

DAPHNE.

BY JULIA GODDARD.

Rare eyes that make a twofold sun
Upon the world to shine,
Red lips that turn the ruby dull,
A face and form divine;
A footstep fleet as that of fawn,
A blush as bright as rosy dawn,
My Daphne, all are thine.

But, ah! why should that glorious sun
For me o'erclouded be,
And lips that answer others' jests,
Ne'er give one smile to me?
Why should morn's flush grow dark as night,
And oft when I appear in sight,
My Daphne fail to see?

In vain I twine a garland fair,
The flower she flings away;
In vain my verse breathes fond conceits,
She scorns each tender lay,
And if I whisper words of love,
And swear by all the stars above,
My Daphne—goes away.

Yet still my harp is tuned to sing
Of Daphne, spite of scorn,
Since the most perfect joy I have
Is from sweet Daphne drawn.
If she despise the love I bear,
No willow-wreath be mine to wear,
Though slighted love I mourn.

Apollo-like, my brows I'll crown,
Through her most sweet disdain,
With laurel; for my constant song
Of Daphne, fame shall gain;
For Daphne keeps my heart, and I
Am captive, with no heart to fly,
No wish to break my chain.

"I."

IN TWO PARTS.

II. DWARFINCH'S.

Time passed on. Susan Lutestring had been for two months established at the Hornet, and was still unenlightened as to the mysterious malady of her master. Passing some hours daily at work in her mistress's room, his voice had become almost as familiar to her as his mother's, with whom, when not disposed for study or music, he laughed and chatted incessantly. There was no trace of suffering in those clear accents. He played and sang the merriest airs. He moved about his large, luxurious room with perfect freedom, as one in health, nay, there was one occasion on which Susan was prepared to make oath, if required, that she heard him walking with a chair, and finishing up with some gymnastic performance, to which his mother at length put an authoritative end. That he ate and drank in the satisfactory manner characterised by Mrs. Martin as "lik a good un," none who saw the amount of viands carried in, and not brought out again, by Luira the deaf and dumb page, would presume to doubt. This youth was Susan's great aversion. She could not divest herself of an odd sort of resentment that the little wretch should be in full possession of the secret she was longing in vain to know. In vain, as it seemed, for her mistress's health had improved of late, and the need of her assistance appeared further off than ever.

At length, one night, Susan's eyes rested on her master. She had had occasion, very late, to revisit the sitting-room below, and while passing through the corridor to regain her room, saw him come forth in his rich, thickly quilted walking-dress, and noiseless slippers. Hardly knowing what to do, Susan shrank back into a recess close at hand, and remained unnoticed.

Her master walked with a measured, manly steps, his head slightly bent, and covered with a hood which concealed his features from a side view. Each hand was thrust into the ample opposite sleeve. He must have been little, if anything, short of six feet in height; and, so far as the thick robe permitted it to be surmised, of a finely-moulded person.

"It" ejaculated Susan, as she gained her room, and noiselessly closed the door.

Fate willed that she should have a still better chance, and that within a day or two.

Being alone with her mistress, one morning, the latter was summoned to a visitor. Susan was still busied about the room, when her master's voice pronounced her name.

"Sir," said Susan, startled.

"Come in, Susan," was the quiet rejoinder. So, the moment had arrived. Despite her natural firmness, the girl's heart gave a throb, as she stepped towards the door, just ajar. What was she about to see?

It was not easy, at first, to distinguish anything, the shutters being partially closed, and the spacious chamber being otherwise darkened with heavy curtains. The bed itself, an imposing structure, that might have accommodated Og, spread a mighty canopy across two-thirds of the breadth of the luxurious apartment, yet left abundant space for the tables, couches, cabinets, look and music stands; besides a thousand et ceteras bearing silent witness to the refined taste and intellectual culture of its recluse inhabitant.

The latter, folded in his brocaded gown, reclined upon a soft deep couch that filled up a recess in the window.

"Come in! come in!" he repeated, laughing merrily, as he caught sight of Susan's appalled look in a hand-mirror with which he had been playing. "The tiger's quite tame—he never bites. Besides, you can leave the door well open, Susan, so as to make the better bolt of it, should your fears get the better of you, when you see—"

He glanced round at her, but with so quick a movement that she got no glimpse of his face.

