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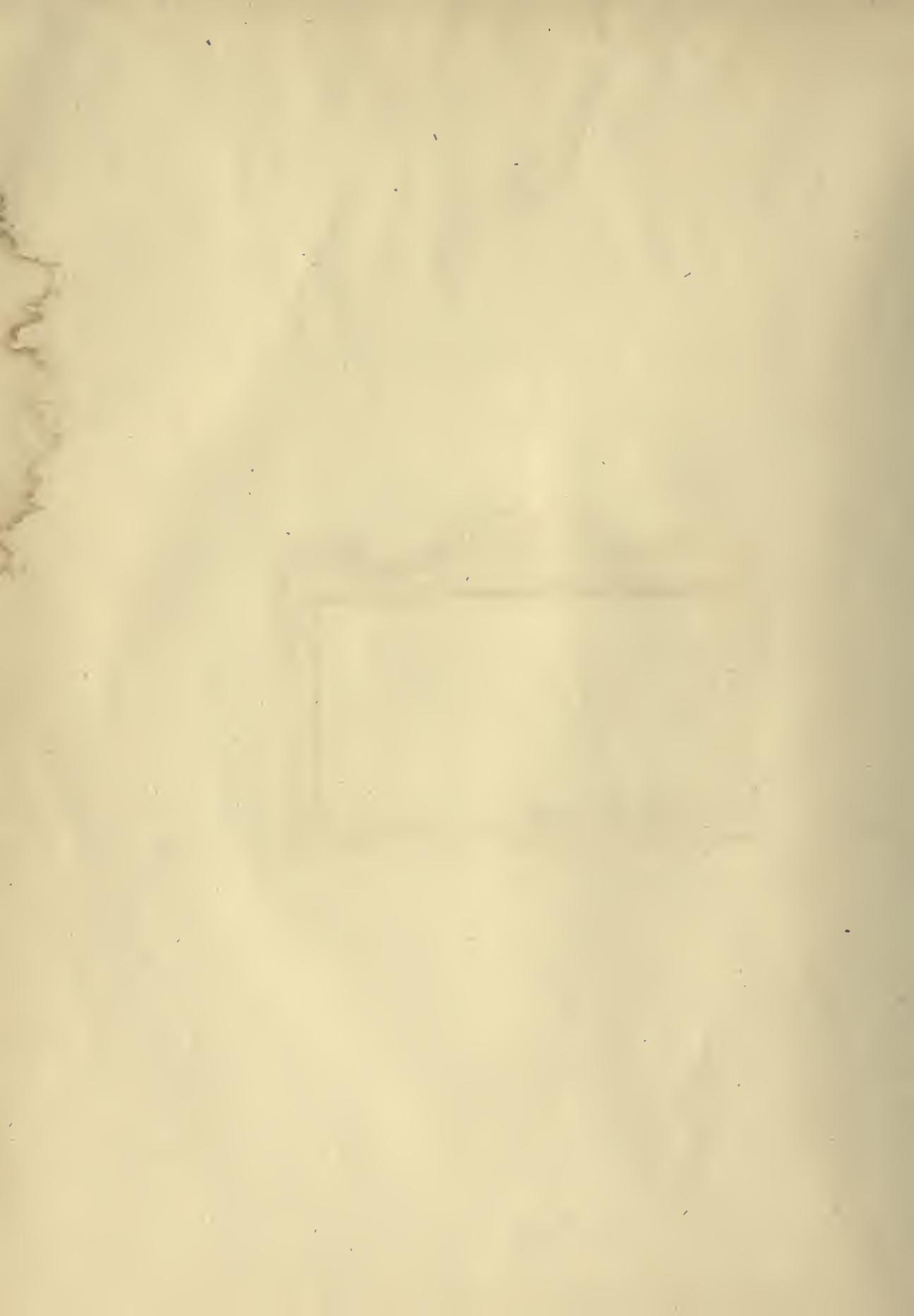
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