

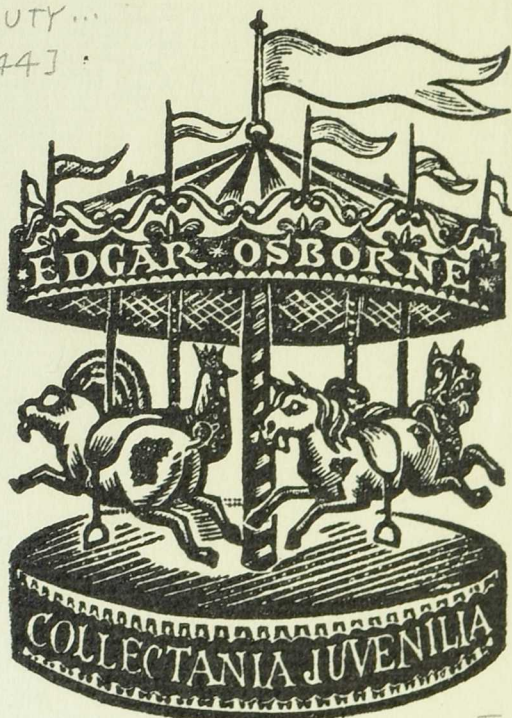


BEAUTY &
THE BEAST

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THE STORY
OF
BEAUTY AND THE BEAST.

DRAMATIZED
FOR JUVENILE PERFORMERS.

BY
LADY THERESA LISTER.

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THE POPULAR TALE OF BEAUTY AND THE BEAST,
DRAMATIZED AND ARRANGED EXPRESSLY FOR THE
AMUSEMENT OF ITS JUVENILE PERFORMERS,
AT KENT HOUSE, IS DEDICATED TO THEM,
BY THEIR MOST AFFECTIONATE FRIEND,
THE AUTHORESS.

Kent House, Knightsbridge,

June 1844.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

CASIMIR, ruined Merchant.

BEAST, (afterwards PRINCE.)

DISCORDIA, eldest daughter

GELOSIA, second daughter

BEAUTY, youngest daughter

} of Casimir.

ROSABEL

LILIA

} attendants in the Palace of Roses

FIRST FAIRY.

SECOND FAIRY.

ATTENDANTS, COURTIERS, &c.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST.

SCENE I.

Casimir's Cottage.

BEAUTY *sitting on a stool knitting or spinning,*
sings gaily :

The lark carols gay from his watch tower on high,
Gay bounds the roe o'er the stream ;
The sun shines gay from the clear blue sky,
And the world shines gay in his beam.

Oh ! my heart beats light
'Midst a scene so bright,
No dread of the hour
When the storm may lower,
Can cast one shade, one bright tint fade,
On what seems like a gay fairy dream.

(F. M.)

Enter DISCORDIA and GELOSIA.

DISCORDIA. There sits Beauty ! always singing and working—working and singing ; it puts me out of all patience !

GELOSIA. There's nothing so fatiguing to the spirits as misplaced gaiety.

BEAUTY. I really find working and singing

go so well together, that all my knitting and spinning seem set to music.

DISCORDIA (*bitterly*). Songs of rejoicing at the downfall of your family.

BEAUTY (*cheerfully*). Not so; but indeed, dear sisters, I cannot—I do not feel our change of fortune so *very* severe a trial.

GELOSIA (*bitterly*). I very believe it is no misfortune at all to *you*, and every one has fortitude for other people's trials.

BEAUTY. Nay, nay, Gelosia, you wrong me there. I am heartily sorry that you should have lost whatever you regret, or be disappointed in your hopes; but surely we must all strive for our dear father's sake, to make his home as cheerful, if not as splendid, as when he was rich.

DISCORDIA (*ironically*). Vastly amiable indeed! but my father knew better how to estimate the splendour he enjoyed, and had hoped to regain.

GELOSIA (*contemptuously*). It is only people of low tastes who do not understand how to appreciate the elegancies of luxury, and the delights of magnificence.

DISCORDIA. Oh, Gelosia! I could cry with

vexation when I think of the dresses and jewels my father would have brought, but for this fresh disappointment.

GELOSIA. Oh! I could go mad with the thoughts that the gold and silver tissues, the rubies and diamonds my father was to give us, will now belong to our rivals.

BEAUTY. So, after all I shall fare the best; for no one will envy me the Rose I asked him to bring!