"You stand it very well. You'll do," continued the young man, in a satisfied tone. "A little nearer, if you please, Miss Lutestring. Put yourself in that comfortable chair—a little behind me—so, where I secure the unfair advantage of seeing you, myself unseen, and oblige me with a few items of Grandchester gossip, from the paper beside you."

Susan obeyed. But the selections she made did not seem greatly to interest her listener. It was manifest, however, that he was watching her intently, all the time, in his mirror, holding it in such a manner as to keep his own face invisible to his companion. Presently, either in absence or from accident, he changed the position of the glass for a moment, and Susan, glancing up at the same instant, saw the reflection of his brow and eyes. She had barely time to observe that these latter were large, and glowing with a singular lustre, when her master, with a movement of impatience, bade her proceed.

Susan read:

"To those who take interest in the contemplation of the more eccentric forms of nature, we are in a position to promise an unprecedented treat. The uncertainty attendant upon the best concerted schemes, forbids us to do more than recall to the recollection of our readers the mysterious announcement that has, for the last few days, invested all the dead, and a few of the living, walls in Grandchester with an unusual interest. 'It is coming'—that is all. But it has been enough, as the poet writes, 'to haunt, to startle, and waylay.' What is coming? whence? and why? Is it an earthquake? a famine? a tidal wave? a revolution? Let us be composed. No need to put our houses in order, otherwise than may be consistent with giving the entire establishment a holiday, with permission to visit the most extraordinary existing phenomenon of the present age. 'It is coming'—steadily, but surely coming. Yet one short week, and we shall be enabled to proclaim—'Hasten to Dwarfinc's. It is come!'"

"Ah! to Dwarfinc's!" repeated Mountjoy. "I'm glad something is coming to the poor devil! Why, it's months—absolutely months—since there was the glimmer of a lamp about that old shop! They say he has a wife and five children, and nothing to keep them on, except the occasional letting of that horrible old edifice, which was once, my mother declares, a madhouse, and still"—he added, with a short, but not unfeeling laugh—"retains one lunatic—the man who took it! Ah! here's my mother. Thanks, Miss Lutestring, I need detain you no longer."

Susan went to her own room.

While standing at the window, her eyes thoughtfully resting upon the drear assembly-rooms, she became conscious of an unwonted movement in front of that building. Workmen were arriving—carpenters and plasterers—ladders were reared against the massive walls, gas-fittings sprouted forth, mighty posters unrolled themselves, and an enormous object, seemingly a transparency, but as yet shrouded from the public gaze, was slowly hoisted to the very centre of the structure, just above the principal door. A small, nervous-looking man, in very seedy attire, but having the air of belonging to a better class, fidgeted about among the workmen, and seemed to point out to two pretty and neatly-clad children, who clung to him on either hand, the wonderful metamorphosis in progress. This was Mr. Dwarfinc, the proprietor.

So much was Susan interested in what was before her, that she was only roused by the pleasant voice of the old housekeeper at her elbow.

"Well, I'm glad to see this," said Mrs. Martin. "Poor things, they wanted a flipp of some sort. The last thing was a horrid and lectur', which didn't pay, for some boys stole the sun, and Mars and Saturn being at the pewterer's, the heavens was thin. I wonder what's coming now?"

In the intervals of conjecture, Mrs. Martin made Susan acquainted with the received history of "Dwarfinc's."

Mr. D., a gentleman by birth, and a graduate of Cambridge, had, in early manhood, been induced to take part in some private theatricals. Such unfortunate good fortune attended his first performance that the poor gentleman imagined himself an actor on the spot. Abandoning all other views, he embraced the professional stage, failed signally, sank from grade to grade, was unable to obtain an engagement even for the humblest line of parts, wandered aimlessly about, and was ultimately directed by his evil star to Grandchester, the old assembly-rooms of which were at that moment sadly in want of a lessee.

"A bank-note, sir! A bank-note!" asserted the agent. "Mints of money to be made there. Rent, a feebite. Repairs might be reckoned on your thumb-nail. What do you say?"

Mr. Dwarfinc, with some misgiving, glanced mechanically at his thumb-nail. He did, however, take the rooms, and, for the first year, not only covered his expenses, but contrived to make a decent living. Encouraged by this, the

misguided man disappeared for a few days, and returned with a wife, a pretty and interesting woman, who, within the next five years, with the help of twins, managed to surround her embarrassed lord with five little pledges of their mutual love.