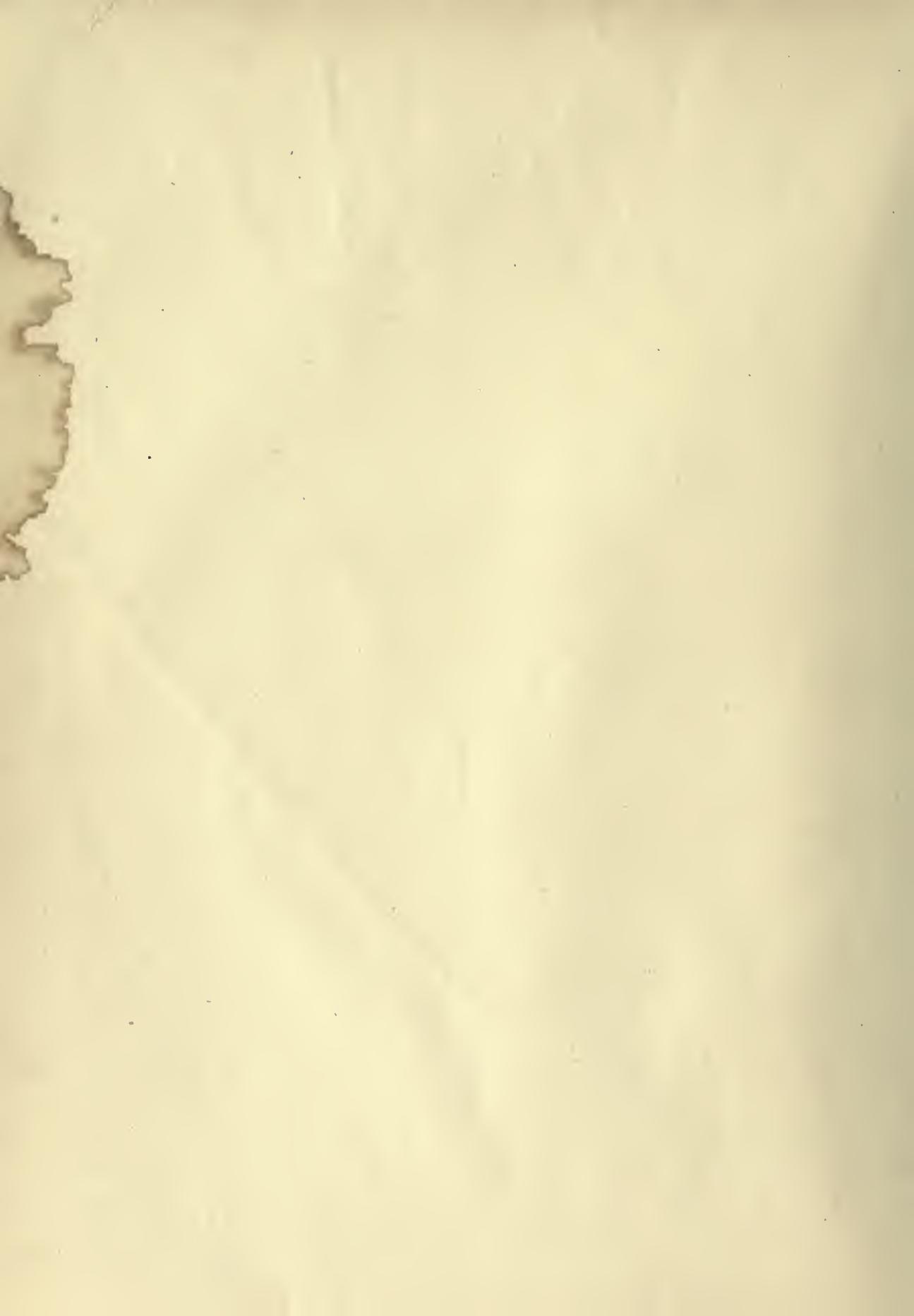
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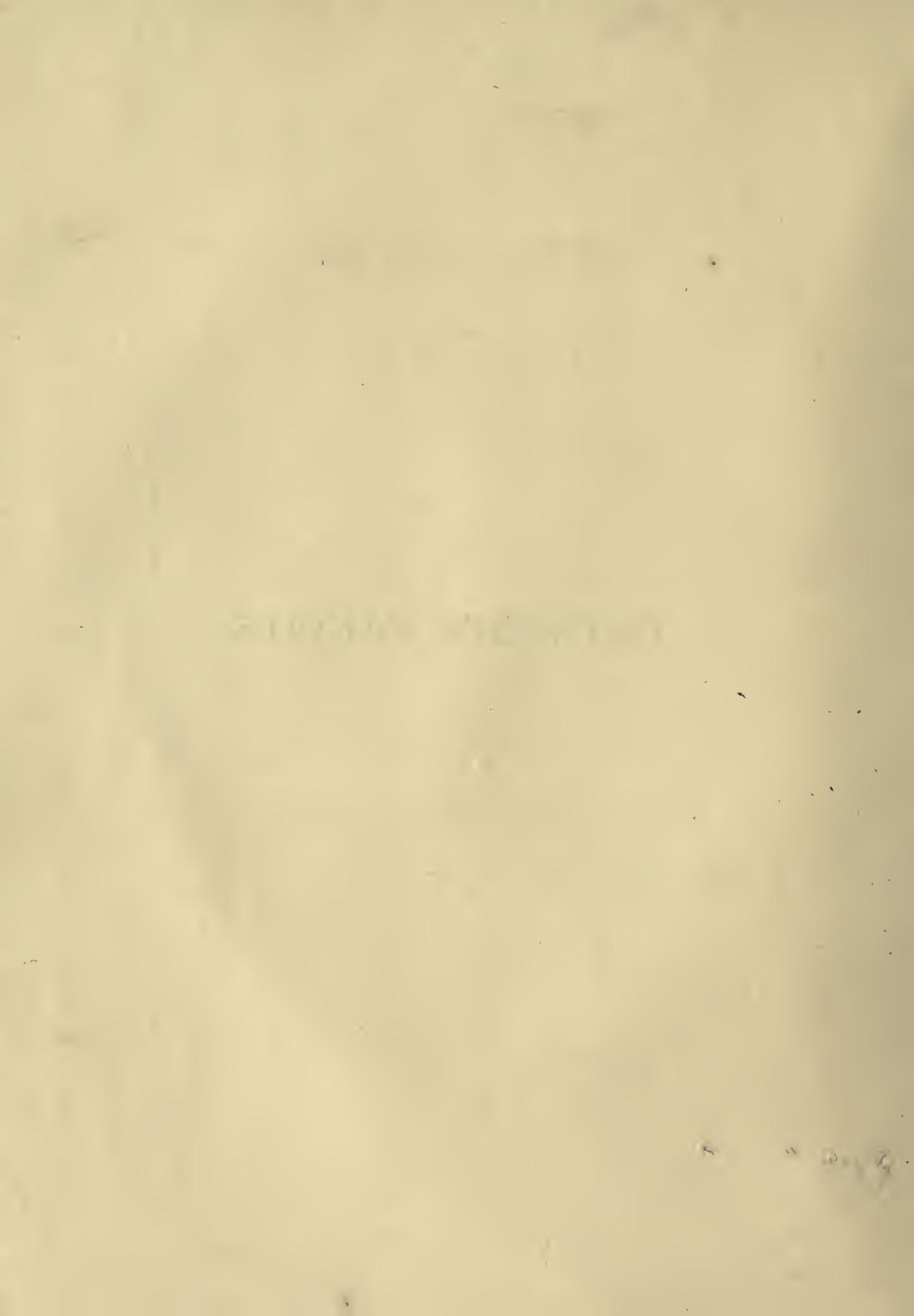




