of overtaking her. My hopes were continually disappointed and continually renewed, and I followed her till night sheltered her from my views. I found myself in so thick and pathless a wilderness, that, though I was sensible I could not be very distant from my father's house, yet I could not determine its direction. It soon grew too dark for me to think of returning; left, bewildered as I was, I might probably be much more so, and I apprehended being obliged to pass the night without shelter, when I was led by a sudden light to this tower. I entered; and, by favour of a glimmering lamp, perceived the stair-case: I ascended it, and arrived at this chamber, where I found a young nymph, who lay slumbering on this couch. A loose robe of azure silk covered her from the shoulders to the feet. It was formed in the Grecian fashion, and was bound beneath her bosom, the beauties of which shone through a veil of purple.

"My instant, and only conception was, that I beheld before me one of those divine beings, whose mere idea had for several years turned all earthly charms into deformities in my eyes, and had rendered the most beauteous of their sex odious to me. The emotions that this heavenly spectacle excited in me, confirmed me in my conjecture. I stood silent, motionless, and hardly daring to breathe before her. I know not how long I were in this trance of admiration and delight; for when the divine form vanished, it seemed to me but an instant."

"Alas, my poor friend!" cried Osmandy, "was it then but a dream?"

"Quite otherwise," replied the youth, "she waked, raised herself from the couch, observed me with attention, and then making a motion with her hand, which I did not comprehend, suddenly vanished. I stood in an instant surrounded with the most profound darkness, and seemed as if I should have sunk to the ground had I not been supported by invisible hands. For some moments I lost all perception, and when I regained my senses found myself on the couch, which had just before been pressed by the lovely nymph. The morn beamed through the window; I looked round, and recognized the chamber; but of its lovely habitant was there no trace.

"I left the tower, and returned to my father's mansion. I told how I had been led astray and benighted, and how I had found a ruined tower, where I had sheltered myself. No one knew of such a tower; but all observed an alteration in my appearance, and harassed me with enquiries concerning what I had seen.

"I retired to my room, and passed the day in reflection on my adventure. And at night, instead of seeking my chamber, I hastened to the forest, and endeavoured, as well as the twilight per-

mitted, to pursue the path, by which I had returned from the tower; but the increasing obscurity would have prevented my continuing any constant road, had I not seen a faint light before me, which I resolved to make my guide. It continually fled, as I advanced, and in a short time conducted me within sight of the tower, which the moon, now rising above the trees, pointed out to me when the light was vanished.

"Think on my extacy, when, at the distance of about forty paces, I saw the form, that had so enchanted me the ensuing evening, seated on the fragment of a broken pillar. Her dress was the same as before; but her veil thrown back presented me a more lovely face than I could have conceived. She sat leaning her cheek on her left arm, and gazed on the moon, as if she beheld in it the image of her beloved. As soon as she perceived me, she covered herself with her veil, and advanced towards me. 'Dost thou seek any one, Clodio?' said she, in a tone that was echoed through my heart. Whom should I seek but thyself, heavenly being? said I. 'Is this adulation, or is it the voice of thy heart?' asked she, smiling graciously. I confess I have long known thee, and my friendship for thee is mature.' I interrupted her by throwing myself at her feet, and kissing her offered hand with uncontrolled transport. She bade me rise, and, as the night was uncommonly warm and fine, led me into the regions behind the castle, which, among all their variety, simplicity and freedom, displayed too much harmony, correspondence, and choice, to conceal the hand of art.

"The varied beauties of this enchanted spot, illuminated by the silver rays of the moon; the odorous gale which breathed from every side; and the presence of my adorable nymph, plunged my senses and fancy into a delicious delirium, and I imagined myself transported into fairy land.

