

murmured Mathe, restraining her tears with difficulty.

When Sire Bos joined the Lords of Baudéan at their repast, he remembered that he had had no time for eating since noon. A quarter of izard, a shoulder of mutton, a roast goose, were buried in huge deep dishes, with broad edges, on which serpents, birds, and lizards were prettily designed. The table was covered with butter from Campan, cheese from Ossun, apples and walnuts from the plain, and the wines of Spain and Roussillon sparkled in silver drinking-cups, rivalling the tints of the ruby and amber. The knights drank to Peter the Hermit, to the first engagement, the honour of the ladies, and the taking of Jerusalem. The Lady Iolande herself superintended the buffet, and on this evening waited on her relatives with a demeanour full of care, dignity and sorrow. Notwithstanding the goodness of the wine, however, Sire Bos became occasionally *distrail*, when turning his eyes towards the darkest corner of the room, where sat Mathe, in a high chair, nearly hidden from view. As soon as he could leave the table, he approached her, saying, as he passed his large hand over her silky hair:

"Cousin, are you sleeping already?"

"Think you I would sleep to shorten the few hours that remain?"

The gentle girl's feet rested on a stool of black cloth, worked in coloured wool. Bos knelt on the stool, and, placing his hands on the two arms of the chair, he looked in Mathe's face. The tears were slowly rolling down her fair cheeks; she bent her head over the knight's hand. Bos's manly heart was moved; he had never called her aught but "Mathe," or "cousin," but now he murmured, "My own beloved."

"Rather say, 'poor forsaken one,'" answered Mathe; "I lose father, brother, and you, Bos; and where shall I turn for comfort or support?"

"Here, dearest; and Bos drew her to his heart, and as her fair head leant on his breast, she looked up sorrowfully at him, and said:

"Here, for one hour?"

"For thy life."

"Oh, cousin Bos," she replied, despondingly, "and if the Saracens should come here?"

"Fear nothing—*God wills it*, and thou wilt pray for me. Mathe, wilt thou be my ladye and my châtelaine?—wilt thou that I ask thy hand of thy parents? The Pope will grant us the dispensation."

"I will, said Mathe," putting her hand in his, "for if without thee, I would have become a nun—no other should ever be my husband."

The Lord of Bénéac arose, leading his cousin: she—pale, slender, overcome by her emotions; he—tall, high in courage, and strong of will. They approached the Sire of Baudéan, who was busily instructing his wife as to the management of his affairs during his absence, recommending prudence and a retired life for her and his daughter.

"Noble Sire," said Bos, "and you my fair aunt, will you accept me for your son?"

"What would you have, my nephew? do we not love you even as our son Sancho?"

"That does not content me; you must give me my cousin Mathe to wife."

"Is the holy St. Savin! that is impossible—you are relations in the fourth degree."

"It is a difficulty that can be overcome—obviated at Rome. I will give as many livres Tournois as are required, and pasture-ground to the Abbey of St. Sevar de Kostang, and a serf to the church of Ibos."

"Do so," said the Sire de Baudéan; if you succeed, she is yours."

"How long have you loved your cousin?" asked Iolande of her child.

"How can I say? my love has grown with me."

"Behold," cried Bos, with a loud voice, "my betrothed before God and man. While I am absent from her, my heart will be a stranger to joy; naught can equal her in my eyes but fame of arms, my faith as a Christian, and the deliverance of the Holy Sepulchre."

"Add my nephew, if the Church consents."

"She will consent."

Mathe gave her troth in a voice full of tenderness and grief:

"Bos, I am thine, here, or in the blessed Paradise."

"And may we all meet there," responded those present.

Sancho loosened the blue and silver ribbon from his sister's head, saying—"Sister Mathe, give him a love token."

"Knight," said the trembling girl, "may this gift from your ladye cause you neither coil nor death!"

The two Lords of Baudéan laughed at her emotion, while she hid her face in her mother's bosom; and Bos smiled as at the speech of a child.

"Nevertheless," said he, "some blood must be shed for this gift—either mine or the accursed Saracen's."

At these words Iolande felt Mathe's head sink heavily on her shoulder—she had fainted.

"Bos, my son," said the Châtelaine, angrily, "you cannot love this silly coward!—this wren that has been placed in an eagle's nest!"

The Lord of Bénéac carried the fainting girl, light and fair as the down of the swan, to catch the breeze from the mountain at the open casement, watching with tender solicitude till she should open her eyes.

"She is not formed to live without support," said he. "Poor gentle dove! Sweet may-flower! rest on my bosom."

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Seven years later where were these cavaliers—these men at arms—those archers that followed the three Lords of Bigorre, carrying lances and halberds, pikes and slings, after their banners and pennons? Of that troop which left the castles of Baudéan and Bénéac with such proud step, raising clouds of dust, and making the air ring with the clang of trumpets and clarions—of all those, but thirty ever set foot on the shores of Palestine. Some were floating on the waves of the Mediterranean, amid the shattered timbers of wrecks; others met death in Cyprus, or under the walls of Constantinople; and of these thirty, there soon remained only the two Lords of Baudéan, lying, side by side, on the plain of Joppa, their faces scarred with wounds—vultures darting their beaks against their unprotected skulls, and jackalls prowling around them. The Lord of Bénéac, that impetuous lord, lay bound in the bed of an old cistern, at the bottom of a tower, a captive to the