

Tales and Novels of J. de La Fontaine — Volume 05 eBook

Tales and Novels of J. de La Fontaine — Volume 05 by Jean de La Fontaine

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Page 1

Title: The Tales and Novels, v5: The Princess Bethrothed to Garba

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*The tales and novels
of
J. De La Fontaine*

Volume 5.

*The princess betrothed to the
king of Garba*

*What various ways in which a thing is told
Some truth abuse, while others fiction hold;
In stories we invention may admit;
But diff'rent 'tis with what historick writ;
Posterity demands that truth should then
Inspire relation, and direct the pen.*

*Alaciel's story's of another kind,
And I've a little altered it, you'll find;
Faults some may see, and others disbelieve;
'Tis all the same:—'twill never make me grieve;
Alaciel's mem'ry, it is very clear,
Can scarcely by it lose; there's naught to fear.
Two facts important I have kept in view,*



In which the author fully I pursue;
The one—no less than eight the belle possessed,
Before a husband's sight her eyes had blessed;
The other is, the prince she was to wed
Ne'er seemed to heed this trespass on his bed,
But thought, perhaps, the beauty she had got
Would prove to any one a happy lot.

HOWE'ER this fair, amid adventures dire,
More sufferings shared than malice could desire;
Though eight times, doubtless, she exchanged her knight
No proof, that she her spouse was led to slight;
'Twas gratitude, compassion, or good will;
The dread of worse;—she'd truly had her fill;
Excuses just, to vindicate her fame,
Who, spite of troubles, fanned the monarch's flame:
Of eight the relict, still a maid received ;—
Apparently, the prince her pure believed;
For, though at times we may be duped in this,
Yet, after such a number—strange to miss!
And I submit to those who've passed the scene,
If they, to my opinion, do not lean.



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The king of Alexandria, Zarus named,
A daughter had, who all his fondness claimed,
A star divine Alaciel shone around,
The charms of beauty's queen were in her found;
With soul celestial, gracious, good, and kind,
And all-accomplished, all-complying mind.

The, rumour of her worth spread far and wide,
The king of Garba asked her for his bride,
And Mamolin (the sov'reign of the spot,)
To other princes had a preference got.

The fair, howe'er, already felt the smart
Of Cupid's arrow, and had lost her heart;
But 'twas not known: princesses love conceal,
And scarcely dare its whispers fond reveal;
Within their bosoms poignant pain remains,
Though flesh and blood, like lasses of the plains.

The noble Hispal, one of zarus' court,
A handsome youth, as histories report,
Alaciel pleased; a mutual flame arose,
Though this they durst not venture to disclose
Or, if expressed, 'twas solely by the eyes:—
Soul-speaking language, nothing can disguise!

Affianced thus, the princess, with a sigh,
Prepared to part, and fully to comply.
The father trusted her to Hispal's care,
Without the least suspicion of the snare;
They soon embarked and ploughed the briny main;
With anxious hopes in time the port to gain.

When they, from Egypt's coast had sailed a week;
To gain the wind they saw a pirate seek,
Which having done, he t'wards them bore in haste,
To take the ship in which our fair was placed.

The battle quickly raged; alike they erred;
The pirates slaughter loved, and blood preferred,
And, long accustomed to the stormy tide,
Were most expert, and on their skill relied.
In numbers, too, superior they were found;
But Hispal's valour greatly shone around,



And kept the combat undecided long;
At length Grifonio, wond'rous large and strong;
With twenty sturdy, pirates got on board,
And many soon lay gasping by the sword.
Where'er he trod, grim death and horroureign'd;
At length, the round the noble Hispal gained.
His nervous arm laid many wretches low
Rage marked his eyes, where'er he dealt a blow:

But, while the youth was thus engaged in fight,
Grifonio ran to gain a sweeter sight;
The princess was on board full well he knew;
No time he lost, but to her chamber flew;
And,



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since his pleasures seemed to be her doom;
He bore her like a sparrow from the room:
But not content with such a charming fair,
He took her diamonds, ornaments for hair,
And those dear pledges ladies oft receive,
When they a lover's ardent flame believe.
Indeed, I've heard it hinted as a truth,
(And very probable for such a youth,)
That Hispal, while on board, his flame revealed;
And what chagrin she felt was then concealed,
The passage thinking an improper time,
To shew a marked displeasure at his crime.