"My unknown fair entertained me, as we wandered through this fascinating spot, with such delightful discourse, as gave me the most exalted opinion of her understanding and fancy, and all with a frankness and confidence as if we were brother and sister. The morn began to enpurple the eastern heaven; she perceived it, and said: we must now separate, but if my society have any charms for thee, thou mayest enjoy it every night, by repairing at the hour of twilight to this tower. She then pointed out to me a path on the other side of the ruins, which in less than an hour conducted me to my residence. After accompanying me some part of the way, she disappeared so suddenly, that I proceeded several steps without missing her. I used the permission which my unknown fair had given me; and fortunately not any of the family seemed to view my conduct with suspicion. I passed some weeks in the regular enjoyment of the most fascinating converse with my unknown fair, and I expressed to her all I felt towards her. She confessed to me in one of these moments of tender effusion, that from her first sight of me she had resolved to bestow on me her heart and person, should she, on examination, find me worthy her choice. She owned too, that my contempt for the earthly fair, and my love for the more

refined beings of the elements, had raised me in her esteem; but she persisted to make her name and nature a secret to me.

"It is now above five weeks since, repairing as usual, full of fervent but respectful love, to our wonted place of meeting, I sought her in vain among the ruins, or walks of the garden; at length I found her on the couch in the chamber, where I had first been blest with her sight. A slight rain which had fallen in the evening induced her to this precaution, as she said, for my health, which might suffer by exposure to the damps of the earth and the night air. I spoke with rapture of the joys of love, and of the blissful hopes she had encouraged me to; and, for the first time ventured to express, the impatient expectations that fired me. She did not resent my boldness, but bade me wait seven days without murmur. Seven days, idol of my heart, cried I, falling at her feet, will be seven ages torture to me. Make my trial cruel as thou wilt, I will endure it without repining; but, oh! do not let it be thus eternal. At length, she was prevailed on to reduce the seven days into three. 'Employ this time,' said she, 'in examining thy heart, and judging if it be capable of so pure and constant an affection as beings of my nature require. I exist only in thee, but in return I demand that thy heart shall be wholly mine. If thou think me worth this sacrifice, and find thyself capable of enduring the test, return hither on the third night from the present, and we will exchange vows of eternal constancy. But now let me quit thee!' Do not ask it, goddess of my soul, cried I, clasping her with passionate ardour; let me here at thy feet—

"At this instant, the magic-day that filled the chamber, died into the utmost darkness, and my fair unknown melted from my embrace. In vain I felt for her every where in the apartment: she was gone, and I was obliged to console myself with the hope of a recompense for my patience at the expiration of the three days.

"These three days were a chasm in my existence. The wished for evening at length came, and I hastened earlier than usual to the forest; but my senses were confused, and I was unable to discover the path, which the nymph had pointed out, though I sought most solicitously. At length I was bewildered in the forest, and was surprised by darkness before I had discovered any signs of the tower, at which I never had been so impatient to arrive.

"At length I perceived a light, and ran towards it, in the hopes that it would direct me to my wishes. It led me for some time in a kind of labyrinth, and vanished, having conducted me to the door of a palace, from which, issued a servant, richly dressed, asked me if my name were Clodio? I had no sooner answered, than he flew into the palace, with an exclamation of joy. In an instant the portals were thrown open, and six virgins, magnificently attired, preceded by twelve slaves bearing torches, came out, and took me by the hand, to lead me into the palace. I entreated them to excuse my declining their invitation, said, that I had wandered from my path, that I was expected elsewhere, and could not delay my departure an instant. 'Pardon us, my lord,' returned one of the

virgins, 'you are arrived where you have been impatiently expected.'—'You mock me,' cried I, angrily, 'I know none in this palace, who could expect me? and am losing here the most precious moments of my existence.' With these words I would have quitted them; but the virgins threw themselves on their knees around me, and said, 'What we solicit from you, generous knight, is what can be effected by you only; it will detain you but a few instants, and it is what no one of your rank and character can refuse to the supplications of the unfortunate. Overcome by their importunities, and seeing no way to disengage myself, I consented to their request, and followed them, though with inward discontent and vexation.