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# RETZSCH'S FANCIES



# F A N C I E S.

## F A N C I E S

A SERIES OF SUBJECTS IN OUTLINE,

NOW FIRST PUBLISHED FROM

THE ORIGINAL PLATES,

DESIGNED AND ETCHED

BY MORITZ RETZSCH.

||

WITH

PREFATORY REMARKS AND DESCRIPTIONS,

BY MRS. JAMESON.



LONDON

SAUNDERS AND OTLEY, CONDUIT STREET.

A. RICHTER AND CO., SOHO SQUARE;  
TREUTTEL AND WURTZ, PARIS AND STRASBURGH;  
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1834.

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LONDON :

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## P R E F A C E.

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It would ill become the writer of these prefatory remarks to assume to be the panegyrist of the work which she has the *honour*—for such she truly esteems it—of introducing to the English public. It is, however, so singular in itself, both in its purpose and execution, that a few observations in the way of explanation may not be deemed obtrusive or impertinent.

Moritz Retzsch, of Dresden, is already famed in this country, not less than in his own, for the spirit, the rich and congenial spirit, in which he has embodied in visible forms the conceptions of Goethe, Schiller, and Shakspeare. He now appears before us in a new character, himself both poet and designer. In these *FANCIES* he has employed his rare graphic talent, simply as the most easy and familiar medium through which to convey to the minds of others the sentiments and ideas with which his own powerful and

luxuriant imagination seems for ever overflowing. The pencil is to him what the pen is to *other* poets ; his effusions throw themselves into forms before they can be clothed in words ; and instead of writing a sonnet to his wife on her birth-day, our artist-poet finds it easier to sketch a birth-day ode, in which her worth and beauty, and his own tenderness, his happiness, his hopes, and his wishes, assume an endless variety of the most elegant and the most fanciful images. To such occasions, the greater part of these sketches owe their existence : they were all, in the first instance, dedicated to his wife, and adorned the pages of her album ; and never was the inventive power of genius, inspired by love, more gracefully displayed than in some of these little birth-day *poems*, for such they appeared to me.

Allegory in painting, that is, the application of the art of design to the representation of abstract ideas, is nearly as old as the art itself, and the power of symbolical painting on the minds and imaginations of the young, as awakening curiosity and exercising both the reasoning and imaginative powers, can be estimated only by those who may have watched the opening faculties of children : more the pity, that art—beautiful art!—so often perverted, so often degraded into a mere stimulant, a mere accomplishment, should not be better appreciated as a moral instrument in education. This, however, is no place for such discussions. If that hackneyed expression of Pope were true, in the sense in which it

ought to be true, that “ Men are but children of a larger growth,”—retaining the simple tastes, and pure, unsophisticated feelings of childhood—there would be little doubt of the success of these FANCIES ; but, alas ! we know that the “ child is not father of the man,” that the man too often is not the improved, but the perverted child. To address the moral faculties through the medium of imagination, for any permanent or beneficial purpose, is the last thing thought of by our legislators and educators. Fable, except as a mere nomenclature of heathen gods and goddesses, is banished from the nursery, and allegory in poetry and the fine arts is out of fashion ; it is deemed the child’s play of the intellect, fit only for the days of Dante, or Spenser, or Michel Angelo—we grown up people are wiser. By allegory in the fine arts I do not mean the application of certain vulgar conventional symbols, which good taste and good sense have deservedly exploded. With reason are we sick of all those “ hieroglyphical cattle,” as Horace Walpole terms them,—Hope leaning sentimentally on her anchor—Death shaking his hour-glass—Valour brandishing his sword—Victory flourishing her palm, and Fame puffing at her trumpet,—all these, which, in Grecian art, were lovely personifications of the ideal, have become, in the hands of our modern artists, wretched, insipid, common-places, from which we turn in disgust.

But if the representation or illustration of abstract

poetry and truth be not beyond the province of graphic art, (and who shall say it is so, because the luxuriant fancy of a Rubens once abused it to excess, and a Verrio and a Kneller depraved it into florid insignificance?) then allegory is surely the only form into which such representation could be properly thrown; but to invent a new allegory is truly no easy matter: it is to write a new poem—it is to create ideas, as well as to imitate forms.

Those who think to find in these FANCIES any thing like the threadbare symbols before alluded to, or any of the common-place prettinesses of our annuals, will be disappointed—I hope agreeably disappointed. I believe this is the first attempt, in modern art, to convey a moral precept, a religious truth, or an abstract poetical idea, by graphical representation. Of course Hogarth is not forgotten; but there can exist no more comparison between his creations and those of Retzsch, than between one of Sir Philip Sydney's sonnets, and one of Congreve's plays. These Fancies are little bits of lyric poetry, such as we find among the Italians and our own early poets who imitated them, in which a simple sentiment or idea is developed and bodied forth in the smallest compass, and in the most intelligible and elegant form. It is the great defect of this species of graphic allegory, that it requires interpretation; but it is also its great charm to awaken curiosity, and to exercise thought. It has been deemed right to give the artist's own

explanation attached to each drawing, because in each he has a distinct purpose—the intention to impress some poetical or moral truth; but many of these FANCIES may bear more than one construction, and all will be found on examination to contain that “something more than meets the eye” both of beauty and meaning.

Those who are well read in our old poets will remark how much of their spirit has fallen upon Retzsch, and how beautifully some of these Fancies might be illustrated by corresponding passages from Spenser, and from Milton. The allegory of Hope was never more elegantly or more intelligibly placed before the imagination, than in the first drawing, on which the young will gaze with a smile, and the old with a sigh. The Enigma of Human Life has something quite Miltonic, in the mingled grandeur and tenderness of the image it presents to the mind; and there are many others in Retzsch’s portfolio, not inferior in graceful and significant expression to those here given—one or two which might be deemed superior; but the province of the editor was not the selection, but the elucidation of those which are now presented to the Public. On the whole, this attempt to address the moral sentiments and the imagination, through the medium of design, may be considered new in this country, and I am inclined to think that the pure and graceful feeling, the novelty and ingenuity displayed in these Fancies, will strike at once, and make a way into the heart

for the beautiful moral lesson or poetical sentiment which will be found beneath the surface—a lovely mystery, couched in a lovely form, which, if it require a little reflection to penetrate, methinks it should be but a charm the more.