The pirate-chief who carried off his prey,
Had short-lived joy, for, wishing to convey
His charming captive from the ship with speed;
One vessel chanced a little to recede,
Although securely fastened by the crew,
With grappling hooks, as usually they do,
When quite intent to pass, young Hispal made
A blow, that dead at once the ruffian laid;
His head and shoulders, severed from the trunk;
Fell in the sea, and to the bottom sunk,
Abjuring Mahomet, and all the tribe
Of idle prophets, Catholics proscribe;
Erect the rest upon the legs remained;
The very posture as before retained;
This curious sight no doubt a laugh had raised,—
But in the moment, she, so lately praised,
With dread Grifonio, fell beyond their view;
To save her, straight the gallant Hispal flew.
The ships, for want of pilots at the helm,
At random drifted over Neptune's realm.

*Grim*death the pirate forced to quit his slave;
Buoyed up by clothes, she floated on the wave,
'Till Hispal succour lent, who saw 'twas vain
To try with her the vessel to regain.
He could, with greater ease, the fair convey
To certain rocks, and thither bent his way;
Those rocks to sailors oft destruction proved,
But now the couple saved, who thither moved:



'Tis even said the jewels were not lost,
But sweet Alaciel, howsoever tost,
Preserved the caskets, which with strings were tied;
And seizing these, the treasure drew aside.

Ourswimmer on his back the princess bore;
The rock attained; but hardships were not o'er;
Misfortunes dire the noble pair pursued
And famine, worst of ills, around was viewed.
No ship was near; the light soon passed away;
The night the same; again appeared the day;
No vessel hove in sight; no food to eat;
Our couple's wretchedness seemed now complete;
Hope left them both, and, mutual passion moved,
Their situation more tormenting proved.



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Longtime in silence they each other eyed
At length, to speak the lovely charmer tried
Said she, 'tis useless, Hispal, to bewail:
Tears, with the cruel Parcae, naught avail;
Each other to console be now our aim;
Grim death his course will follow still the same.
To mitigate the smart let's try anew;
In such a place as this few joys accrue.

Consoleeach other, say you? Hispal cried;
What can console when forced one's love to hide?
Besides, fair princess, ev'ry way 'tis clear,
Improper 'twere for you to love while here;
I equally could death or famine brave;
But you I tremble for, and wish to save.

Thesewords so pained the fair, that gushing tears
Bedewed Alaciel's cheeks, her looks spoke fears;
The ardent flame which she'd so long concealed;
Burst forth in sighs, and all its warmth revealed;
While such emotion Hispal's eyes expressed,
That more than words his anxious wish confessed.
These tender scenes were followed by a kiss,
The prelude sweet of soft enchanting bliss;
But whether taken, or by choice bestowed,
Alike 'twas clear, their heaving bosoms glowed.

Thosevows now o'er, said Hispal with a sigh,
In this adventure, if we're doomed to die,
Indiff'rent surely 'tis, the prey to be
Of birds of air, or fishes of the sea;
My reason tells me ev'ry grave's the same,
Return we must, at last, from whence we came,
Here ling'ring death alone we can expect;
To brave the waves 'tis better to elect;
I yet have strength, and 'tis not far to land;
The wind sets fair: let's try to gain the strand;
From rock to rock we'll go: I many view,
Where I can rest; to *this* we'll bid adieu.

To move, Alaciel readily agreed;
Again our couple ventured to proceed;
The casket safe in tow; the weather hot;
From rock to rock with care our swimmer got;



The princess, anxious on his back to keep:—
New mode of traversing the wat'ry deep.