DISCORDIA (*contemptuously*). Very likely indeed that my father should remember such nonsense! (*a noise from without.*) Hark! what noise is that?

BEAUTY. It is my father's voice! Oh! sisters, let us run to meet him! (*Exit in haste.*)

GELOSIA. How different will be our meeting to that which we had hoped for!

DISCORDIA. His return seems to make one the more sensible of our disappointed hopes!

(*Re-enter Beauty, leaning affectionately on her father.—Discordia and Gelosia salute him.*)

FATHER. Alas! alas! my children, 'tis a sad greeting!

DISCORDIA. Indeed, father, we have truly sympathized in your disappointments.

GELOSIA. We shall never know what it is to be happy again!

FATHER (*sighs deeply*). Oh! woe! woe!

BEAUTY. Dearest father, do not sigh. All sorrow seems forgotten since we can welcome you once more to home.

FATHER (*sighs deeply*). Alack! alack! my child! I have a tale to tell that forbids all welcome.

DISCORDIA. What fresh disaster has occurred?

FATHER. Alas! too dire to tell.

GELOSIA. Perchance fresh honours to our hated rivals.

FATHER. Worse! worse! 'tis vain to guess.

BEAUTY. Your children will console you in this new affliction.

FATHER. Alas! alas! the thoughts of my dear children serve but to embitter my grief!

GELOSIA. Hopeless ruin, I suppose!

DISCORDIA (*impatiently*). This doubt is more distracting than the worst certainty. We pray you, sir, to be more explicit.

FATHER. Oh, my children, seek not to hasten the terrible disclosure (*covers his face with his hands*).

BEAUTY. Oh! that we could alleviate this sorrow without seeking its cause.

FATHER (*deeply affected*). My poor daughters! and must you be left so soon without a father's protection?

BEAUTY. No, no, dear father, we will go with you wherever you may go; your own little Beauty will never—never—leave you.

FATHER. Bless you, my child!

(*He embraces her.*)

DISCORDIA. We pray you, sir, once more to say, *why* you thus talk of leaving us again?

FATHER. Yes! my dear children, the horrid tale must be told.

(*Beauty gives him a chair—the elder daughters sit on each side of him—Beauty places herself at his knees.*)

FATHER. No sooner had I sent you the sad tidings that our enemies had triumphed, and that we must still languish in poverty (*Discordia and Gelosia weep*), than I determined to hasten home, and seek the only comfort that remained in life—the society of my children.

BEAUTY (*kisses his hand*). Dearest father!

FATHER. Towards the close of the third day, I found myself in the midst of a forest. My horse was weary—a fearful storm arose—the rain poured in torrents—the trees creaked fear-

fully as they bowed to the winds—night came on—I had missed the beaten track, and thought my doom was sealed—that to die of cold and hunger, or be torn in pieces by the howling wolves, would be my fate, when suddenly, at the far—far—end of a long row of trees a light appeared!

BEAUTY. Oh! we could bless the hand that placed it there to guide you.

FATHER. I hastened to the spot, and found on my approach, a gorgeous palace splendidly illuminated.

GELOSIA. Strange, we never heard of any Prince so near!

FATHER. The gates were opened, but not a single person to be seen!

DISCORDIA. How strangely negligent in a Prince's palace!

FATHER. The door of a capacious stable, ready furnished with food for my horse, stood open—the poor beast, hungry and tired as his master, gladly availed himself of such entertainment, whilst I proceeded to the palace. The hall door was open—the fire glared—a table was spread with every dainty, whilst the chair for a single guest was set to welcome the solitary wanderer!

GELOSIA. How truly considerate in the Prince!

FATHER. I waited long and anxiously to apologise for the liberty I had taken—no one appeared! but I resolved to seek the owner's permission ere I trespassed further on his unconscious bounty.

BEAUTY. Surely the same kind hand that rescued you from danger, would never have refused you a night's lodging.

FATHER. The first door I opened on quitting the hall, led to a handsome sleeping apartment, where, to my surprise, I found, as in the hall, every preparation for a guest—the same splendour and thoughtful regard for the comfort of a benighted traveller!

DISCORDIA. None but Royalty think of the wants and wishes of others!

FATHER. Worn out with fatigue, I cast myself on the bed—a delicious sleep crept over my exhausted frame; it was late the next morning ere I awoke from my slumbers to the sound of soft music.

GELOSIA. What a pleasure to sleep in the precincts of a palace!

