

The Fortune-Teller,

A Gypsy Tale.

By Mrs. Mary Robinson

LUBIN and KATE, as gossips tell,
Were Lovers many a day;
LUBIN the damsel lov'd so well,
That folks pretend to say
The silly, simple, doting Lad,
Was little less than loving mad:
A malady not known of late—
Among the little-loving Great!

KATE liked the youth; but woman-kind
Are sometimes giv'n to range.
And oft, the giddy Sex, we find,
(They know not why)
When most they promise, soonest change,
And still for conquest sigh
So 'twas with KATE; she, ever roving
Was never fix'd; though always loving!

STEPHEN was LUBIN'S rival; he
A rustic libertine was known;
And many a blushing simple She,
The rogue had left,—to sigh alone!
KATE cared but little for the rover,
Yet she resolv'd to have her way,
For STEEHEN was the village Lover,
And women pant for Sov'reign sway.
And he, who has been known to ruin,
Is always sought, and always wooing.

STEPHEN had long in secret sigh'd;
And STEPHEN never was deny'd:
Now, LUBIN was a modest swain,
And therefore, treated with disdain:
For, it is said, in *Love* and *War*,—
The boldest, most successful are!

Vows, were to him but fairy things
Borne on capricious Fancy's wings;
And promises, the Phantom's Airy
Which falsehood form'd to cheat th' unwary;
For still deception was his trade,

And though his traffic well was known,
Still, every trophy was his own
Which the proud Victor, Love, display'd.
In short, this STEPHEN was the bane
Of ev'ry maid,—and ev'ry swain!

KATE had too often play'd the fool,
And now, at length, was caught;
For she, who had been pleas'd to rule,
Was now, poor Maiden, taught!
And STEPHEN rul'd with boundless sway,
The rustic tyrant of his day.

LUBIN had giv'n inconstant KATE,
Ten pounds, to buy her wedding geer
And now, 'tis said, tho' somewhat late,
He thought his bargain rather dear.
For, Lo! The day before the pair
Had fix'd, the marriage chain to wear,
A Gypsy gang, a wand'ring set,
In a lone wood young LUBIN met.
All round him press with canting tale,
And, in a jargon, well design'd
To cheat the unsuspecting mind,
His list'ning ears assail.

Some promis'd riches; others swore
He should, by women, be ador'd;
And never sad, and never poor—
Live like a Squire, or Lord;—
Do what he pleas'd, and ne'er be brought
To shame,—for what he did, or thought;
Seduce mens wives and daughters fair,
Spend wealth, while others toil'd in vain,
And scoff at honesty, and swear,—
And scoff and trick, and swear again!

One roguish Girl, with sparkling eyes,
To win the handsome LUBIN tries;
She smil'd, and by her speaking glance,
Enthrall'd him in a wond'ring trance;
He thought her lovelier far than KATE,
And wish'd that she had been his mate;
For when the FANCY is on wing,
VARIETY'S a dangerous thing:
And PASSIONS, when they learn to stray
Will seldom seldom keep the beaten way.

The gypsy girl, with speaking eyes,
Observ'd her pupil's fond surprize,
She begg'd that he her hand would cross,
 With Sixpence; and that He should know
His future scene of gain and loss,
 His weal and woe.—

LUBIN complies. And straight he hears
That he had many long, long years;
That he a maid inconstant, loves,
Who, to another slyly roves.
That, a dark man his bane will be—
“And poison his domestic hours;
“While a fair woman, treach'rously—
 “Will dress his brow—with thorns and flow'rs!”
It happen'd, to confirm his care—
STEPHEN was *dark*,—and KATE was *fair*!
Nay more that “home his bride would bring
“A little, alien, prattling thing

“In just six moons!” Poor LUBIN hears
All that confirms his jealous fears;
Perplex'd and frantic, what to do
The cheated Lover scarcely knew.
He flies to KATE, and straight he tells
The wonder that in magic dwells!
Speaks of the Fortune-telling crew,
And how all things the Vagrants knew;
KATE hears: and soon determines, she
Will know *her* future destiny.

Swift to the wood she hies, tho' late
To read the tablet of her Fate.
The Moon its crystal beam scarce shew'd
Upon the darkly shadow'd road;
The hedge row was the feasting-place
Where, round a little blazing wood,
The wand'ring, dingy, gabbling race,
 Crowded in merry mood.

And now she loiter'd near the scene.
Now peep'd the hazle copse between;
Fearful that LUBIN might be near
The story of her Fate to hear,—
She saw the feasting circle gay
By the stolen faggot's yellow light;
She heard them, as in sportive play,
They cheer'd the sullen gloom of night.

Nor was sly KATE by all unseen
Peeping, the hazle copse between.

And now across the thicket side
A tatter'd, skulking youth she spied;
He beckon'd her along, and soon,
Hid safely from the prying moon,
His hand with silver, thrice she crosses—
“Tell me,” said she, “my gains and losses?”

“You gain a *fool*,” the youth replies,
You lose a *lover* too.”
The false one blushes deep, and sighs,
For well the truth she knew!
“You gave to STEPREN, vows; nay mare
“You gave him favors rare:
“And LUBIN is condemn'd to share
“What many others shar'd before!
“A false, capricious, guilty heart,
“Made up of folly, vice, and art,
“Which only takes a wedded mate
“To brand with shame, an husband's fate,”

“Hush! hush!” cried KATE, for Heav'ns sake be
“As secret as the grave—
“For LUBIN means to marry me—
“And if you will not me betray,
“I for your silence well will pay;
“*Five pounds* this moment you shall have.”—
“I will have TEN!” the gypsy cries—
The fearful, trembling girl complies.
But, what was her dismay, to find
That LUBIN was the gypsy bold;
The cunning, fortune-telling hind
Who had the artful story told—
Who thus, was cur'd of jealous pain,—
“*And got his TEN POUNDS back again!*”

Thus, Fortune pays the LOVER bold!
But, gentle Maids, should Fate
Have any *secret* yet untold,—
Remember, *simple* KATE!