*With*Heav'n's assistance, and the rocks for rest,
The youth, by hunger and fatigue oppressed,
Uneasiness of mind, weighed down with care,
Not for himself, but safety of the fair,
A fast of two long tedious days now o'er,
The casket and the belle he brought on shore:



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I *think* you cry—how wond'rously exact,
To bring the casket into ev'ry act!
Is that a circumstance of weight I pray?
It truly seems so, and without delay,
You'll see if I be wrong; no airy flight,
Or jeer, or raillery, have I in sight.
Had I embarked our couple in a ship
Without or cash or jewels for the trip,
Distress had followed, you must be aware;
'Tis past our pow'r to live on love or air;
In vain *affection* ev'ry effort tries
Inexorable hunger *all* defies.

The casket, with the diamonds proved a source,
To which 'twas requisite to have recourse;
Some Hispal sold, and others put in pawn,
And purchased, near the coast, a house and lawn;
With woods, extensive park, and pleasure ground;
And many bow'rs and shady walks around,
Where charming hours they passed, and this 'twas plain,
Without the casket they could n'er obtain.

Beneath the wood there was a secret grot,
Where lovers, when they pleased, concealment got,
A quiet, gloomy, solitary place,
Designed by nature for the billing race.

One day, as through the grove a walk they sought,
The god of love our couple thither brought;
His wishes, Hispal, as they went along,
Explained im part by words direct and strong;
The rest his sighs expressed, (they spoke the soul;)—
The princess, trembling, listened to the whole.

Said he, we now are in a place retired,
Unknown to man, (such spots how oft desired!)
Let's take advantage of the present hour:
No joys, but those of *love*, are in our pow'r;
All others see withdrawn! and no one knows
We even live; perhaps both friends and foes
Believe us in the belly of a whale;
Allow me, lovely princess, to prevail;
Bestow your kindness, or, without delay,
Those charms to Mamolin let me convey.



Yet, why go thither?—happy you could make
The man, whose constancy no perils shake,
What would you more?—his passion's ardent grown;
And surely you've enough resistance shown.

Suchtender elocution Hispal used,
That e'en to marble, 'Twould have warmth infused;
While fair Alaciel, on the bark of trees,
With bodkin wrote, apparently at ease.
But Cupid drew her thoughts to higher things,
Than merely graving what from fancy springs.
Her lover and the place, at once assured,
That such a secret would be well secured;
A tempting bait, which made her, with regret,
Resist the witching charm that her beset.



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Unluckily, 'twas then the month of May,
When youthful hearts are often led astray,
And soft desire can scarcely be concealed,
But presses through the pores to be revealed.
How many do we see, by slow degrees,
And, step by step, accord their *all* to please,
Who, at the onset, never dreamed to grant
The smallest favour to their fond gallant.
The god of love so archly acts his part,
And, in unguarded moments, melts the heart,
That many belles have tumbled in the snare,
Who, how it happened, scarcely could declare.

When they had reached the pleasing secret spot;
Young Hispal wished to go within the grot;
Though nearly overcome, she this declined;
But then his services arose to mind;
Her life from Ocean's waves, her honour too,
To him she owed; what could he have in view?
A something, which already has been shown,
Was saved through Hispal's nervous arm alone:
Said he, far better bless a real friend,
Than have each treasure rifled in the end,
By some successful ruffian; think it o'er;
You little dream for whom you guard the store.

The princess felt the truth of this remark,
And half surrendered to the loving spark;
A show'r obliged the pair, without delay,
To seek a shed:—the place I need not say;
The rest within the grotto lies concealed:—
The scenes of Cupid ne'er should be revealed.
Alaciél blame, or not—I've many known,
With less excuses, who've like favours shown.

Alone the cavern witnessed not their bliss;
In love, a point once gained, naught feels amiss,
If trees could speak that grew within the dell,
What joys they viewed—what stories they might tell!
The park, the lawn, the pleasure grounds, and bow'rs,
The belts of roses, and the beds of flow'rs,
All, all could whisper something of the kind;
At length, both longed their friends again to find,



Quite cloyed with love, they sighed to be at court;
Thus spoke the fair her wishes to support.