Alas! as expenses increased, income diminished. Some new public rooms were opened in a better situation. Their lessee had money as well as enterprise. "Dwarfinc's," despite the respect in which the manager was held, and the sympathy felt by many, in his manly struggles, fell into more and more disfavour, until, as Mountjoy had said, it was with extreme difficulty poor Dwarfinc could provide fitting food and raiment for the wife and children he idolised.

Now and again the desolate pile glimmered with a momentary brightness. A meeting, a cheap concert, a lecture, a charity dinner, might put ten or fifteen pounds into the pockets of the starving family, but this was nothing to their needs, and affairs of late had looked gloomy in the extreme.

Kind-hearted Mrs. Martin, who had scraped acquaintance with Mrs. Dwarfinc, with the object of administering fillips, in the shape of marmalade and raspberry-tarts, to the pretty children, heartily rejoiced to see the spirited preparations now in progress, for what was evidently intended to be a desperate fling at fortune.

An offer of four pounds, light and waiting included, from an itinerant conjuror, had been the straw that broke the camel's back.

"I'll stand this no longer!" exclaimed the outraged proprietor, starting up in a rage, and flinging the conjuror's letter into the grate. "Alice, we must do something—must go in for, for—something. A man or a mouse, my dear! We have just twenty-five pounds left in the world. In it shall go!"

"In what, my dear?" asked his wife, with a somewhat wan and hopeless smile.

"Anything!" was the reckless rejoinder. "Cat-show; baby-show; lions; gladiators; Blondin! I'll have the posters out this very day!"

"Letter, pa," cried Miss Alice Dwarfinc, skipping into the room, and handing him a note, which appeared to have been sealed with marmalade.

Mr. Dwarfinc tore it open, read, and sank back into his chair, pale with emotion.

"The very thing, my love; it's like a—a summons! It's like a providence! My benefactor! Restorer of my fortunes!" he continued, walking about in ecstasy, and waving the letter over his head. "Blessings on your name!"

"What is his name?" asked his wife, fully aroused.

"His name," replied Mr. Dwarfinc, growing more composed, "is Tippeny. He is, without exception, the greatest marvel of the age, yet, with the modesty of true genius, this great, this gifted man, will present himself to the public, at these rooms, on being guaranteed twenty pounds!"

"Twenty pounds!" ejaculated his wife, faintly.

"Twenty!" repeated Mr. Dwarfinc, firmly. "My love, I know what I am about. Ask no questions. To work—to work!"

Mrs. Dwarfinc, whose faith in her spouse's judgment held out against all his ill-luck, was quite content to ask no questions. He himself went "to work" with all the zeal and intrepidity of a man who feels that fortune is at last really coming to his call, and must be welcomed with all the honors due to a long-absent guest. He papered Grandchester from end to end. He engaged whole columns of the local journals. He sent forth processions, with boards and handbills. All announcements were confined to the three warning words, "It is coming," and it was only when public curiosity had been stimulated to the utmost, that "Dwarfinc's" was at length superadded, as the scene of "It's" appearance.

It was on the day succeeding Susan's first interview with her master that the huge transparency in front of Dwarfinc's was solemnly unveiled, and revealed the tremendous secret. There appeared the semblance of an enormous skeleton, at least twelve feet high.

Dressed it certainly was, but the close-fitting "shape"—of yellowish white, judiciously chosen as being the nearest approach to bone—revealed the minutest articulation in every joint and limb. The scanty doublet was of a darker hue, but—as if the tailor had shrunk from the task of adapting any outer garment to the fearful angle of those projecting hips—holes had been provided, through which these joints seemed to force their way. The countenance of this spectral monster was lit up with a ghastly grin, intended, as afterwards appeared, to symbolise the gay and genial temperament belonging to the individual who had been permitted, through some caprice of nature, to shake off the burden of the flesh, without parting with his bones. New posters, unfolding themselves in every direction, proclaimed that Mr. Edward Tippeny—the celebrated Living Skeleton, the Wonder of the Age—was about to present himself in Dwarfinc's; and a bill, larger than any yet issued, confidently announced, "IT IS HERE!"

It really seemed that fortune designed to compensate poor Dwarfinc for the many scurvy tricks she had played him. Grandchester happened to be greatly in want of a public sensation of some sort. The militia, at this moment embodied, help to flood the streets at evening with groups of idlers. A large party of seamen, just paid off from a ship of war, had come up the country on a spree. Any exhibition, of decent attraction, would probably have

done good business for a night or two. How much more, then, the mighty Skeleton, the Wonder of the Age? At all events the thing took, to a degree unparalleled in the annals of the ancient city. Two days before that fixed for "It's" appearance (the bills persisted in so describing Mr. Tippeny) every seat in the vast assembly-room was engaged, and this at prices double those demanded for any previous entertainment on record.

