

[From the Ladies' Companion.]

LOVE IN A LANTERN.

I HAVE often thought of the associations of a lantern. A common utensil! it has witnessed many a queer and many a severe joke—many a sad and many a glad tale. It is not of modern origin—whether Noah had one in the ark or not, is not yet sufficiently ascertained to be affirmed: but, this much I do know, Diogenes had one which he held in the face of every person he met with, while endeavoring to find an honest man on earth; and the lantern of Demosthenes rests, somewhat *opaque* to be sure, upon the Acropolis of Athens, at the present moment. Guy Fawkes endeavoured to blow up the parliament of England, King James and all, with his lantern: and Sir John Moore was buried on the heights of Corrunna,

"By the struggling moon-beam's misty light,
And the lantern's dimly burning."

Shakspeare had much to do with lanterns: and the grave-digger, the man who represented the moon, and the carrier on Gadshill, all introduced the lantern to full communion with the drama. In the Celestial Empire, the Chinaman and his lantern are wedded together.—When the British frigate, *Alceste*, Captain Maxwell, fired upon the battery at Anna hoy, the Chinese soldiers it is said abandoned the fort, having been influenced *by that fear of being killed*, which generally thins off a newly raised army more effectually than the camp fever, small-pox, or cold plague. In this flight, however, they could not leave their lanterns behind them, but each one took his dearly beloved transparency and clambered with it up the steep hill-side behind the fort. The sight of an army with lighted lanterns ascending the rugged cliff, was ludicrous in the extreme, and the long pig-tails that dangled from the bald pates of both rank and file, seemed ready to *point a moral* or adorn a *tale*. The Royal marines in the tops of the *Alceste*, were so much convulsed with laughter at the sight, that not one of the pig-

tailed heroes fell before their hitherto deadly fire. Truly, in the multitude of lanterns, there *was* safety. The Feast of Lanterns, when the natives "chin chin jos, ie, give thanks to God," is a splendid affair—then the lantern is seen in its perfection. It is computed by travellers, that two hundred millions of these gorgeous lamps are exhibited at one time, shedding their crimson light throughout the Chinese Empire. He who feels thankful hangs out his light, and you might as well expect a son of New-England to celebrate thanksgiving without a turkey, as for a Chinaman to "chin chin jos," without a lantern.

During the French Revolution, (I mean that of blood and terror,) the lanterns in the streets of large cities enabled the midnight mobs to hang the proscribed royalists more expeditiously. Every lantern-post became a gallows, and '*mort par le lanterne*,' signified death by cordage. Well might this harmless utensil have been termed a death-light in that night of blood, for it enabled many a man to *see how* to take his leap in the *dark*, and then flared in solemn splendor over his dangling corpse.—Lanterns have gleamed in the dungeon and at the altar, and in the palace of the gold worshipper. They have shone from the spires of beacon-lights, to the lowest depths of the damp and dismal mine—from the hands of watchmen in the drizzly streets of a smoke choked city, to the quarter galleries of a three decked admiral, dashing proudly along the foam-capped bosom of the deep.—Lanterns have lighted to love, to battle, to treason, to murder, to the gallows and to the grave. One hangs above Mahomet's sacred pantaloons, in the mosque of Saint Sophia in Constantinople, with a verse from the Alcoran, on its side: and another hangs in the capitol of the United States, not far below the speaker's chair, with the significant notice of "hot coffee and pig's feet," staring in red paint at the adventurous visitor, who *Æneas* like descends to the abode of spirits. Truly, in that magnificent house of the people,