The following slight sketch of Moritz Retzsch is abridged from the account of him and his works, already given by the writer in another place.

He was born at Dresden, in 1779, and has never been far from his native place. From childhood he was a singular being, giving early indications of his imitative power by drawing, or carving in wood, resemblances of such objects as caught his attention, without the slightest idea in himself or others of becoming eventually an artist; it is even said that when he was quite a youth, his enthusiastic mind, labouring with a power which he rather felt than knew, his love of the wilder aspects of nature, and impatience of the restraints of artificial life, had nearly induced him to become a huntsman or forester (*Jäger*) in the royal service. However, at the age of twenty, his love of art became a decided vocation. His small inherited property having been dissipated during the war, he has since depended on his talents alone, and in 1824 was nominated professor of painting in the Royal Academy at Dresden. His usual residence is at his own pretty little farm, or Weinberg, a few miles from the city.

Retzsch is exceedingly striking in his appearance, with

a grand, picturesque head, and a fine, open, expressive, countenance. In his manners and mode of life, he is domestic, simple, and independent; he is married to a most amiable, sweet looking wife, and is much respected by his countrymen. Love of his home, love for his art, and the most passionate ambition for all the distinction his art can give, appear to divide an existence, which, exempt from all vicissitudes without, may be presumed happy, in spite of a most excitable and sensitive temperament, and that inequality of spirits, which is said to be so frequently combined with the gift of rare and surpassing genius.

A. J.



## C O N T E N T S.

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London, published May 1, 1834, by Saunders & Otley, 1, Fleet Street

1830



## DECEIVED HOPE.

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A group of playful children are peeping under a hat for a butterfly, which they fancy they have caught and hold secure. It is easy to see that the pursuit has been over many a summer field—through many a flowery brake: and now they bend forward in various attitudes of eagerness and expectation, to seize the promised joy. Meantime their little captive has escaped unperceived, and is fluttering away beyond their reach.

The innocent, arch delight in one little face, the eager earnestness of the other, and the fond infantine confidence and simplicity in the third, who is just peeping under the edge of the hat, are very lovely; the parable of Hope has seldom been more charmingly or more forcibly expressed.



## L'ESPOIR TROMPE.

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DES enfans enjoués, formant un groupe, soulèvent doucement un chapeau sous lequel ils croient trouver un papillon qu'ils s'imaginent avoir pris. Il est aisé de voir qu'ils l'ont poursuivi pendant l'été, à travers bien des champs, à travers bien des buissons fleuris. Maintenant, penchés en avant pour saisir leur captif, ils prennent diverses attitudes qui annoncent leur empressement, leur espoir et leur joie. Cependant leur petit prisonnier s'est échappé à leur insu, et il voltige hors de leur portée.

Le plaisir innocent et malin qui brille dans les yeux d'un de ces jeunes enfans, l'empressement ardent du second, la confiance enfantine et la simplicité du troisième, qui regarde sous le bord du chapeau, offrent le caractère le plus aimable. Rarement l'emblème de l'espérance a été présenté avec plus de force et de grâce.



## FLÜCHTIGE ANDEUTUNGEN

*zum Verständniss meiner von mir selbst radirten Fantasien.*

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### GETÄUSCHTE HOFFNUNG.

ALLEINIGE Freude gewährt meist nur die Erwartung eines Vergnügens ; denn entweder es ist zu flüchtig verschwunden, oder tritt wohl gar nicht ein, so sicher Sterbliche dessen auch zu seyn wähnen ;—diese schmerzliche Erfahrung macht auch schon das Kind. Versichert den schönen bunten Schmetterling unter dem Hute gefangen zu haben, schirken sich diese Kleinen voll Freude an, des Gefangenen habhaft zu werden, ohne zu bemerken, dass derselbe bereits entschlüpft ist, und ohne zu ahnen, dass somit die erwartete Freude im nächsten Augenblick sich in Betrübniss umwandeln wird.







## THE ENIGMA OF HUMAN LIFE.

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THE Spirit or Genius of Humanity, doomed for a season to walk this earth in ignorance and sorrow, sits meditating on the riddle of human existence, which is here represented by the gigantic Sphinx, half buried in the sands, its countenance averted, and partly veiled in clouds; around him is a desert—stony, barren, and overrun with nettles and thistles; and in his hand he holds a rose, of which the withered and fast falling leaves express the transient nature of all that is sweetest and loveliest on earth. The spectacle of sin and death, (figured by the reptile at his feet, and the lifeless bird which has perished by its fang,) fill the mourning Spirit with grief and dread; but he looks up, and behold! two butterflies, which have escaped from the chrysalids which lie on the thistle-leaf, and are soaring and sporting in the clear ether above his head: on them his eyes are fixed with a contemplative and trembling hope, and his heart glows with the conception of a higher and purer state of existence.



## L'ENIGME DE LA VIE HUMAINE.

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L'ESPRIT ou le Génie de l'Humanité, condamné, pour un temps, à rester sur cette terre dans l'ignorance et le chagrin, est assis, méditant sur l'éénigme de la vie humaine, représentée ici par le Sphinx gigantesque, à demi enterré dans les sables, la tête détournée, et cachée en partie dans les nuages. Autour de lui est un désert stérile, couvert de pierres, d'orties et de chardons. Il tient en main une rose, dont les feuilles flétries tombant rapidement indiquent le caractère passager de tout ce qu'il y a de plus doux et de plus aimable sur la terre. Le spectacle du péché et de la mort, représentés par le reptile qui est à ses pieds, et par l'oiseau que le venin du serpent a privé de la vie, remplissent l'Esprit de douleur et de crainte. Mais il lève ses regards, et voilà que deux papillons qui viennent de sortir de leurs chrysalides encore attachées à une feuille de chardon, voltigent en folatrant dans l'éther azuré qui couvre sa tête. Ses yeux pensifs se fixent sur eux avec espoir et tremblement, et son cœur s'ouvre avec ardeur à l'idée d'un état d'existence plus pur et plus élevé.