Loved youth, to *me* you must be ever dear;
To doubt it would ungen'rous now appear;
But tell me, pray, what's love without desire,
Devoid of fear, and nothing to acquire?
Flame unconfined is soon exhausted found,
But, thwarted in its course 'twill long abound;
I fear this spot, which we so highly prize,
Will soon appear a desert in our eyes,

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And prove at last our grave; relieve my woe;
At once to Alexandria, Hispal go;
Alive pronounced, you presently will see,
What worthy people think of you and me;
Conceal our residence, declare you came,
My journey to prepare, (your certain aim,)
And see that I've a num'rous escort sent,
To guard me from a similar event.
By it, believe me, you shall nothing lose;
And this is what I willingly would choose;
For, be I single, or in Hymen's band,
I'd have you follow me by sea and land,
And be assured, should favour I withdraw,
That I've observed in you some glaring flaw.

Wereher intentions fully as expressed,
Or contrary to what her lips confessed,
No matter which her view, 'twas very plain,
If she would Hispal's services retain,
'Twere right the youth with promises to feed,
While his assistance she so much must need:
As soon as he was ready to depart
She pressed him fondly to her glowing heart,
And charged him with a letter to the king;
This Hispal hastened to the prince to bring;
Each sail he crowded:—plied with ev'ry oar;
A wind quite fair soon brought him to shore;
To court he went, where all with eager eyes,
Demanded if he lived, amid surprise,
And where he left the princess; what her state?
These questions answered, Hispal, quite elate,
Procured the escort, which, without delay,
Though leaving him behind, was sent away:
No dark mistrust retained the noble youth;
But Zarus wished it: such appeared the truth.

Byone of early years the troop was led,
A handsome lad, and elegantly bred.
He landed with his party near the park.
And these in two divided ere 'twas dark.



Onehalf he left a guard upon the shore,
And with the other hastened to the door,
Where dwelled the belle, who daily fairer grew:
Our chief was smitten instantly at view;
And, fearing opportunity again,
Like this, perhaps, he never might obtain,
Avowed at once his passion to the fair;
At which she frowned, and told him, with an air;
To recollect his duty, and her rank:—
With equals only, he should be so frank.

Onthese occasions, prudent 'tis to show
Your disappointment by a face of woe;
Seem ev'ry way the picture of despair:—
This countenance our knight appeared to wear;
To starve himself he vowed was his design;

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To use the poniard he should ne'er incline,
For then no time for penitence would rest.-
The princess of his folly made a jest.
He fasted one whole day; she-tried in vain
To make him from the enterprise refrain.

At length, the second day she 'gan to feel,
And strong emotion scarcely could conceal.
What! let a person die her charms could save!
'Twas cruel, thus to treat a youth so brave.
Through pity, she at last, to please the chief,
Consented to bestow on him relief;
For, favours, when conferred with sullen air,
But little gratify she was aware.

When satisfied the smart gallant appeared,
And anxiously to putting off adhered,
Pretending that the wind and tide would fail;
The galleys sometimes were unfit to sail,
Repairs required; then further heard the news,
That certain pirates had unpleasant views;
To fall upon the escort they'd contrived:
At length, a pirate suddenly arrived,
Surprized the party left upon the shore,
Destroyed the whole; then sought the house for more,
And scaled the walls while darkness spread around.
The pirate was Grifonio's second found,
Who, in a trice, the noble mansion took,
And joy gave place to grief in ev'ry look.

The Alexandrian swore and cursed his lot;
The pirate soon the lady's story got,
And, taking her aside, his share required
Such impudence Alaciel's patience tired,
Who, ev'ry thing refused with haughty air;
Of this, howe'er, the robber was aware;
In Venus' court no novice was he thought;
To gain the princess anxiously he sought;
Said he, you'd better take me as a friend;
I'm more than pirate, and you'll comprehend,



As you've obliged one dying swain to fast,
You fast in turn, or you'll give way at last;
'Tis justice this demands: we sons of sea
Know how to deal with those of each degree;
Remember you will nothing have to eat,
Till your surrender fully is complete.