FATHER. I arose in haste, and found in place

of the clothes in which I had arrived, torn, dirty, and wet, a handsome suit prepared for my use, and a purse well filled on my table !

BEAUTY. Generous Prince !

FATHER. I sought the hall where I had supped—a sumptuous breakfast was prepared : and, Oh ! the beauty of the scene before me ! Gardens laid out with magic art ; the air perfumed with the delicious fragrance of the richest flowers, cooled by the dripping fountains, and thrilled with the song of bright winged birds.

DISCORDIA. Refinement worthy of a royal owner.

FATHER. In vain I sought that owner. I called aloud to proffer thanks for all I had received, no human form was to be seen—no human voice responded to my own.

BEAUTY (*timorously*). Oh, father ! the palace must have been enchanted.

FATHER. The garden tempted me to stroll, ere I took my departure ; my eye was attracted by the luxurious growth of roses that clung to the wall, and recollecting the modest request of my beloved little Beauty, I plucked a bunch (*gives the roses to Beauty*) : instantly the air seemed rent with a tremendous crash, and a

huge beast advanced towards me. "Ungrateful man!" he exclaimed in a voice of thunder, "I have saved your life, and in return you steal my roses. Prepare to die!"

ALL THE DAUGHTERS. How have you escaped?

FATHER (*in great despair*). I have not escaped—(*a pause*)—I have gained delay, not pardon.

DISCORDIA. Could you not explain that it was by the thoughtless wish of an inconsiderate child that you plucked the rose?

FATHER. I besought his forgiveness on my knees, and humbly said, "My lord! I did not think it would offend to gather a rose for one of my daughters."

GELOSIA. And was he not appeased?

FATHER. "Call me not *lord*," said he in that awful voice that makes me tremble when I think of it; "I AM NO LORD, BUT A BEAST."

BEAUTY. Could nothing move him from his dreadful purpose?

FATHER. His terms of freedom are but more terrible.

ALL THREE DAUGHTERS. What are the terms?

FATHER (*much affected*). That one of my daughters should willingly agree to die in my stead (*Discordia and Gelosia start up in horror*), if not, that I must return to die in three months.

(*Beauty throws her arms round her father.*)

DISCORDIA (*bitterly*). So my father must die because Beauty could not live without a rose!

GELOSIA. To think that such a palace should belong to a Beast!

BEAUTY (*tenderly*). Father! you *must* not die!

DISCORDIA. That is easy for *you* to say who have been the cause of his death!

GELOSIA. Yes! and now does not shed a tear for the evil she has done.

BEAUTY. It would be vain to weep (*firmly*), for he *shall not* die! The Beast will accept one of his daughters, and *I* shall take his place.

FATHER. My child! my child! it is impossible;—*I* am old, and have not long to live—
You—

BEAUTY. I care not for life, and would rather be eaten up by the monster, than die of grief for your loss.

FATHER. No—no, my beloved Beauty.

BEAUTY. Father, I am resolved—no earthly power shall withhold me—and come what will to the palace you cannot—must not—return without me!

(*Beauty throws herself into her father's arms.*)

Scene closes.

ACT THE SECOND.

SCENE I.

Room in the Palace of the Beast, decorated with roses.

BEAUTY is discovered sitting pensively on a sofa, listening to music.

AIR—(“*Believe me, if all those endearing.*”)

(*Voice behind the scenes.*)

Dared I cherish the hope that those beauties and charms,
That with love and amazement I see,
Might repose on this bosom, be clasped in these arms,
Oh! the world were a heaven to me! F. M.

BEAUTY. Again that voice of touching sweetness! How strange the only sounds that greet my ear in this dread palace are of softest music!

Enter ROSABEL and LILIA.

LILIA. The hour of refreshment is at hand.

ROSABEL. Our master bids us say, that with your leave he will sup with you this evening.

BEAUTY (*shuddering*) *His will is law.*

(Exeunt.)

The time approaches for my wretched end! For three long days have I expected to behold the fearful sight of the monster! My heart sickens at the picture I have fancied of his huge and horrid form.

(Re-enter Rosabel and Lilia with supper.)

ROSABEL (*presents a bouquet of roses to Beauty*). My master sends you this token of his remembrance, and bids you expect him as the hour strikes *nine*.

(They place the supper on the table, and retire.)

BEAUTY (*takes the roses in despair*). Alas! the token of remembrance of the offence for which I suffer! (*she weeps.*) But no—he shall not see these unworthy tears. My father is safe, and for *him* I die.