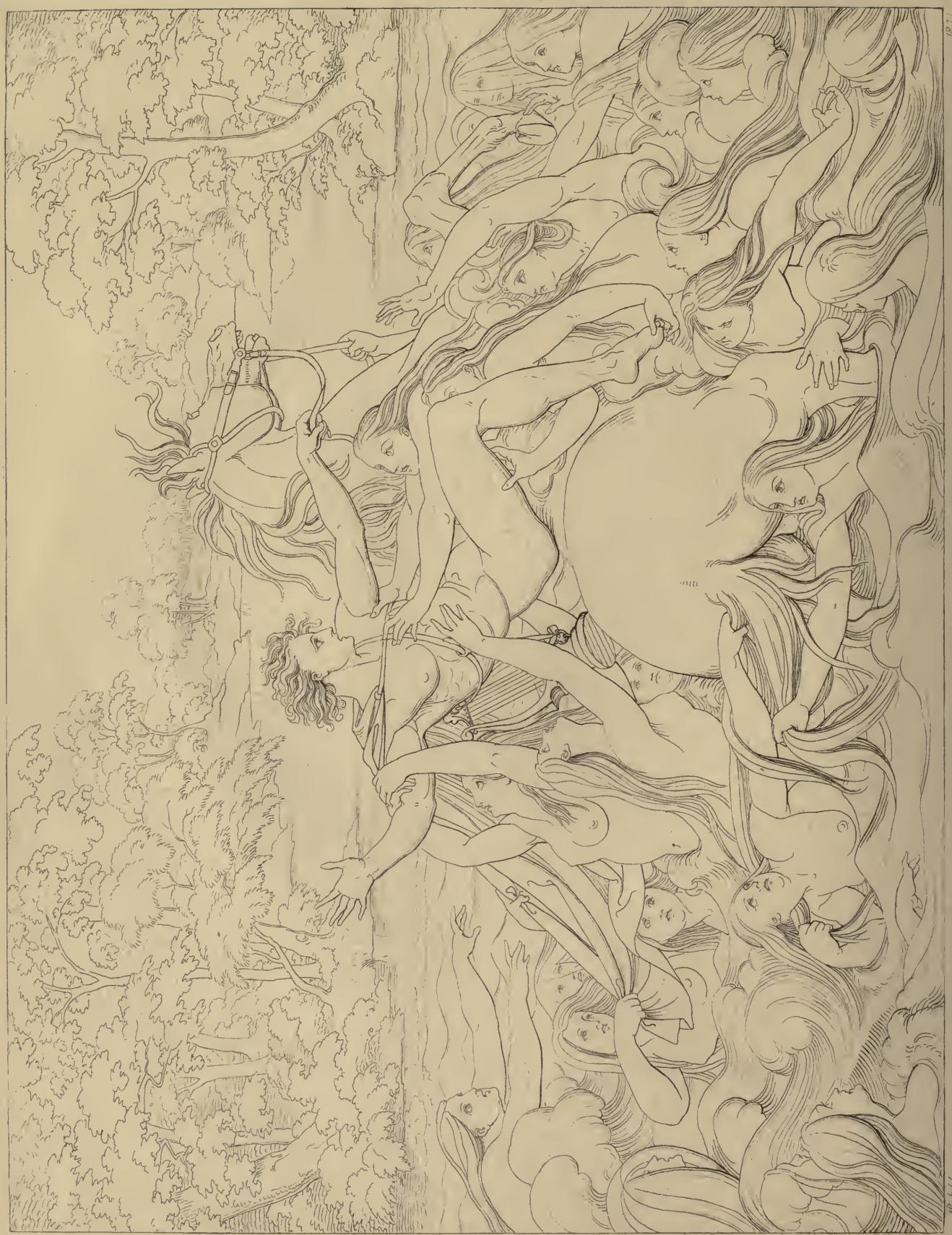
## DER MENSCHENGEIST AUF DER SPHINX.

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DER Menschengeist in kindlicher Unwissenheit auf die Erde gebannt, sitzt, auf eine Sphinx sich lehnend, über das Räthsel des Lebens nachsinnend, dessen Phisionomie (das Gesicht der Sphinx) sicheben so wenig wie das von Nebeln umhüllte Oberhaupt desselben erkennen lässt; er ist betroffen vom Anblick des Todes und des Verbrechens (der von der Schlange zu seinen Füssen gemordete unschuldige Sänger), und Schmerzhaft ergriffen und erschüttert vom Begriff der Vergänglichkeit;—das Symbol des Reizenden und Schönen, die lieblich duftende Rose, welkt und verblüht in seiner Hand, ihre ausfallenden Blätter vom Winde entführt. Nesseln und Disteln wuchern auf karem, steinig sumpfigem Boden umher, und Nebel ziehen die Ferne verhüllend, düster herauf; Trauer Wehmuth, und Angst umschleyern die Seele,—da entschlüpfen von ihm wahrgenommen, zweileicht beschwingte Tagfalter ihren auf den Blättern der Distel fest haftenden Hüllen, und heben sich in bunter Pracht, leicht und freudig aus, drückender Sphäre zum reinen lichten Aether empor; und sinnend, folgt ihnen sein ernstes Auge, erglühend in der Ahnung eines höhern schönen Seyns.