Nohaggling, princess pray, my word receive;
What could be done, her terror to relieve?
Above all law is might:—'twill take its course;
Entire submission is the last resource.

*Of't*what we would not, we're obliged to do,
When fate our steps with rigour will pursue.
No folly greater than to heighten pain,
When we are sensible relief is vain.
What she, through pity, to another gave,
Might well be granted when herself 'twould save.



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At length she yielded to this suitor rude:—
No grief so great, but what may be subdued.
'Twould in the pirate doubtless have been wise,
The belle to move, and thus prevent surprise;
But who, from folly in amours is free?
The god of love and wisdom ne'er agree.

While our gay pirate thought himself at ease,
The wind quite fair to sail when he might please,
Dame Fortune, sleepy only while we wake,
And slyly watching when repose we take,
Contrived a trick the cunning knave to play,
And this was put in force ere break of day.

A *Lord*, the owner of a neighb'ring seat,
Unmarried;—fond of what was nice and neat,
Without attachment, and devoid of care,
Save something new to meet among the *fair*;
Grew tired of those he long around had viewed,
Now constantly, in thought, our belle pursued.
He'd money, friends, and credit all his days,
And could two thousand men at pleasure raise:
One charming morn, together these he brought;
Said he, brave fellows, can it well be thought,
That we allow a pirate, (dire disgrace!)
To plunder as he likes before our face,
And make a slave of one whose form 's divine?
Let's to the castle, such is my design,
And from the ruffian liberate the fair;
This evening ev'ry one will here repair,
Well armed, and then in silence we'll proceed,
(By night 'tis nothing will impede,)
And ere Aurora peeps, perform the task;
The only booty that I mean to ask
Is this fair dame; but not a slave to make,
I anxiously desire to let her take
Whate'er is her's:—restore her honour too;
All other things I freely leave to you;
Men, horses, baggage, in a word, the whole
Of what the knavish rascals now control.
Another thing, howe'er:—I wish to hang
The pirate instantly, before his gang.



This speech so well succeeded to inspire,
That scarcely could the men retain their ire.

The evening came, the party soon arrived;
They ate not much, but drink their rage revived.
By such expensive treats we've armies known,
In Germany and Flanders overthrown;
And our commander was of this aware
'Twas prudent, surely, no expense to spare.

They carried ladders for the escalade,
And each was furnished with a tempered blade;
No other thing embarrassing they'd got;
No drums; but all was silent as the grot.



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*They*reached the house when nearly break of day,
The time old Morpheus' slumbers often weigh;
The gang, with few exceptions, (then asleep),
Were sent, their vigils with grim death to keep.

*The*chief hung up:—the princess soon appeared;
Her spirits presently our champion cheered;
The pirate scarcely had her bosom moved:—
No tears at least a marked affection proved;
But, by her prayers she pardon sought to gain,
For some who were not in the conflict slain;
Consoled the dying, and lamented those,
Who, by the sword, had closed their book of woes:
Then left the place without the least regret,
Where such adventures and alarms she'd met.
'Tis said, indeed, she presently forgot
The two gallants who last became her lot;
And I can easily the fact believe:
Removed from sight, but few for lovers grieve.

She, by her neighbour, was received, we're told,
'Mid costly furniture and burnished gold;
We may suppose what splendour shone around,
When all-attracting he would fain be found;
The best of wines; each dish considered rare:—
The gods themselves received not better fare:
Till then, Alaciel ne'er had tasted wine;
Her faith forbade a liquor so divine;
And, unacquainted with the potent juice,
She much indulged at table in its use.
If lately *love* disquieted her brain,
New poison now pervaded ev'ry vein;
Both fraught with danger to the *beauteous fair*,
Whose charms should guarded be with ev'ry care.