"They led me through a long gallery, splendidly illuminated, and through various apartments, the last of which had no light, but what it received from a dim lamp. At the upper end were folding doors that opened into another room, and beside them stood two giants with enormous clubs to guard the entrance. I stopped and turned to the virgins, who were my guides, and told them that I was unarmed; when at that instant a dragon descended from the ceiling with a flaming sword in his mouth. I seized the weapon, and rushed towards the gigantic forms, who lifted their ponderous clubs; but as I drew near, sunk to the earth. I now passed into a hall lined with black, which, from a cupola that seemed vaulted with fire, received a blue sulphurous light, that rendered the darkness below more horrible. Beneath the dome stood a bier covered with black velvet, that hung to the ground. Six blacks in yellow habits, with black plumes in their turbans, and scimitars drawn in their hands, stood in menacing attitudes round the bier; but as I advanced with the flaming sword to encounter them, they sunk to the ground and disappeared. Two of the virgins who had accompanied me, removed the pall, and beckoned me to her. I did, and beheld, by the dismal light, a young lady of extraordinary beauty lying in a coffin, with an arrow plunged up to the pinion in her left breast. As I shrunk with horror from this piteous sight, the virgin thus addressed me: 'You see before you the unfortunate person, whose deliverance from her present condition is reserved for you. This young princess unhappily inspired a powerful genius with a violent passion for her. As he is not less odious than she is amiable, her aversion was equal to his love. After having persecuted her with his hateful suite, and finding all his offers scorned, he determined on vengeance. He conveyed her by his power to this hall, placed her in the coffin, and plunged the arrow in her breast. For more than a year past he has visited her every morn, and drawn the shaft from her bosom. The wound instantly heals, and he urges her the whole day with his abhorred passion; but as she remains immovable in her aversion, he every evening drives the arrow into her breast, places her in the coffin, and retires. Beside the guard of Moors and giants, whom he set over her, he has affixed a talisman to the palace, which renders it invisible; and, if this proves insufficient, he removes it every day to a different place. Yet all these provisions have not

prevented its being in your power, noble stranger, to terminate the captivity of the princefs. A vifion informed me, that her deliverance could only be achieved by a young knight, named Clodio, who, guided by fuperior powers, fhould elude and vanquifh the enchantments of our tyrant. After long expectation, noble knight, you are arrived; and are doubtlefs the fame whom the vifion announced. Your difcovery of the palace, the magic fword, and, above all, your valour and fuccefs, affure us of it, and promife a happy conclufion. No power on the earth, but the Genius's and your own, can extract that arrow from the bofom of our unhappy princefs: if it fucceed, the power of the tyrant ceafes. I approached the fair form, whofe beauty was fo dazzling, that I did not obferve her attentively. With mingled expectation and horror I grafped the dart, and with fome labour drew it from her breaft. Immediately the gloomy light was quenched in utter darknefs: a burft of thunder fhook the whole edifice; and, for fome time, I was wrapped in a thick pitchy cloud. At length it diffipated, and I found myfelf in a magnificent hall, fplendidly illuminated, and hung with blue velvet; the bier was replaced by a fumptuous throne, on which I beheld the fair Diana, in the attitude of one recovered from a long trance. She rofe to retire, and, while leaning on two of her virgins, fhe slowly paffed me, caft on me a look of tendernes that penetrated into my heart. My eyes involuntarily purfued her till fhe left the hall.

"Amazed with the fucceffion of ftrange circumftances, I was fome minutes forgetful of the tower, and of my fair unknown: at length I was preparing to depart, when one of the virgins returned, and begged me in the name of her miftrefs not to leave the palace, till fhe had expreffed her fenfe of the fervice I had rendered her.

"Painful as this new delay was to me, it feemed impoffible to avoid it. They fet before me a collation on a table of ebony fupported by golden feet. My long wandering in the foreft, had fo enfeebled and exhausted me, that fome minutes repofe and refrefhment was neceffary to me. At length I perceived the morn break, and faw, with inexprcffible pain, that the time for meeting my fair unknown was elapfed. The thought of having violated the appointment drove me to madnefs. What muft fhe conclude of my love? In this tumult and vexation of fpirit, the virgin found me, when fhe returned to conduct me to her miftrefs. I followed her with a vifible expreffion of difcontent and uneafinefs; but the firft ray of Diana's eyes, diffipated every fhade of fadnefs and anger that clouded my afpect, and all was ferenity and joy. Whatever might be the confequences of this adventure, I could not but congratulate myfelf on having been, in the hands of a higher power, of fuch effential fervice to fo amiable a perfon. My myfterious miftrefs, thought I, will commend my neglect, when fhe knows the caufe of it.

