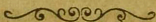


BEAUTY AND THE BEAST



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THERE was once a rich merchant, who had three boys and three girls. The daughters were handsome; but the youngest was so beautiful, that every one called her "Little Beauty," which made her sisters jealous. She was good-tempered, and spent her time usefully; while her sisters attended balls, and public places. As they had large fortunes, many merchants paid their addresses to them; but the two eldest always said they would marry only noblemen. Beauty also declined many offers, saying she was too young.

By some failure, the merchant lost his fortune. He said to his daughters, in tears, "My children, we must now dwell in a cottage, and labour for our bread." The two eldest refused, fondly hoping some one would marry them, but they were mistaken, none would look at them now. Several gentlemen offered to marry Beauty; but she now said she would never leave her poor father. The family removed to a cottage.

One day, the merchant was informed that his richest ship had just come into port. He immediately prepared to go to the vessel.

the eldest sisters begging him to bring them back gowns and trinkets. Beauty asked for nothing, which her father remarking, said, "And what shall I bring you, my child?" "A rose, father; for we have none in our garden," answered Beauty. The merchant reached the ship; but as some persons went to law with him about the cargo, he was obliged to return to the cottage. Thirty miles from home, he lost himself in a forest. Night came on; the wolves howled round him; a light appeared at the end of some trees; he made his way to it, and found that it came from a fine palace. He opened the gates, but saw no one; he went into a large hall, where he found a good fire, and a table spread with provisions. He waited till eleven o'clock, and nobody came; he now helped himself to a chicken, and wine, all the time trembling with fear. He opened another door, and went into a grand bedroom, and lay down there. In the morning, he saw a handsome new suit of clothes instead of his own. He returned to the hall, ate a good breakfast, and was going to look after his horse, when, passing an arbour loaded with roses, he thought of Beauty, and took a bunch. The same moment he heard a shocking noise, and a frightful beast came to him. "Ungrateful man!" exclaimed the beast; "I have saved your life, by letting you into my palace, and in return you



steal my roses; but for your fault you shall die in a quarter of an hour." The merchant begged for his life, saying, "I did not think it would offend your lordship, to gather a rose for one of my daughters." "I am not a lord, but a beast," replied the monster; "I hate false compliments. You tell me that you have daughters; now I will pardon you if one of them will agree to die instead of you. Go, and if your daughter should refuse, promise me that you will return in three months."

After much hesitation, the merchant promised. Upon which the beast said, "Go to the room you slept in, and you will find a chest, fill it with what you like best, and I will get it taken to your own house for you." He returned to the room, and, after filling



his chest to the brim with gold, mounted his horse, and soon reached home. His children came running round him; but he wept as he looked at them. "Take those roses, Beauty; but little do you think how dear they have cost your poor father;" after which, he gave them an account of all he had seen in the palace of the Beast. The elder sisters began to shed tears, and lay the blame upon Beauty. "See!" said they, "what happens from the pride of the little wretch." "He shall not die, now," replied Beauty, "as the Beast will accept of one of his daughters, I will give myself up to him, and so prove my love!" The merchant was so grieved at hearing this, that he quite forgot the chest of gold; at night, to his great surprise, he found it in his room.

When the three months were passed away, the merchant and Beauty went to the palace of the Beast. They found a table covered with every dainty, and two plates laid ready for them. When they had finished, they heard a great noise, and the poor old man began to bid his child farewell, for he knew the Beast was coming. Beauty was frightened at his hideous form. The Beast asked her if she had come of her own accord; she answered, "Yes." "You are a good girl," said he, "and I think myself much obliged to you." He then said to the merchant, "Good man, you may leave the palace in the morning, never to come back to it again. Good night, Beauty." He then left the room. "My dear child," said her father, "I will not leave you with this Beast; go back, and let me stay in your place." "No," said Beauty, firmly, "I will never consent to that; you must go home to-morrow morning." Beauty, charmed with everything she saw, came to a door, on which was written, "Beauty's Room." She opened it, and beheld several musical instruments.

"Alas!" said she, "there is nothing I so much desire as to see my poor father, and to know what he is doing." As she said this, she cast her eyes on a looking-glass that stood near, and saw her home reflected on it; her father appeared sorrowful, but her sisters were pleased. As she sat down to supper,

she heard the noise of the beast. "Beauty," said he, "tell me, do you not think me very ugly?" "Why, yes," said she, "but you are good." He then said, "Beauty, will you be my wife?" She was speechless; at length she said, "No, Beast." The Beast sighed and went away.

For three months the Beast visited her every night at supper, always asking her if she would be his wife, and was grieved at her saying "No." One night, the Beast said, "I love you better than myself; promise me you will never go from me." Beauty was struck when he said this, for she had seen in her glass that her father had fallen sick of grief for her. "I promise never to leave you quite," said she, but I do long so much to see my father." "I would rather die myself, than make you unhappy," answered the Beast, "you shall find yourself with him to-morrow." Next morning she found herself at home. On the tenth night she dreamed the Beast lay dying. She wished to be with him, and in the morning she found herself in the palace garden, where the poor Beast lay senseless. He opened his eyes, and said, "You forgot the promise you made, so I resolved to starve to death." "No," said Beauty, "I offer to marry you." As soon as Beauty had said this, she saw at her feet the handsomest Prince that ever was seen. They were married soon after, and lived happily for a great number of years.