Long before the hour of opening, so dense was the multitude around the doors, that the police on duty with difficulty made way for the carriages to set down. As for pit and gallery, such was the rush that not one half of those who sought admission were lucky enough to pass the threshold.

Before recounting what followed on that eventful day, we must return for a moment to the Hornet.

As if—the ice once broken—young Mountjoy found solace in the presence of his new companion, Susan found herself summoned to his room every day. This was indeed the more necessary, as his mother had been indisposed for a day or two, and, on the evening on which we revisit the Hornet, had not quitted her bed at all.

Susan had read herself almost hoarse, her master being apparently disinclined to do anything but listen to her musical tones, and gaze intently into the mirror which seldom left his hand. He had grown more careless in handling it. Again and again Susan caught sight of those large, earnest, glittering eyes, and moreover, knew—or rather felt—that they were perpetually fixed on hers. To read their expression was impossible, and the rest of his features remained too cautiously veiled to offer any interpretation.

The proceedings at Dwarfinc's had seemed to interest him in a remarkable degree. After the uncovering of the transparency, he had remained at the window as if fascinated by the grisly, grinning monster, and had even directed that some branches of one of the trees in the carriage sweep that intercepted his view should be lopped away. Whatever might be his own affliction, it had manifestly softened his heart towards another, but he could hardly forgive poor Mr. Tippeny for making himself a public show.

"The miserable beggar," he growled. "And as if it was not enough to be poked, and prodded, and snapped, and rattled, at sixpence a head, he must—hand me the fellow's bill, my dear—yes, perform a fantasia on the violin, sing a barcarole to the cithern, dance a saraband, and—hallo! there seems to be a row!" And, throwing the hood over his face, the young man leaned eagerly from the window.

Although, by this time, the assembly-room must have been packed from floor to ceiling, the crowd outside seemed quite undiminished, and, if anything, more excited than before. Something was evidently amiss. People stood in the doorway gesticulating violently, in futile endeavors to make themselves heard. The roar of an angry or impatient audience within could at times be distinguished above the noise without. Poor Mr. Dwarfinc, with a soiled and anxious face, could be seen at intervals fitting or struggling among the crowd, as seeking to preserve peace and order. But the tumult only increased.

"I must know what this means," exclaimed Mountjoy, drawing in. "Send, Susan, send and inquire."

Seeing the gardener in the road below, Susan questioned him from the window, and was able to bear back word to her master that the riot, for such it was become, was caused by the non-appearance of the skeleton, who should have made his long-promised bow to the expectant multitude at least half an hour before.

Whether the public had lost faith in Dwarfinc's, or whether disappointed applicants had set the rumor afloat, could not be known, but a belief was certainly rife that the whole affair was a swindle, the unexampled prices demanded for tickets tending greatly to the strengthening of this suspicion. The crowd within hooted, roared, demanded their money back, and even threatened damage to the rooms. The crowd without laughed and jeered, and howled for the manager, but when they had him would not let him speak.

Suddenly a carriage was seen slowly working its way through the throng. Shout were heard. "It's coming!" "Here 'tis at last!" "Tippeny, Tippeny." "Hooray for the skeleton," bellowed the crowd.

Dwarfinc breathed again, as the coach drew up, and hurried forward to welcome the Wonder of the Age.

"Thank goodness you are come! But why so late? The people are half mad," he gasped. "Quick, quick, my dear fellow. Take my arm." The skeleton did not immediately respond. Without moving from his seat, he bent forward a great, bewildered-looking face, in form and substance not unlike an ordinary man's, then beckoned Mr. Dwarfinc to come closer.

The latter obeyed, when the Wonder of the Age, placing two groups of bones, intended for hands, on his friend's shrinking shoulders, uttered these words:

"I shay—ole fell—lesh—lesh make—night of it." And fell forward upon the manager's breast, an inert mass of bone.

There was no mistake about it. Strange and eird as was the effect produced by the unexpected phenomenon, the skeleton was, beyond all question, helplessly drunk.

Overcome as he was by this crowning misfortune, and staggering under the superincumbent skeleton, Dwarfinc was roused to action