

hounds of Warwick; save as his king was again an exile afar from the land of his fathers; save as her own and only daughter was imperilled by her loyalty. For, though her vassals had returned, the gray haired seneschal who led them to the field, and who had fought beside her husband's rein in Guineo and Poitou, was yet a fugitive, wounded and weak, as tidings had already reached her, not daring to return to his own home, whither most certainly he should be hunted—for the good knight who bore her banner, Sir Amelot de Manhower, was in like plight, and only bade her trust that banner to his keeping, for it was bound about his breast, till brighter days should come, and it should fly again for Exremont and Lancaster—for she had one fair daughter, the flower of all the daisies; and even now she stammered as she thought how the bloody and licentious Edward might wreak his vengeance on herself, upon that innocent and lovely child. She shuddered, but she struck not for one instant from her fealty; nor hesitated, even in her innocent heart, from battling yet again for Lancaster, as soon as Henry's banner should be spread again to British breezes.

While thus she sat, her tall and stately figure clad in the darkest weeds, bending above the pictured mural, her snow white locks straying disheveled over her neck and shoulders, her dark eyes fixed on vacancy, a light and joyous step came bounding down the stone turret stairway, and paused for a moment at the door, as if in doubt whether it might enter.

But the lady heard not, heeded not, till a fluttering hand turned the ponderous lock, and the fleet foot crossed the threshold with a step so light-some, as told sure tidings of a happy heart inspiring it.

It was as beautiful a girl as ever cheered a widowed mother's solitude, not past her eighteenth summer, and looking yet more youthful than she was, from the extreme brilliancy and brightness of her pure complexion, the sunny loveliness of her long golden tresses, and the expression of exquisite innocence and candor which lighted up her large azure eyes. The Lady of Barden raised her eyes and fixed them fondly on her child, and a mournful smile played over her pallid features as she looked upon her, joyous soul and radiant in the midst of peril and distress.

"Ever gay, ever joyous, Eleanor," she said, with a half reproachful gesture of the head; "and what can you find in these dark and dreadful days, to light up that merry beacon in your eye, to kindle that gay smile upon your lip? But, youth! youth! it is still the part of youth to hope, as it is of age, and age, to despair."

"Nay, mother dear," said the girl, in a whisper, when she stood close beside the lady's foot-stool, having closed the door carefully behind her, "but there is cause of joy now, yes, great cause of joy, for he has returned, and safely, too, or, at least, not badly wounded, and is hard by, looking to us, as well he may, for succor."

"Who has returned? Whom do you mean, Eleanor?"

"Whom do I mean, mother?" she exclaimed, her cheek paling for the moment with the intensity of her feeling. "Whom should I mean but Amelot?"

"Sir Amelot de Manhower?" replied the lady. "I had not thought of this. He should not have come. What shall we do to save him? There is a Yorkist force even now at Seville." Thus far she had spoken musingly, as if in thoughtful communion with herself; but now her eye brightened, and she inquired quickly, "But how can you know this? Where is Sir Amelot? Is he within the tower. Why came he not with his report to me, instead of forcing you into this peril?"

"No, dearest mother," replied the girl, eagerly, "my maiden, Marian, brought me the tidings up. She was down in the glen at sunset, ere the storm came on; and, seeing her, he crawled out from his hiding place, and bade her bring you tidings

that he was hidden in the cavern under the first fall, and that no man could take him there, for that he only knows its secret. But he lacks food and wine, and the means of procuring light, which he prays you send him."

"And why brought she not the news to me? Why did she tarry so long on the way? She must have known that these five hours."

"She dared not leave the supper-table before my hour for retiring; and dared not seek your presence, with whom she had no duty to perform, lest she should so create suspicion."

"If that were but the reason!" said the lady, relapsing into thought. "But that boy, that page, Damian! I doubt her—I doubt her much, Eleanor. Why should she have told you? Does she know that you love him, Nell?"

"Mother!" exclaimed the agitated girl, with the conscious blood flushing crimson to her brow, her cheeks, her neck. "No one—no one knows that. I don't—I don't know, mother! What mean you, mother mine!" And she burst into a flood of tears, and sank into a chair, overpowered and exhausted by the mere force of her own feelings.

The lady walked up slowly to her fair child's side and laying both her withered hands in the attitude of benediction on that fair, sunny head—

"Be comforted, my own sweet child. Weep not; but little can you guess what a mother knows or knows not, whose best child's happiness is staked. Eleanor, I have known, have seen all this a year and over."

"You have seen—have known all, mother!" cried she, starting to her feet, and gazing into her mother's eyes with nascent hope. "Then you do not—you do—I mean—not disapprove! You, ah! you pardon me?"

"If I had disapproved, I had interposed to prevent. For the rest, Eleanor, I trust—have I aught to pardon?"

"I do love him, mother."

"And he knows it?"