*The*princess by the maids in bed was placed;
Then thither went the host with anxious haste,
What sought he? you will ask:—mere torpid charms:—
I wish the like were clasped within my arms.
Give me as much, said one the other week,
And see if I'd a neighbour's kindness seek.
Through Morpheus' sleepy pow'r, and Bacchus' wine:
Our host, at length, completed his design.



Alaciel, when at morn, she oped her eyes,
Was quite o'ercome with terror and surprise,
No tears would flow, and fear restrained her voice;
Unable to resist, she'd got no choice.

A *night* thus passed, the wily lover said,
Must surely give a license to your bed.
The princess thought the same; but our gallant,
Soon cloyed, for other conquests 'gan to pant.



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The host one evening from the mansion went;
A friend he left himself to represent,
And with the charming fair supply his place,
Which, in the dark he thought, with easy grace,
Might be effected, if he held his tongue,
And properly behaved the whole night long.
To this the other willingly agreed;
(What friend would be refused, if thus in need?)
And this new-comer had complete success
He scarcely could his ecstasy express.

The dame exclaimed:—pray how could he pretend;
To treat me so, and leave me to a friend?
The other thought the host was much to blame;
But since 'tis o'er, said he, be now your aim,
To punish his contempt of beauteous charms;
With favours load me—take me to your arms;
Caress with fond embrace; bestow delight;
And seem to love me, though in mere despite.

She followed his advice: avenged the wrong;
And naught omitted, pleasures to prolong.
If he obtained his wishes from the fair,
The host about it scarcely seemed to care.

The sixth adventure of our charming belle,
Some writers one way, some another tell;
Whence many think that favour I have shown,
And for her, one gallant the less would own.
Mere scandal this; from truth I would nor swerve,
To please the fair: more credence I deserve;
Her husband only eight precursors had;
The fact was such;—I none suppress nor add.

The host returned and found his friend content;
To pardon him Alaciel gave consent;
And 'tween them things would equally divide
Of royal bosoms clemency's the pride.

While thus the princess passed from hand to hand
She oft amused her fancy 'mong a band
Of charming belles that on her would attend,
And one of these she made an humble friend.
The fav'rite in the house a lover had,



A smart, engaging, handsome, clever lad,
Well born, but much to violence inclined
A wooer that could scarcely be confined
To gentle means, but oft his suit began,
Where others end, who follow Cupid's plan.

*It*one day happened, that this forward spark;
The girl we speak of, met within the park,
And to a summer-house the fav'rite drew;
The course they took the princess chanced to view
As wand'ring near; but neither swain nor fair,
Suspicion had, that any one was there;
And this gallant most confidently thought,

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The girl by force, might to his terms be brought!
His wretched temper, obstacle to love,
And ev'ry bliss bestowed by heav'n above,
Had oft his hopes of favours lately marred;
And fear, with those designs, had also jarred:
The girl, howe'er, would likely have been kind,
If opportunities had pleased her mind.

*The*lover, now convinced that he was feared;
In dark designs upon her persevered.
No sooner had she entered, than our man
Locked instantly the door, but vain his plan;
To open it the princess had a key;
The girl her fault perceived, and tried to flee;
He held her fast; the charmer loudly called;
The princess came—or vainly she had squalled.

*Quit*edisaappointed: overcome with ire,
He wholly lost respect amid desire,
And swore by all the gods, that, ere they went,
The one or other should to him consent;
Their hands he'd firmly tie to have his way;
For help (the place so far) 'twere vain to pray;
To take a lot was all that he'd allow;
Come, draw, he said; to Fortune you must bow;
No haggling I request—comply; be still:
Resolved I am with one to have my will.

*Wha*thas the princess done? the girl replied,
That you, to make her suffer, thus decide
Yes, said the spark, if on her fall the lot,
Then you'll, at least for present, be forgot.