"I found the lovely Diana feated on a fofa; fhe invited me to fit befide her, and thanked me, for the fervice I had rendered her. The found of her voice ftrangely affected me: it was not that of my beloved fylph, but it refembled it, and this refemblance ex-

deared her to me. Her glances were arrows of love, that pierced directly to the heart; but their wounds were too pleasant to be avoided or counteracted. Imagine a face embellished with every charm; conceive it the impression of the most insinuating sensibility; fancy a gentle, tender smile, floating on the lips and cheeks, that alternately reigned and yielded to the most interesting languor; and say, if it were possible for mortal to remain unconquered."

It was difficult to withdraw the eyes from so amiable a creature; but I did not spare attempts to tear myself from the enchanting spectacle. Her dress was a delightful union of pomp, elegance, and simplicity. Her ebon hair, adorned with pearls, hung like an unpropped vine in luxuriant clusters on her ivory neck and shoulders, and her bosom was less concealed than is common to the sex, as if to convince her deliverer, that no ruinous trace remained of the accursed dart. Confess, Osmandy, that my constancy was put to a fiery test! I felt my danger; and my agitation betrayed more anxiety than tenderness. She enquired about the subject of my uneasiness, and added with a tender sigh, that she should be inconsolable if my generous efforts in her deliverance had cost me a sacrifice greater than she could replace to me. This address threw me into wild commotion, and I had almost invoked my adored Sylph to sustain my sinking constancy. I renewed in my heart all my vows of fidelity; but every glance at the fair Diana rendered me faithless. I felt that flight alone could save me: and yet was I so infatuated, that I had not the power to fly.

Every moment magnified the danger, and it was by a series of most violent efforts that I was at length able to resolve on departure. I told her, as she was now safe from her prosecutor, I would discharge her of my presence: an affair of the highest value to me, requiring my attendance at a place, where I was expected the preceding evening, when accident led me to the gates of her palace. She said, 'she should for ever accuse herself, if by obliging her I should cost myself the least sacrifice: that what she was already indebted to me, gave her no right to expect new complaisances on my part, and if I would gratify her with my company only for the day (she added with a smile), she would surrender me at eve to those who had a prior right to me.'

In short, I yielded to her intreaties, and, after having suffered her to gain this victory over me, was conducted to a chamber, that I might recreate myself by a few hours repose.

"About noon, I was again invited to the fair Diana, whom I found in a superb saloon that opened to the garden, surrounded by her virgins, and attired in an Oriental dress. I felt all my firmness melt beneath her glance, and could scarcely refrain from throwing myself at her feet. After the repast, which consisted of the richest and rarest fruits, she challenged me to chess; and, if her design were to assail me in a narrow circle with the collected force of all her charms, and thus complete her conquest of my reason, her plan could not have been chosen with more art. You may conceive, how often I was mated, and will judge, that Diana

had little cause to thank her skill in the game for her success; but the more for this her eyes glittered with exultation at the triumph of her seductive arts.

"The approaching evening invited us to enjoy its beauties in the gardens of the palace, which were of vast extent, and embraced whatever nature possesses of the grand, the beautiful, and fantastic. Insensibly we were left by the attendants, who had for some time accompanied us; the soft perfumes of the gardens, the warbling of the birds, who seemed to chant an hymeneal; the love-inspiring whispers of the zephyrs, the sweet confusion of light and shade, which equally conspired to lull us to repose and languor, insensibly I pressed Diana's consenting hand against my throbbing heart; insensibly I imbibed from her love-melting eyes an entire oblivion of the past and future; and ere we knew where we were, we found ourselves in a temple of white marble, that stood inclosed with a grove of myrtles.

"I see thou tremblest for me, Osmandy, and I blush to proceed. The lovely Diana sunk on a sofa, and I fell at her feet, and was devouring her hand with kisses, when suddenly the whole temple appeared in flames, a loud clap of thunder shook the ground, Diana vanished from my arms, and the voice of my unknown fair, in an indignant tone, exclaimed, 'Perfidious youth, thou hast lost me for ever.'