(The clock strikes nine.)

A low moan behind the scenes.

SCENE II.

Enter the BEAST.

BEAST. Lady! ere I venture to approach, tell me if you came here with your own free consent?

BEAUTY (*trembling*). I did—(*aside*) How gentle is his voice!

BEAST. Beauty, I have watched you now for three long days, and have, as yet, forborne to enter this apartment; *can* you endure the presence of a monster?

BEAUTY (*aside*) How kind his accent! *Can* he be so dreadful?—(*aloud*) Whatever may be your pleasure, Beast, I must obey.

BEAST. No, Lady, say not so—*You* only must command in this Palace. May I humbly ask to look on you at supper?

BEAUTY (*aside*). His gentleness revives my courage.—(*aloud*) To you, sir, I owe the careful kindness that prevents each want—I would not be ungrateful to my benefactor.

BEAST (*aside*). The sweetest words gain sweetness from those lips.—(*aloud*) Beauty! my form may terrify you, and I would rather

sacrifice my fondest wish than give you pain.
Adieu! (*turns as if to go.*)

BEAUTY. No Beast, do not go! (*she turns suddenly round and sees him—she screams and covers her face; the Beast covers before her.*)

BEAST (*despondingly*). It must be so! Hide your face, sweet Lady! I am too hideous for one so fair to look upon.

BEAUTY (*uncovers her face*). But your words are kind! It was surprise, good Beast, not only fear, that startled me. Your wish is granted—we will sup together.

(*Enter Rosabel and Lilia, who place the supper, table and chairs, in front of the stage.*)

BEAST. I fear my presence may disturb your meal, for (*sighing*) I know that I am but a Beast.

BEAUTY. You seem most gentle, kind, and good!

BEAST. Alas! I am not only deformed in body, but dull in mind.

BEAUTY. There are many men who, though ugly and stupid, have not the sense to know it.

BEAST. Yet, if I had sense, I should know how to thank you for telling me so; but I can say nothing but that *I know I am a monster.*

BEAUTY. There are worse monsters than you, Beast—those who carry wicked hearts under the form of man!

BEAST (*shakes his head*). Still I know I am a monster! (*he rises with great embarrassment.*) Beauty! would you ever be my wife?

BEAUTY (*rises hastily and in great fear*), No, Beast.

BEAST (*sighs deeply*). It was a presumptuous thought. (*Exit.*)

BEAUTY. How sad to give a moment's pain to one whose only fault is his misfortune, and whose virtue is his own. 'Tis late—a soft languor steals gently o'er my senses—I will seek repose. (*She throws herself on the sofa.*)

AIR—Rousseau's Dream.

FAIRIES *enter—wand in hand moving slowly round the bed.*

FIRST FAIRY.

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

SECOND FAIRY.

For thee the fairest flowers shall blow,
For thee the brightest gems shall glow;
Perfumes shall scent the balmy air,
And sweetest music charm thine ear. F. M.

END OF ACT SECOND.

ACT THE THIRD.

SCENE I.

BEAST (*alone, sitting in a melancholy attitude*).
Three months of bliss unutterable have passed !
Can Time ! the great leveller of all distinctions,
have made the dreaded Beast no longer an
object of disgust ! Oh, Beauty, thine own
sweetness sheds a halo on all around, and teaches
thee to view with pity, what thou can'st not love.
Her unsought thanks are lavished for my tender
care. She smiles in gratitude for kindness that
scarce dares to own its source. Oh ! that it
were possible to hope that love could purchase
love—then would she be mine for ever !—cruel,
cruel fate !

Enter BEAUTY from behind.

SCENE II.

BEAUTY (*aside*). How sad he seems ! (*she approaches him*) Dear Beast, I fear you are not well this morning.

BEAST. Beloved Beauty ! and can you care for the health of a monster ?

BEAUTY. Dear Beast ! Talk no more of a form to which your goodness has reconciled my foolish fears.

BEAST. I know I am but a Beast—all the sense I have springs from love of you.

BEAUTY. Thank you, Beast ! I shall always be your grateful friend.

BEAST (*aside*). Love seeks not gratitude, but love ! (*he covers his head with his paws*).

BEAUTY (*gently takes his paws from his face*). Dear Beast ! I came to ask you a favour ; but I almost fear you will think me importunate.