## THE FATE OF THE POET.

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THE Poet, or rather the Genius of Poetry personified, is thrown into a world, where the lofty language, and the noble aspirations of his divine art are either unknown or not understood. He endeavours to adapt himself to the sphere in which he is obliged to move, and descending from his Pegasus, which in its airy flights bore him too far above mortal ken, he is fain to mount a sorry steed of earthly lineage. Hence it happens, that in attempting to wade through some deceitful bottomless ford, (over which he ought to have been borne aloft in winged safety,) the Ondines, or water nymphs, seize and overpower him—they drag him down to their cold twilight chambers beneath the wave, where his life and sorrows find at least a poetical close.

Many a gifted spirit hath thus “felt the influence of malignant star;” and forced from his high vocation, and painfully toiling through the difficulties of the world, thus sinks beneath the wave of time, and finds, instead of fame and honour, cold oblivion, despair and death.

This beautiful and singular conception might bear several other interpretations, which are left to the imagination of those who consider it attentively; there is abundant food for meditative fancy, both in the subject, and the grace and endless variety of form and expression with which it has been treated.



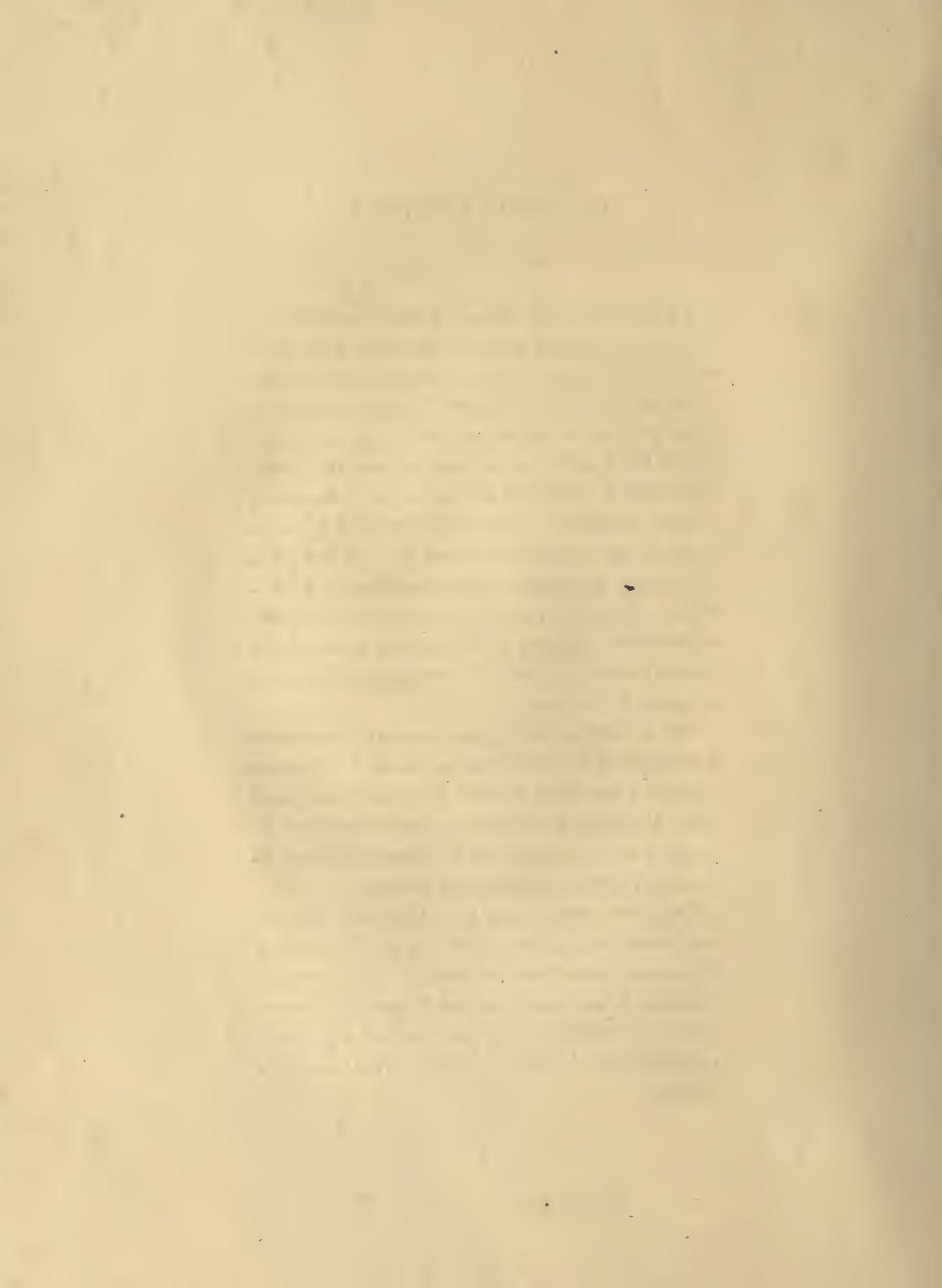
## LE DESTIN DU POETE.

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LE Poète, ou plutôt le Génie de la Poésie personnifié, est jeté dans un monde où les expressions élevées et les nobles aspirations de son art divin sont inconnues ou ne sont pas comprises. Il s'efforce de s'adapter à la sphère dans laquelle il est obligé de se mouvoir, et descendant de son Pégase qui lui faisoit prendre un essor trop au dessus de la portée des mortels, il est forcé de monter une pauvre Rossinante de race terrestre, il en résulte qu'en essayant de passer à gué une eau trompeuse et profonde, au dessus de laquelle son coursier ailé l'auroit transporté sans danger, les Ondines, ou les Nymphes des eaux, le saisissent, en triomphant, et l'entraînent dans leurs demeures froides et sombres au dessous des ondes, où sa vie et ses chagrins trouvent du moins une fin poétique.

Bien des esprits, doués de grands talens, ont éprouvé ainsi “l'influence d'une constellation malfaisante.” Forcés de renoncer à leur haute vocation, ils luttent péniblement contre les vagues du monde, sont engloutis par les eaux du temps, et au lieu d'honneur et de renommée, trouvent les glaces de l'oubli, du désespoir et de la mort.

