

devil, and we had fair play, I would not turn my back on him."

"Many have talked in the same strain, who were not able to make good their words," replied the prince, more attentively surveying the kindling brow and bold bearing of his companion; and struck with the fearlessness of his demeanour, more than once suspected he was conversing with the dreaded bandit himself. But the king considering his scrutiny as an implied doubt of his courage, answered with some indignation:

"Now, by St. Herbertus! I am no vain boaster; and will make good my words before the moon which glimmers so brightly on our path is an hour older. I swear on the honour of a true knight, to restore the princess to her father, or bring the head of Wolfenstien in lieu of the lady!"

So saying he plunged among the trees, leaving Prince George confounded at his rashness, and not very well pleased at finding himself solus in the depth of the forest.

"This Wolfenstien, must be a brave fellow," said the king, as he forced his passage through the trees, "who can thus contend with a whole nation, yet keep the place of his retreat unknown. By heaven, I should esteem his friendship of more worth than that of half the court sycophants with whom I have lately herded."

While busied in these reflections he descended a rugged path between two hills, which terminated in a lonely valley, through which a small but turbulent stream poured its slender waters. Worn out both in mind and body, the king sat down on a large stone, and began seriously to revolve on the perils of his situation, and the unpleasant prospect of spending the rest of the night with the wild beasts of the forest.

The romantic enterprize he had undertaken began to wear a more serious aspect; and for the first time he calmly asked himself, "what business a king, the father of a brave and loyal people, had so far from his own dominions, and engaged in such a wild adventure?" From these unpleasant reflections he was roused by a female voice, speaking near him in the tone of earnest supplication.

He sprang to his feet, and grasping his sword as three armed men, leading a lady in a hunting dress, emerged from the rocky defile through which he had entered the glen.

"I do not plead to you as robbers whose trade is to kill," she said in a persuasive voice; "for in that case I should have small hope of obtaining mercy at your hands; but I appeal to you as men, as fellow creatures, possessing human hearts and human feelings, and liable to all the ills and sorrows that afflict mankind; pity my present sufferings, restore me to an aged father, by this time overwhelmed with grief for my loss."

"Lady, we are not insensible to your tears, or

deaf to your entreaties," said the foremost robber. "we are men whom circumstances have rendered desperate but not cruel."

"If such be the case," returned the weeping girl; "you will grant my request; I will secure you from all punishment, and the Elector will amply reward you for the mercy you extend to me."

"Your supplications, noble maiden, must be addressed to our captain—we are his followers, and you are his prize."

The princess shuddered, and covered her face with her slender fingers, as if she already encountered the glance of the dreaded Wolfenstien, when Gustavus, springing forward and brandishing aloft his sword, exclaimed in the voice of one used to command obedience:

"I will dispute your captain's claim—resign the lady, or dread the vengeance of this arm!"

"We have much to fear from one man against three, and that one a beardless stripling," said the former spokesman, with an ironical laugh; "are you my lady's page, or my lord's squire? or which do you think, young sir, most likely to be proof against a steel bullet, your gay riding cloak or our coats of steel?"

"Many a soft garment covers an iron heart!" retorted the king, laying with a side blow, the man that held the princess insensible at his feet; "my masters, how like you this rough play?"

Exasperated at the sight of their comrade's blood, the robbers resigned the fainting Eleonora to the bosom of her mother earth, and were in the act of closing with the intrepid prince, when a stern voice from behind called loudly upon them to desist.

The robbers drew back with a low discontented murmur, as a tall man in a dark hunting dress, with pistols in his belt and a carbine across his shoulder, joined the hostile group.

"How! two to one, on that unarmed stripling!" he cried, sternly surveying the party; "is this according to our rules? Away to the south—you will find more powerful foes to contend with—leave me to cope with this stranger."

The men slowly and sullenly retired, and Wolfenstien, (for it was the bandit chief,) turning to the king, said in a gay and careless tone:

"Sir Knight, shall we try our skill, and run a fair tilt for the lady?"

"You have anticipated my wishes, brave outlaw," returned the king; "I have pledged my knightly honour to restore the princess to her father, or bring him your head in lieu of the lady."

The robber started, and for a few seconds surveyed the youthful monarch with an air of troubled interest.

"You have resigned too much on one stake, young valour—yet 'twere almost a sin to quench in darkness this gallant dawning of a glorious day," he continued in a thoughtful tone; "return, noble