"Spare me the rest of my sad tale, I have not strength to support the renewal of that fatal night; since which I have been the most miserable of men. Alas! but for this, I should have been the most blessed. I am too convinced that it was my adored Sylph, who in the character of Diana, unveiled herself to me, and by all her charms, of which I had beheld in the tower but a few rays, and by every seduction of time, circumstance, and manner, laboured to render me unfaithful to herself. Cruel fair! how could she expose to my heart such a test?

"She will not, she cannot remain implacable," said Osmandy, "That she loves thee is evident, and——"

"Thou dost not know," interrupted the desponding Clodio, "the jealous delicacy of beings of her nature. They are inexorable to the image of infidelity. Alas! forgiveness of my crime is hopeless. Renouncing all hope of happiness, I devoted myself to lamentation and despair, and shut myself in this tower, which I have never since quitted.

One of the masked personages, who, during all this discourse, had remained in the anti-chamber, whispered these words to the other: "it is now time for us to finish our work and retire." On this the other drew a small flask from beneath his mantle, hid to the upper part of the tower, came down immediately, and with the former, stole away as unperceived as they had arrived.

"I cannot think," said Osmandy, "that your mistress can be so obdurate, as not to pardon a crime so deeply lamented. But permit me, since you have reminded me of it, to ask the source of

your acquaintance with Lafiris and Osmandy, have you ever been in Egypt?"

"Before I answer thee," returned the youth, "let me entreat thee to partake with me of what I can set before thee. We both need some refreshment."—With this he opened the secret closet, and drew from it some fruits together with a flask of wine, which he had not before perceived. "My invisible purveyor," said he, "seems to have reckoned on my guest by the unusual abundance of the provisions."

"A sudden thought strikes me," said the youth of the castle; as the gloom of anxiety fled before the cheerfulness of the table: "how say you, if your beloved statue, should be of my acquaintance, and indeed, my nearest relative?—The Egyptian gazed at him with amazement and expectation.—"At least, continued the other, "the idea is plausible, as thou wilt confess, when I relate to thee the origin of my acquaintance with thy family."

"It is now the third year since the death of my excellent mother. My father, though esteemed the wisest of men, found in the whole magazine of his philosophy nothing that consoled him for his loss. He intimated to me and my sister, who was then about fifteen years of age, that we should prepare for a long journey. 'I will voyage to Egypt,' said he, 'and confirm my fortitude in the arms of my friend Lafiris.' I learnt on this occasion, that they had known each other in early youth, and during more than forty years, notwithstanding absence and vast distance, had cultivated the closest friendship. We were received by the venerable Lafiris with every testimony of joy. The two sages found in meeting, after a separation of so many years, a renewal of their youth; and their mutual communications were so reciprocally delightful, that my father was easily persuaded to remain a whole year. Thou wert then traversing Greece; and I, entered into the temple of Isis, to be initiated into your mysteries, where I passed the greater part of the time. Thy sister, at our arrival, was with a relation of her mother's, and I had shut myself up in the temple of Isis before she returned; so that owing to this, and to my aversion to the sex, I have never seen her. But between her and Matilda there grew so warm an affection, that they soon became inseparable, and when a separation began to be spoken of, it was found that either Matilda must remain, or thy sister proceed to my father's castle. Thy father consented to part with his daughter, on condition, that his friend should leave with him the statue of Matilda. My father, among various arts and secrets which he possesses, is skilled in statuary, and has discovered a method of tinging marble with hues, that enable it to emulate life. A Grecian artist, who had accompanied him, prepared the work, which my father perfected; and this must be the form that so attracted thy wonder in the cabinet of Lafiris."

Here the youth of the castle noticed a singular incident, which was no less, than that his young friend had not been kept awake by a tale, so interesting to him. This event appeared unaccountably

to him: but while he was reflecting on it, he himself yielded to the power of sleep, and sunk unconscious on the couch behind him.