On pourroit donner à cette belle et singulière idée plusieurs autres interprétations, qui sont laissées à l'imagination de ceux qui y réfléchiront avec attention. Il y a une source abondante de méditations tant dans le sujet en lui même, que dans la manière gracieuse avec laquelle il a été traité, et dans la variété infinie de l'expression et des formes qu'il présente.



## DER DICHTER IN DER GEWALT DER UNDINEN.

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UM in der Welt fortzukommen, das heisst, sein Brod zu haben und verstanden zu werden, ist die personificirte Poesie (der Dichter) meist nothgedrungen, antsatt den Pegasus oft besteigen zu können, in höhere Regionen aufzu, steigen, und in Begeisterung von Erhabenen Dingen zu sprechen, (welche Dinge und Sprache dem grossen Haufen der prosaischen Weltleute unbekannt und gänzlich unverständlich sind) fast ausschliesslich einen gewöhnlichen Gaul zu reiten, wodurch er, so auf niederer Bahn fortzutraben gezwungen, spät oder früh ins Wasser der Alltäglichkeit gerathend, gar bald seinen Untergang findend, noch glücklich zu preisen ist, wenn die Undinen ihn in ihr feuchtes Reich herabziehen, und er sonach noch ein poetisches Ende mimmt.

Wie viele hochbegabte Künstler-und Dichter-genien, verschwinden im Wellenschlag der Zeit, mehr oder weniger auf ähnliche Weise.







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In 30

August 1895

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## LOVE AND THE MAIDEN.

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LOVE, pretending to be sick or overcome with sleep, is thus found by an innocent girl, who compassionately takes the little cheat upon her back, and carries him home to her dwelling to nurse and restore him. There he will probably make her feel (like Anacreon of old) the true attributes of the guest she has harboured.

There is exquisite grace and simplicity in this little group. The declined head and sleepy eyes of the Cupid, and the lovely expression of the female, need hardly be pointed out to admiration.



## L'AMOUR ET LA JEUNE FILLE.

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L'AMOUR, feignant d'être malade ou accablé de sommeil, est ainsi trouvé par une jeune fille innocente, qui, par compassion, prend le petit trompeur sur ses épaules, et le porte chez elle pour en prendre soin et lui rendre la santé. Là, il lui fera probablement sentir, comme jadis à Anacréon, quels sont les véritables attributs de l'hôte qu'elle a accueilli.

Il y a une grâce et une simplicité exquises dans ce petit groupe. Il est à peine besoin d'appeler l'admiration sur la tête penchée et les yeux assoupis de Cupidon, et sur l'expression aimable de la physionomie de la jeune fille.



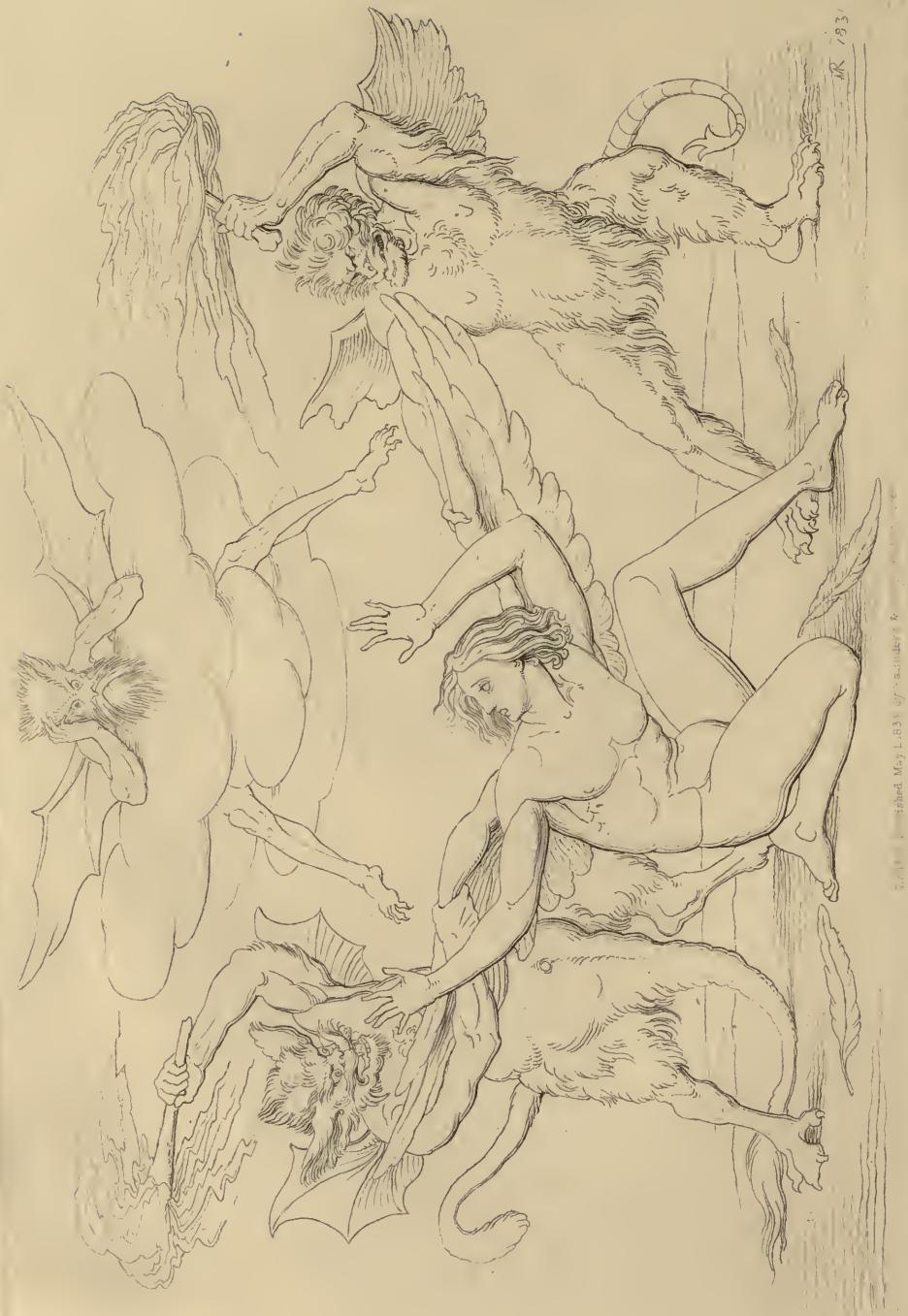
## AMOR UND DAS MÄDCHEN.

