

Had been spent in vain.

See here! may yonder
Have I cast my vest, and in it crushed,
The letter lies concealed, which yesternorn
Revealed this startling news.

As he speaks, Susanne looks stealthily around her, and seeing the garment lying on the grass a few paces from her, she snatches it up unperceived, and runs away with it towards the place where Florine is awaiting her.

SCENE, as in the plate.—The two girls sitting under a broad oak.—Florine holds an open letter in her hand.—Susanne leans against her shoulder while she reads as if to screen her from observation.—Gaston and Lewis are seen in the distance, still in earnest talk.

SUSANNE, (glances furtively towards them as she speaks.)

Fear naught, Florine;
I will keep watch while thou dost read the lines;
They heed us not, for still they hold discourse
Of their dark plot. Little doth Gaston wot,
How cunningly he's trapped in his own snare.

FLORINE.

Ah! wicked wretch! and he so seeming fair!
So smooth of speech, so full of gentle words
And loving acts! But his reward is won,—
I fear him not, since these dear lines are mine,
Writ by my Leon's hand;—dear words of love, (presses
the letter to her lips.)

Sweet, sweet they are, filling my weary heart
With joy and peace. Ah! soon he will be here,
Perchance this eve, this bright and blessed eve
To claim his bride, to live henceforth for her,
For home and love! Saith he not this? See here, (showing
her the letter.)

Ay, read it for thyself. Dear, kind Susanne!
To thee I owe it, that I now behold
Those precious words.

SUSANNE.

Of Gaston's truth, Florine,
Long hath my mind harboured a secret doubt,
Which grew of late, because he shunned me oft,
Seeing, perchance, that I distrusted him,
For guilt is cowardly, and though it triumph,
Ne'er can know true peace. But yonder, look!
That cloud of dust, and banners floating free,
And music too,—a martial train!

She points towards the distant high road which skirts the field, along which are seen advancing a small band of soldiers, their arms glittering brightly in the sunshine.

FLORINE, (with agitation.)

He comes!

The baron comes; and Leon—ah! my heart,
Hope not in vain,—it cannot be—ah! no,
He whom but now I deemed among the dead,
Oh! is it so, that I shall see him soon,
Constant and true, and warm with breathing life?

SUSANNE.

Why should'st thou not? To greet them, let us haste:
See, see they halt beneath those spreading trees

That skirt the road, and many press around
With fond embrace, and grasp of cordial hand,
To welcome back, brother and son and friend.
I have a cousin there, and thou, Florine,
A lover dear, whom thou dost pine to see.
Nay, wox not pale, and pritties tremble not
Like the green leaf that shivers in the breeze;
Lean on my arm, and let us heste away.

They are moving away, when looking towards the place, where Gaston had been sitting, they see him with a terrified air, concealing himself behind a tree, while he scans the distant band of soldiers, when Susanne stops, and taking up the stolen vest, throws it towards him, as she passes by, at the same time holding up the abstracted letter, she says in a reproachful tone:

There is thy vest, deceiver, that thou art!
But of thy wickedness I keep thy proof,
Nor wish for thee a sorer punishment,
Than that which now o'ertakes thee, in the shame
Of thy discovered guilt. Haste thee, begone!
See, Leon comes, he hath espied Florine,
And hither hastes with love's impatient speed.
Depart, nor dare his wrath!

Gaston hesitates a moment, and then with a look of angry mortification and disappointment, he turns away and quits the field in an opposite direction. Florine looks after him a moment with a sorrowful expression, and murmurs in a low voice:

I pity thee,

Ay, pity and forgive, like as thou art,
For sore thy chastisement,—my harvest, joy!

She quits her friend as she speaks, and runs forward to meet Leon, who has approached very near. He receives her with open arms; Susanne steals off, unperceived, and the lovers walk slowly away by themselves.

CHARADE.

BY A. L.

What from the flowers
The bee devours,—
What from the rane does flow,—
Or what from alps,
From woman's lips,
My first will serve to show.

My neck's the seat
Of love and hate,
Of sorrow and of joy;
It is, in short,
Ofttimes a fort,
Which Cupid's darts destroy.

If any fair,
Of beauty rare,
My meaning can unravel;
I hope she may,
Without delay,
Get for her pains my whole.