Their sleep continued some time, and both waking about the same time, what was their amazement and joy, when Olmandy beheld his beloved statue, and Clodio his adored Sylph. Olmandy beheld his statue on the same couch, with her dove on her bosom, and breathing and looking love, as he had so often seen her in the cabinet of his father. Clodio saw his celestial fair in her azure robe and purple veil, as she was wont to appear to him in the tower. Both feared to trust their eyes and their wishes; yet both rushed to throw themselves in speechless rapture at the feet of their idols, when a concealed door sprang open, and the majestic sages, Lasiris and Aranes, entered hand in hand, and by their sudden appearance fixed them in dumb amazement. Aranes seized the hand of the young Egyptian, and, smiling, said to him. "animate her, if thou canst, and be happy!" At the same time Lasiris led the youth of the castle to his supposed Sylph, and, drawing aside the veil, said, "let your forgiveness be mutual, your mutual offences will but heighten and confirm your love and felicity."

The moments that ensued were such as spurn description. Olmandy, sinking in the arms of his beloved image, felt with ecstasy her heart, for the first time, beat against his own. Clodio needed all the fire of love, that streamed on him from the eyes of the tender Diana, to feel himself in the embrace of his austere Sylph, without expiring with rapture. Never had love made four mortals so blest: and never had two fathers enjoyed to such a height in the transports of their children, the accomplishment of their favourite project.

The hospitable tower was too confined for so much happiness, and they descended to the garden, which, behind the ruins, fell by a gentle slope into the plain. The lovely Naomi pointed out to him a winding path, leading to the palace of the supposed fairy, which had been concealed from him in his rambles, by a grove of poplars.

After some time they entered the marble temple, and seated themselves on the cushions which were placed around it. Aranes, who read in the eyes of the young men their curiosity to learn what was incomprehensible to them in this blissful adventure, began to gratify it by a full explanation.

"The friendship betwixt myself and Lasiris was built on so solid a basis, that never, perhaps, did affection so strong subsist between two men. No sooner did we see ourselves blest each with a son and daughter, than we resolved; if possible, to unite the two families by a double marriage. We did not consult your inclinations; we knew that your happiness would depend on your own hearts. In the late visit which I made to Lasiris, the desire of uniting our families was renewed with redoubled warmth. But the son of Lasiris was absent, and to Clodio, who from his childhood had nourished such an aversion to the daughters of the earth, it would have been dangerous to shew him the amiable daughter of Lasiris, though she might inspire him with an immortal love as one of his fantastic beings. Olmandy

was suffered to continue his travels, and Clodio was left undisturbed in his whimsical phantasy. Naomi had opportunities of seeing my son without being observed by him, and Matilda needed but the assurance that Osmandy resembled his sister, to conceive a sufficient partiality for him. However certain we might esteem ourselves of succeeding in our project, we concerted the double adventure, which has terminated so favorably to our wishes. Osmandy's affections were engaged to his future consort as a statue; and Clodio was enamoured of Naomi as a Sylph. The year which you, my son, employed in your journey, gave me sufficient time for all my preparations. The wildest part of the forest near my mansion, was changed into the dwelling of the supposed fairy, and the pavillion, which after thy return was the usual residence of the two sisters, was so situated among the surrounding gardens, that Naomi could perform her double character without difficulty; and your supposition that a spot like this could not have remained unknown without magic, was confirmed by all the household having the strictest injunctions to profess ignorance, whenever your curiosity impelled you to make any enquiries respecting the wondrous place." "As for the wine that contained a sleeping potion, was conveyed there by me," said Naomi, who had arrived with Matilda at the castle in disguise, just after Osmandy, and heard best part of their discourse.

"And that there has been no forcery in the proceedings at the enchanted castle," continued she, with a smile, "Clodio will be convinced, when he receives this magic feat, together with the Moors, giants, dragons, and other apparatus, which accompany the heart and hand of Diana herself.

THE
ROBBER'S DAUGHTER;
OR, THE
PHANTOM OF THE GROTTO.

ABOUT the distance of three miles from the Black Forest, in Germany, was once situated a strong free-booter's hold, which was occupied by a knight named *Wilibald*; he was the flower of free-booters, and the terror of all who ventured along the roads. The moment his sword was girt about his loins, and his spurs tinkled at his heels, his heart was steel'd to bloodshed and to rapine.