"He might hope, might perhaps fancy—but I—Oh, mother, you do not dream that I ever told him?"

"Nor he you, Eleanor?"

"Had he but whispered it without your sanction, then I had not loved him."

"Then you have loved, yourself unloved. Is it so, Eleanor?"

"Mother, no! Can you think it of me?" she exclaimed, indignantly, and again she crimsoned.

"You said he never whispered it," replied the lady, half-suppressing a smile. "How then can you know it?"

"Never in words, mother; but his manner—his voice—his eyes. Oh, mother, do not do not, you must know what I mean."

"Perfectly, dearest. His manner, his voice, and his eyes told you what he dreamed of, and yours replied as plainly. But now to the point; does Marian know or suspect aught, think you, of these—these love passages?"

"I am certain—no, as certain as that I live."

"Send her to me at once. I distrust her sorely. There have been passages, I know, between her and the page Damian; and he sought leave of me as the curfew rang, to go down to the Abbot's forester. Send her to me at once; and bid Geoffrey, the warder, take arms, with two of his best men, and wait my call in the anteroom."

Eleanor, not unwilling to escape farther questioning, and to gain time to collect her senses, bounded from the hall; and, giving the lady's orders to the warder, hurried up to her turret chamber, and sent the girl down to her mother's presence. "Then falling on her knees by her own bedside, she thanked, from the depths of her guileless heart, the Giver of all good for the blessings he had that night granted her, and prayed, among last-flowing tears, half of joy, half of sorrow, for protection to her loved Amelot."

The interview between the dreaded lady, and the girl, Marian, was but brief; for, terrified and ready and self-conscious, she could no more endure the lady's piercing eye and calm, hard, cutting questions than the partridge can the talons and the beak of the keen goshawk. Within ten

minutes from entering the hall, the lady's voice was heard, "Without there!" And, at the word all steel from helm to shoe, with bill and bow and broadsword, the stout retainers entered.

They found the lady, impassive as her wont, writing upon a strip of parchment, and the girl prostrate at her feet, in an agony of tears and terror.

"Here, Jansen," said the lady, as she finished her writing, "bear this scroll forthwith to the sub-prior of Bolton; and, hark you, put this wench upon a palfrey and carry her down with you to the abbey. There leave her in keeping of the Father Janitor. That done, await the sub-prior's orders. Perform them, be they what they may, and that with all due diligence. Tush, wench!" she added; "tears are vain, no supplicating. You should have thought of these things ere you thought to deal in treason. Lose no time, Jansen, honor and life depend upon your diligence and fealty."

The stately henchmen bowed, and leading the unhappy girl away, half carried in the arms of his followers—for, ignorant what fate awaited her, she was now all but fainting—he left the proud, impassive lady to her own melancholy meditations.

They were not long, however; for, lighting a taper from her lamp, she opened a private doorway at the farther end of the hall, and ascending a narrow staircase to an upper story, soon stood, unseen and unsuspected, at the door of her daughter's chamber.

Already had that fair young being fallen into the light and happy sleep of innocence and peace; but need was that she should be aroused; and long and anxious was the consultation that ensued on her awakening.

It had already struck the first hour past midnight, and the bells for primo were already pealing up the deep glen from Bolton's hoary towers, ere, with a heartfelt blessing; and a parting memento to be asir with the lark or before him, the mother left her child to dream of future bliss, alas! not unmixd with future peril.

Perhaps even then she had not left her, but that a hoarse resounding challenge from the gate tower warned her that probably her emissaries had returned; and, in truth, she had scarce re-trimmed her lamp, and resumed her seat in the great hall, where of late she had held vigils all the well nigh morning, before an esquire reverently entered to say that the warder craved a hearing of the lady.

The man had little to relate, however. The sub-prior, he said, had sent the ballist for the forester, and had questioned him, for some time in private, when, with the simple word that "it was too late!" he had dismissed them. The girl, Marian, he had heard, was committed to the penitentiary cell.

"You have done well, Jansen," answered the lady. "But you have more to do. Keep watch and ward yourself to night, with half the garrison in arms; suffer no one to enter or go out before noon to-morrow, saving the Lady Eleanor, who will go forth mounted at daybreak. If the page Damian show himself before the gates, bend your own trusty bow and send a cloth-yard arrow to his heart. For the rest, if any band of marauding Yorkists show themselves on our side the Wharfe, ring banchoche and fire beacon till all the country is aroused, and then tip the bell; and cry 'Egremont for Lancaster, and give no quarter!'"

The man bowed low, and was retiring silently, when a sign checked him.

"How goes the night, Jansen? and how promises the morrow?"

"The storm has rolled away to the east, lady; the moon is up. It will be fair morn the morrow."

She waved him his dismissal; and, within half an hour, except the warder at the gate house; and the sentinels along the walls, there was not an eye open within the walls of Barden Tower.

Lying ere the sun was up, however, a light foot glided down the castle stair; and the delicate