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AMOR sich krank oder schlaftrunken stellend, wird von einem jungen unschuldigen Mädchen mitleidig auf den Rücken genommen, um denselben nach ihrer Wohnung zu tragen und da zu pflegen; was ihr der Schalk nach seiner Weise wohl bitter vergelten wird







Published May 1, 1834, by J. C. H. & Co.

MR 1834

## THE TORMENTED SPIRIT.

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A good angel or genius is vainly struggling in the power of two demons who are tearing the plumes from his outstretched wings, and shake their infernal torches over his head. The Tormented Spirit looks upward for aid, but sees, interposing between himself and compassionate Heaven, the fiend, by whose mandate he is thus afflicted. There are those among the best and most gifted of human spirits, who suffer for a time under the agonizing influence of evil thoughts and unknown sin. With torn and ruffled pinions they grovel on the earth for a season, till their plumes are renewed, and they spring with fresh vigour into the regions of imagination.

“ What man is he that boasts of fleshly might,  
And vain assurance of mortality,  
Which all so soon as he doth come to fight  
Against spiritual foes, yields by and by,  
Or from the field most cowardly doth fly !  
Ne let that man ascribe it to his skill,  
That thro’ high grace hath gained victory ;  
If any strength we have it is to ill,  
But all the good is God’s, both power and eke the will.”

SPENSER.



## L'ESPRIT TOURNENTE.

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UN bon ange ou un bon génie lutte en vain contre le pouvoir de deux démons qui arrachent les plumes de ses ailes déployées, et qui secouent sur sa tête leurs torches infernales. L'esprit tourmenté lève les yeux comme pour demander du secours, mais il voit entre lui et le ciel compatisant l'être diabolique par l'ordre duquel il est ainsi persécuté. Parmi les meilleurs des esprits humains, parmi ceux qui ont reçu le plus de dons du ciel, il en est qui souffrent pour un temps sous l'influence cruelle de mauvaises pensées et de péchés inconnus. Incapables de prendre l'essor, ils rampent quelque temps sur la terre ; mais enfin les plumes de leurs ailes repoussent, et ils s'élancent avec une nouvelle vigueur dans les régions de l'imagination.

“ Quel est l'homme qui, fier de sa force physique, et comptant vainement sur la faiblesse humaine ne cède pas la victoire, ou ne fuit pas lâchement du champ de bataille, quand il a à combattre des ennemis spirituels ? Que celui qui, par le secours d'en haut, est resté victorieux, ne s'en attribue pas la gloire. Si nous avons quelque force, c'est pour le mal ; mais tout le bien procède du pouvoir et de la volonté de Dieu.”

SPENSER.



## DES GENIUS GEISSLUNG.

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ÜBERFALLEN und niedergeworfen von zwei kräftigen Unholden, die ihn mit Flamengeisseln furchtbar auspeitschen, und fest bei den Schwingen gehalten, wodurch manche Schwungfeder verloren geht, strebt vergebens dieser Engel sie zum Mitleid zu bewegen, und sich frei zu machen; auf das Gebot ihres auf einer Wolke reitenden, sich an den Qualen des gepeinigten weidenden Obern, lassen sie nicht eher nach, bis ihnen ein anderes Opfer angewiesen wird. So gepeinigt und gestraft für unbekannte Schuld fühlt sich gar oft der gute Engel im bessern Menschen, und vermag nichts dagegen zu thun als auszuhalten und zü dulden; er verliert auf einige Zeit die Schwungkraft, bis die verletzten Schwingen durch neue Federn ersetzt, neue Kraft zum Aufschwung erhalten.







London, Published May 1, 1934 by Saunders & Otley, Commercial Street.

MR.  
930.

## LOVE REPOSING.

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False love ! why do men say thou canst not see,  
And in their foolish fancy feign thee blind ?  
That with thy charms the sharpest sight dost bind,  
And to thy will abuse ?

SPENSER.

CUPID, tired of his sport, has flung down his bow and quiver, and lies stretched at the foot of a tree, where he reposes with half-shut eyes, laughing to himself at his past exploits, and meditating new mischief.



## L'AMOUR SE REPOSANT.

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“Amour trompeur ! pourquoi dit-on que tu ne peux voir ? Pourquoi la folle imagination des hommes te peint elle aveugle ; toi dont les charmes savent abuser les yeux les plus clair-voyans, et leur faire voir ce que bon te semble ?”

SPENSER.

CUPIDON, las de ses folies, a jeté par terre son arc et son carquois et s'est étendu au pied d'un arbre. Il s'y repose, les yeux à demi fermés, riant en lui même de ses exploits passés, et méditant de nouvelles malices.

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(P.S.)

## DER LIEGENDE AMOR.

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AMOR, behaglich an einem Baum hingestreckt, blickt lächelnd und verschmitzt, mit halbgeschlossenen Augen, nach irgend einem Gegenstand, Mädchen oder Knabe, und scheint auf Neckerei zu sinnen; seine Waffen liegen nachlässig hingeworfen umhers unweit von ihm das Taubenpaar seiner Mutter sich schnäbelnd.

MORITZ RETZSCH.





