

THE BOOK OF RIDDLES

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The Book of Riddles by Anonymous

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ANONYMOUS

THE BOOK OF RIDDLES



Pastimes for the Parlour.

THE
BOOK OF RIDDLES,

CONTAINING

CHARADES,
ENIGMAS,
CONUNDRUMS,
REBUSES,

PUZZLES,
ANAGRAMS,
ACTING CHARADES,
ACTING PROVERBS, &c.

BY

The Editors of "The Lady's Library."

LONDON:
DARTON & CO., 58, HOLBORN HILL.

1851.

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P R E F A C E.

WHILST so many admirably-conducted periodicals devote a portion of their columns to the proposal and solution of Riddles of various classes, it may seem somewhat presumptuous to offer to the public a brochure like the following. Yet it has not been done without mature consideration, and a conviction that it promised to be an acceptable gift in many family circles. I formed this belief on two grounds: in the first place, a style of literature (if, indeed, Riddle-making may aspire to being considered as a branch of the mighty "tree of knowledge") which depends so much on a mere play of words, is occasionally apt to merit but too well the definitions which Johnson gives of it—"a low jest,

a vulgar conceit;" secondly, although there are thousands of Riddles which reflect equal honour on the talents and the taste of the inventors, there are, also, many quite unfit for the school-room circle. They also possess another demerit in the eyes of young children: they are seldom sufficiently obvious to allow them the great pleasure of guessing them; and, if the expression of the face is to be trusted, it is but dull work to listen to the propounding of a series of conundrums which are above our capacity. Many a time have I watched the group of little eager faces, bright at first with hope and ambition, as a number of Riddles were proposed, gradually lose all animation and interest, as one after another was "given up,"—and regretted that some, at least, of the collection, were not more suited to the powers of the youngest members of the party, even though such simple Riddles might appear beneath the dignity of the elder branches of the group. And, therefore, in gratitude to

dear children, to whose society I have been indebted for most, if not all, of the happy hours of my life, I have endeavoured to repay to the many the affection of the few, by giving them this very simple book, in which, I think and hope, even very little children may find something they can like, because something they can guess. During the last twelve months I have given novel occupations in needlework to thousands; let me hope that, whilst mammas and elder sisters patronise my "Library," the present book may be a favourite in the Nursery and the School-room.

Perhaps a few words on the different sorts of Riddles may not be unacceptable.

We are all familiar with the classical story of

" The Theban monster that proposed
Her riddle;—and him who solved it not, devoured;
That, once found out and solved, for grief and spight
Cast herself headlong from the Ismenian steep; "