No, cried Alaciel, ne'er I'll have it said,
To sacrifice I saw a maiden led;
I'll suffer rather all that you expect,
If you will spare my friend as I direct.
'Twas all in vain, the lots were drawn at last,
And on the princess was the burthen cast;
The other was permitted to retire,



And each was sworn that nothing should transpire:
But our gallant would sooner have been hung,
Than have upon such secrets held his tongue;
'Tis clear, no longer silent he remained,
Than one to listen to his tale he'd gained.

This change of favourites the princess grieved;
That Cupid trifled with her she perceived;
With much regret she saw her blooming charms,
The Helen of too many Paris' arms.

One day it happened, as our beauteous belle
Was sleeping in a wood beside a dell,
By chance there passed, quite near, a wand'ring knight,
Like those the ladies followed with delight,
When they on palfreys rode in days of old,
And purity were always thought to hold.



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This knight, who copied those of famed romance,
Sir Roger, and the rest, in complaisance,
No sooner saw the princess thus asleep,
Than instantly he wished a kiss to reap.
While thinking, whether from the neck or lip,
'Twere best the tempting balm of bliss to sip,
He suddenly began to recollect
The laws of chivalry he should respect.
Although the thought retained, his fervent prayer
To Cupid was, that while the nymph was there,
Her fascinating charms he might enjoy;
Sure love's soft senses were ne'er designed to cloy!

The princess woke, and great surprise expressed;
Oh! charming fair, said he, be not distressed;
No savage of the woods nor giant 's nigh,
A wand'ring knight alone you now descry,
Delighted thus to meet a beauteous belle
Such charms divine, what angel can excel!

This compliment was followed by his sighs,
And frank confession, both from tongue and eyes;
Our lover far in little time could go;
At length, he offered on her to bestow,
His hand and heart, and ev'ry thing beside,
Which custom sanctions when we seek a bride.

With courtesy his offer was received,
And she related what her bosom grieved;
Detailed her hist'ry, but with care concealed
The six gallants, as wrong to be revealed.
The knight, in what he wished, indulgence got;
And, while the princess much deplored her lot,
The youth proposed Alaciel he should bring,
To Mamolin, or Alexandria's king.

To Mamolin? replied the princess fair,
No, no—I now indeed would fain repair,
(Could I my wishes have), to Zarus' court,
My native country:—thither give support.

If Cupid grant me life, rejoined the knight,
You there shall go, and I'll assist your flight;
To have redress, upon yourself depends,



As well as to requite the best of friends;
But should I perish in the bold design,
Submit you must, as wills the pow'rs divine.
I'll freely say, howe'er, that I regard,
My services enough to claim reward.

Alaci readily to this agreed;
And favours fondly promised to concede;
T'ensure, indeed, his guarding her throughout,
They were to be conferred upon the route,
From time to time as onward they should go,
Not all at once, but daily some to flow.



Page 14

Thing thus arranged, the fair behind the knight
Got up at once, and with him took to flight.
Our cavalier his servants sought to find,
That, when he crossed the wood, he left behind;
With these a nephew and his tutor rode;
The belle a palfrey took, as more the mode,
But, by her walked attentively the spark,
A tale he'd now relate; at times remark
The passing scene; then press his ardent flame;
And thus amused our royal, beauteous dame.

The treaty was most faithfully observed;
No calculation wrong; from naught they swerved.
At length they reached the sea; on ship-board got;
A quick and pleasing passage was their lot;
Delightfully serene, which joy increased;
To land they came (from perils thought released;)
At Joppa they debarked; two days remained:
And when refreshed, the proper road they gained;
Their escort was the lover's train alone;
On Asia's shores to plunder bands are prone;
By these were met our spark and lovely fair;
New dangers they, alas! were forced to share.

To cede, at first, their numbers forced the train;
But rallied by our knight they were again;
A desperate push he made; repulsed their force;
And by his valour stopt, at length, their course;
In which attack a mortal wound he got,
But was not left for dead upon the spot.

Before his death he full instructions gave,
To grant the belle whatever she might crave;
He ordered too, his nephew should convey,
Alaciel to her home without delay,
Bequeathing him whatever he possessed,
And—what the princess owed among the rest.