BEAST. Speak, Love ! I only seek to grant your wishes ere they are expressed—speak on.

BEAUTY. It is your permission to return awhile to my father's house.

BEAST (*clasps his paws in agony*). Ah ! Beauty ! is it come to this ?

BEAUTY (*imploringly*). Do not be angry, kind Beast—but *indeed, indeed*, I will return to you.

BEAST. Then why seek to leave me ?

BEAUTY. Listen ! On looking at the magic glass last night, I thought upon my father—desiring anxiously to know how it fared with him and my sisters.

BEAST. And what image did the glass then picture?

BEAUTY. It shewed me that my father, wearied with grief and watching for his child, had fallen sick, and had not long to live.

BEAST. And your sisters?

BEAUTY. Married—but not happily—and away from home. My father is alone, and I shall die of grief if not allowed to go to him.—Do not—do not refuse me.

(She kneels to him.)

BEAST *(raises her)*. Forbear! *(mournfully)* I can refuse you nothing. You have asked my life, it is yours—I shall not live till your return.

BEAUTY. Oh! say not so, my kind, my gentle Beast: for one week only will I absent myself.

BEAST. Be it so. To-morrow when you awake, it will be in your father's house. When you would return, place this ring *(gives her a ring)*, place this ring on the table when going to rest, and you will be restored to your Beast.

BEAUTY. Dearest Beast! it grieves me to leave you; but depend not only on my *promise* but on my *wish* to return to my benefactor.

BEAST. Adieu! thou lovely one.

DUET.

SHE. { I'll come to thee by this day week.
HE. { Oh! come to me by this day week.

SHE. { Beast! I'll come to thee!
HE. { Sweet! then come to me!

SHE. { My gentle Beast, so kind and meek,
HE. { Thy faithful Beast, so fond and meek.

SHE. { I'll never fail to thee!
HE. { Will never fail to thee!

BOTH. { When days are past, and joys return,
 { Within this palace gay,

SHE. { To thee, dear Beast, my heart I'll turn,
HE. { For thee, sweet love! my heart will burn.

SHE. { But I must be away!
HE. { But must thou be away!

ACT THE FOURTH.

Scene in Casimir's House.

Enter DISCORDIA and GELOSIA.

DISCORDIA. Well! we have succeeded in making her loiter beyond the promised time—and who knows if the charming Beast will admit the little Beauty who has played truant.

GELOSIA. Perhaps he would then learn to

bestow his favors on her betters! Ah! Discordia! why did not we offer to go? then *we* should have been decked in gay jewels and splendid attire instead of being condemned to toil for our husbands.

DISCORDIA. Aye! and to submit to *their* will instead of having *our own*. It was with difficulty I could obtain leave to come home and see MY DEAR SISTER (*ironically*).

GELOSIA. Had our tyrants known the wealth she would bring us we should have been forced to give it to them.

DISCORDIA. It is distracting to think how that artful girl has gained every thing with her pretended simplicity.

GELOSIA (*laughing*). Ha! ha! ha! I don't doubt *her* simplicity, for she does not doubt *our* pretended affection.

DISCORDIA (*laughing*). Ha! ha! ha! poor Beauty!! To think of her being such a dupe!

GELOSIA. I wonder how much longer she will believe that we have given up our homes for her sake!

DISCORDIA. The vanity of the child!!

GELOSIA. To have her head so turned by the kindness of a Beast.

DISCORDIA. To believe that we shall die of grief if she will not kindly consent to stay another week!!

GELOSIA. It is enough to kill one with laughing!—(*They both laugh heartily.*)

Enter FATHER.

FATHER. How now, my daughters! Was it laughter that I heard? Know you not that Beauty is again lost to us?

DISCORDIA and GELOSIA (*in the greatest surprise*). Beauty lost!! And when did she depart?

FATHER. No trace of her is to be found! Last night she took my blessing and retired to rest. This morning she has vanished!

DISCORDIA. Does no one know the hour of her departure?

FATHER. The hour and the mode are alike unknown.

GELOSIA. Her weighty treasures could not be removed without assistance.

FATHER. All is mystery. Not a trace is left of all her weighty treasures, not a vestige of her sumptuous attire—even the magnificent gifts so freely bestowed have disappeared!

DISCORDIA. *Our jewels gone ! oh misery ! misery ! No treasures left ! Oh cruel, cruel fate !! (She weeps.)*

FATHER. All—all—vanished as a dream—
Oh ! my child ! my child !

