

Isabel raised her head. "My pride would keep me from the fall you hint at, father. Isabel de Lisle is too proud to be a renegade from the faith of her fathers and the traditions of her house."

"Pride keep you close to the faith of the lowly Son of Mary!" answered he. "Oh, never, O my child, lay aside that self-reliance, that haughty nature—too proud to mourn, too proud to seek for aid. I would send a little child into the strife of life with more confidence than I would you."

"I thank you, father, for your trust in me. If I have hitherto been so unfaithful to the religion which none can profess without suffering, as to warrant you to speak thus with justice, I was ignorant of it. You blame me for controlling myself; methinks I need it, and such words from you on my mother's burial night."

Isabel was burning with indignation.

"It is the night of our parting, and that forever," rejoined the priest; and he looked up where, through the narrow window, he saw the sun rising. "Something tells me that my time draws near. We must meet once more, Isabel; but then it will be too late for priest to warn. Will you not suffer me to speak, even in chiding and truth, for the last time? I cannot speak falsely even to comfort you, Isabel, though my heart bleeds for you."

"Forgive me, father," said Isabel, bursting into tears; "forgive me for those sinful words. I know I am unworthy you should speak to me. Alas! without you how shall I live, how shall I ever struggle against temptation?" And then Isabel wept long and deeply.

The sun had now risen, and Father Gerard was warned he must not linger longer. The parting was brief, as partings with those who look not to meet again ever must be. Isabel, completely subdued, sought her chamber, as soon as Father Gerard, bestowing a fervent blessing on his children, resumed his disguise and quitted the castle with Rose.

CHAPTER V.

"She was a vision of delight, When first she burst upon my sight," —Wordsworth.

Lord Beauville began to grow impatient of his long stay at Castle de Lisle, and neither Walter nor Isabel was surprised when he informed them it was his intention they should both accompany him to his house of Apswell Court, situated some thirty miles from London.

"You must remember that you are my wards, by the queen's command," said the Earl—information which both heard in silence.

Preparations for departure began to be made: Walter was really glad; he was weary of the gloom and painful associations of his home, and as he was not to be master, he felt it preferable to submit to the Earl elsewhere than in his ancestral castle. Father Gerard's last advice had been to submit in patience, at least for awhile, and Walter strove to curb the impulses of his fiery nature. The squire of Lord Beauville, who was to hold Castle de Lisle in safety, was also charged to receive the rents. This was a serious blow to the faithful tenantry, Catholic to a man, and many resolved to give up their farms. Among these was Master Ford. For he clearly foresaw that the number of fines which he would be liable to for non-attendance at the Protestant worship at the parish church, and from which, under the new government of the estates, he could find no protection, would soon ruin him; and he deemed it wisest to employ the little money he possessed in starting in some new occupation, whose obscurity should form his protection, and where he could sometimes enjoy the consolations of his faith, and so with his wife and family, which consisted of two sons, besides his daughter Rose, he resolved to go to London. Rose knew that her father's circumstances would be greatly impoverished by the change, and she implored herself of offering to go as serving maiden to some lady

father's consent she sought Isabel to ask her advice how best to set about finding a situation. She found Mistress de Lisle sitting listlessly, as was her wont, over her embroidery, and taking not the slightest interest in the efforts of Rachel and Mary to carry away from the castle all the little articles of her own, or her mother's, which they imagined would be a comfort to her. When Rose told her errand, Isabel was roused; she grew indignant at the thought of the sufferings of the tenantry, and at length she bid Rose wait for her, and quitted the apartment; and great was the astonishment of the Earl when he heard that Mistress de Lisle craved an interview with him.

She came, she said in her stately manner, to make a request; could she be allowed to take with her two serving-women?

"Well, Mistress Isabel," answered the Earl, "it is an attendance beyond your rank; and I fear me our gracious queen, who hears things wondrous quickly, would dislike it."

Isabel colored with offended pride. "It is not for assumption of higher rank that I ask it, my lord, but I can never suffer Rachel, my mother's attendant to leave me, and I would fain take under my protection the daughter of our trusty tenant, Master Ford; it is necessary she should seek service and for early friendship's sake (she was my playmate) I would have taken her with me also."

"Then let her go with you, by all means," said the Earl. "My sister, Lady Anne, will, I warrant me, speedily find her a service with some lady of her acquaintance, and she can be under your protection meanwhile. I would I could pleasure you further, fair Isabel."

But Isabel was in no mood for soft speeches; and without deigning to thank Lord Beauville for the part of her request granted, she withdrew.

Unlike Castle de Lisle, Apswell Court bore every mark of a wealthy owner; around it were spread none of the hills and wooded valleys among which the former proudly stood, but the flat pasture land bore signs of luxuriance, herds of red deer gambled in the park, an array of noble chargers filled the stable, numerous retainers were seen in every direction. There was no doubt the sun of fortune was shining here. A large party of ritters have arrived at the stately portico, and at the foot of the long flight of marble steps which lead into the grand entrance-hall—

"Welcome to Apswell Court, fair Isabel," said the Earl; "I will suffer no other hand than mine own to place you within its walls. Be assured," he continued in a lower tone, all that can be done to supply what you have lost will be offered you."

Isabel bent her head; her only acknowledgment of a speech she deemed an insult; and with a cold and haughty air she ascended the steps and advanced into the entrance-hall. There stood two ladies ready to receive her: Lady Anne Beauville, an elderly and formal-looking dame, advanced slowly towards her, and ere she had reached her (for Isabel stood on the threshold) the path was intercepted and Isabel felt herself embraced and her face warmly kissed by two rosy lips; and then releasing her not from her grasp, but looking full into her countenance, Isabel beheld a face whose witchery few could withstand; the hazel eyes laughed with glee, and in a voice of silver sweetness the owner of them said: "Welcome, dear Isabel; I am so glad you are come—so very glad."

"Lady Constance," said Lady Anne severely, "you strangely forget yourself in your father's hall. What must Mistress de Lisle think of you?"

Constance would have taken little heed of this remonstrance, had not the surprise and gravity written on Isabel's face assured her her conduct was not pleasing to her guest; she quickly disengaged herself, and stood by in silence, while Lady Anne with solemnity welcomed Mistress de Lisle to her brother's house. Isabel received the attention with equal distance, and then presented her cousin.

(To be continued.)

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