At length, from dread alarms and tears released,
The pair fulfilled the will of our deceased;
Discharged each favour was, of which the last
Was cancelled just as they the frontiers passed.



*The*nephew here his precious charge resigned,
For fear the king should be displeas'd to find,
His daughter guarded by a youthful swain:—
The tutor only with her could remain.

No words of mine, no language can express
The monarch's joy his child to re-possess;
And, since the difficulty I perceive,
I'll imitate old Sol's retreat at eve,
Who falls with such rapidity of view,
He seems to plunge, dame Thetis to pursue.

*The*tutor liked his own details to hear,
And entertaining made his tales appear:
The num'rous perils that the fair had fled,
Who laugh'd aside, no doubt, at what he said.



Page 15

I *should* observe, the aged tutor cried,
The princess, while for liberty she sighed,
And quite alone remained (by Hispal left,)
That she might be of idleness bereft,
Resolved most fervently a god to serve,
From whom she scarcely since would ever swerve,
A god much worshipped 'mong the people there,
With num'rous temples which his honours share,
Denominated cabinets and bow'rs,
In which, from high respect to heav'nly pow'rs,
They represent the image of a bird,
A pleasing sight, though (what appears absurd)
'Tis bare of plumage, save about the wings;
To this each youthful bosom incense brings,
While other gods, as I've been often told,
They scarcely notice, till they're growing old.

Did you but know the virtuous steps she trod,
While thus devoted to the little god,
You'd thank a hundred times the pow'rs above,
That gave you such a child to bless your love.
But many other customs there abound:—
The *fair* with perfect liberty are found:
Can go and come, whene'er the humour fits;
No eunuch (shadow like) that never quits;
But watches ev'ry movement:—always feared;
No men, but who've upon the chin a beard:
Your daughter from the first, their manners took:
So easy is her ev'ry act and look,
And truly to her honour I may say,
She's all-accommodating ev'ry way.

The king delighted seemed at what he heard;
But since her journey could not be deferred,
The princess, with a num'rous escort, tried
Again o'er seas t'wards Garba's shores to glide,
And, there arrived, was cordially received
By Mamolin, who loved, she soon believed,
To fond excess; and, all her suite to aid,
A handsome gift to ev'ry one was made.

The king with noble feasts the court regaled, At which Alaciel pleasantly detailed just what she liked, or true or false, 'twas clear; The prince and courtiers were disposed to hear.



At night the queen retired to soft repose,
From whence next morn with honour she arose;
The king was found much pleasure to express;
Alaciel asked no more, you well may guess.

By this we learn, that husbands who aver
Their wond'rous penetration often err;
And while they fancy things so very plain,
They've been preceded by a fav'rite swain.
The safest rule 's to be upon your guard;
Fear ev'ry guile; yet hope the full reward.



Page 16

*Sweet, charming fair, your characters revere;
The Mamolin's a bird not common here.
With us Love's fascination is so soon
Succeeded by the licensed honey moon,
There's scarcely opportunity to fool,
Though oft the husband proves an easy tool.*

*Your friendships may be very chaste and pure,
But strangely Cupid's lessons will allure.
Defeat his wiles; resist his tempting charms
E'en from suspicion suffer not alarms.
Don't laugh at my advice; 'twere like the boys,
Who better might amuse themselves with toys.*

*If any one, howe'er unable seem,
To make resistance 'gainst the flame supreme
Turn all to jest; though right to keep the crown
Yet lost, 'there wrong, yourself to hang or drown.*

ETEXT EDITOR'S BOOKMARKS:

Above all law is might
Ev'ry grave's the same
Favours, when conferred with sullen air, But little gratify
Historick writ
No folly greater than to heighten pain
No grief so great, but what may be subdued
Of't what we would not, we're obliged to do
Removed from sight, but few for lovers grieve
The eyes:—Soul-speaking language, nothing can disguise
The god of love and wisdom ne'er agree
Tis all the same:—'twill never make me grieve
Tis past our pow'r to live on love or air
You little dream for whom you guard the store

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