DISCORDIA. Our wealth !

GELOSIA. Our ornaments all lost !

Scene—Palace.

BEAST (*lying extended on the floor*). Yet another—and another day—she comes not.—Oh, Beauty ! how fondly did I cherish the hope that thou wouldst not forget thy faithful Beast ! Yet why should I reproach thee ? I have loved thee as the image of all loveliness—and thou forgavest me ! What greater favour could a monster claim ! It is easier far to die, than try to live, uncheered by thee.—Oh, Beauty ! Beauty ! my life is ebbing fast—my strength fails me, and yet the thoughts of thee press stronger on my heart—the air seems peopled with thy image, and yet I see thee not. Ah ! why didst thou name the day—the hour of bliss, to mark more surely my despair ! No food has passed my lips since hope died within me—my brain turns—all is dim—Beauty ! Beauty !

(He falls insensible.)

BEAUTY *enters, calling loudly*, Beast! Friend! Benefactor! I have searched for him every where in vain. (*She sees him lying on the floor, and screams—she kneels down.*) Oh, Beast! dearest beast! speak to your Beauty—gentlest—kindest Beast—oh! look up, and say that you forgive me! Why does he not answer? Oh! tell me that you forgive me—that you love me still. He knows me not. Oh, sisters! sisters! why did I yield to your entreaties, and tarry from my beloved benefactor! (*She places her hand on his heart.*) His heart still beats—he lives! he lives!

BEAST (*opens his eyes*). Beauty, you forgot your promise—but I have seen you once more, and shall die content.

BEAUTY (*helps him to rise*). Oh, Beast! dearest Beast! do not talk of dying! You must live to be mine—for ever mine.

BEAST (*revives*). Do my weakened senses deceive me—or is the dream of my life to be realised!

BEAUTY. Beast, I thought my love for you was friendship—was gratitude—but the anguish I suffered when I thought you were dead tells me that I cannot live without you.

(*She turns her face from him.*)

(*The Beast's dress falls off, and reveals the Prince!!!*) Oh, Beauty, how can I repay your goodness?

BEAUTY (*starts and retreats*). Where is my beloved Beast?

PRINCE. Kneeling humbly at your feet till you bid him rise.

BEAUTY. What means this change! Oh, Prince! if changed in form, in heart I trust the same.

PRINCE (*rises and kisses her hand*). Yes, beloved Beauty, the spell is broken, and the Prince may claim the hand that was given to the Beast.

Fairies enter.

1st FAIRY.

By Beauty's power the spell is broken,
She ne'er the Beast disdains,
By Lady loved in hall and bower,
This Prince his form regains.

2nd FAIRY.

By cruel Fairy now no longer bound
His shape and sense to hide,
His friends he soon may call around
To see his beauteous bride.

FAIRIES *wave their wands*—Enter FATHER, two SISTERS, Attendants, Courtiers, &c. &c.

FATHER. Oh! my child! (*Embraces her.*)

BEAUTY. Welcome ! welcome ! sweet sisters !

DISCORDIA. We have wronged you, Beauty !

GELOSIA. Can you forgive us ?

BEAUTY. All wrongs are forgotten in this day of joy.

PRINCE. Beauty's power alone has sway—
and those who now enter the Palace of Roses
will henceforth breathe but affection and love.

SONG AND CHORUS.

BEAUTY.

Our fears dispelled—our sorrows past,
Our hearts now wake to love and joy,
To love which dreads no blight nor blast,
To pleasure pure without alloy.

Oh ! Father dear—no care or sorrow
Shall cloud the evening of thy days,
To-day's bright sun shall shine to-morrow,
No envious storm shall dim his rays.

DISCORDIA AND GELOSIA.

Deserving nought but hate and scorn,
We sought thy grace—nor sought in vain—
Thou saw us contrite—sad—forlorn,
And took us to thy heart again.

ROSABEL.

One word from us to welcome Beauty,
The vassals of her much loved Beast ;
To both we swear our faith and duty.
So now we're off—to serve the feast.

BEAST—(*to Beauty.*)

Be my sweet task, with true devotion,
 Thy fate to watch, thy steps to guard ;
 With tenderest care and fond emotion,
 My love to prove and thine reward.

TO THE AUDIENCE.

And now, dear friends, your favouring spirit,
 Your kind indulgence we implore :
 We little folks have little merit,
 And need your kindness all the more. F. M.

THE END.

