

unsoiled and not a single fold disarranged in the silken mantle which flowed gracefully over his stainless and undinted armour.

"In faith, fair lady," he exclaimed, "these awkward Burgundians have played us a clumsy joke, doubtless the braggart knaves think it a fine thing to have detained a cavalier of France for the space of six hours in harness under a hot sun, but, par-die, a warm bath and a little Hungary water will repair the damage."

"Did not Walden——, did not the enemy," returned Jacqueline, correcting her hasty speech, "make any attempt to scale the walls?"

"No," cried Montmorenci, "nor did they adventure within a bow-shot of the garrison. By mine honour and St. Denis, if the Lombards give us not exercise for our good swords, they are like to grow rusty in these campaigns with the English and their timorous allies."

"So thought the Mareschal des Cordes," said Jacqueline, rather scornfully, "yet the fall of Dixmude taught him another lesson. This is but a feint of the besiegers to draw you out into the open field, for never yet did the Burgundian chivalry quail before the arms of France."

Hastening up to her chamber Jacqueline relieved her full heart by a flood of tears. Though persuading herself that the craven conduct displayed by Waldenheim's soldiers was prompted by some deep-laid artifice, yet she could not avoid feeling very painful misgivings. The force which her lover had brought against St. Omer was certainly inadequate for the capture of so strong a town; Maurice would, perchance, imagine that he had redeemed his pledge by merely appearing before the frowning ramparts, and had probably no intention of endangering either life or limb in her service. Nothing disturbed the tranquillity of the besieged during the following day; the anxious maiden saw Montmorenci armed at all points, preparing to make a sortie on the foe, and, from

an upper window, she watched him as he returned in the same gallant array, not a feather broken from the plume that waved over his casque, his armour without spot or blemish, and his mantle still undisordered and stainless. Pleading a head-ache Jacqueline refused to join the count and her father, and thus was spared the disgraceful taunts which the haughty Frenchman cast upon a knight once ranked among the flower of Maximilian's chivalry.

Two more days elapsed, and, perceiving that de Montmorenci no longer led his soldiers in person to the ramparts, the now desponding Jacqueline emerged from her seclusion to learn the cause.

"The Burgundians have retreated," said she, as she saw Count Bertrand lounging idly in her father's hall.

"Not so," replied Montmorenci, "they tilt with the air in yonder plain, taking especial care to keep beyond the reach of our cross-bows; come to the walls and you shall see the cooks and scullions of St. Omer, armed with their spits and basting ladles, drive these redoubtable assailants like a flock of geese before them to the entrenchments of their camp."

"I will not," cried Jacqueline, "do the soldiers of Maximilian so much wrong as to witness so base an indignity."

"Then," exclaimed Montmorenci, "I will condescend to lead the attack again, trusting that the animating sight of beauty may inspire the degenerate Waldenheim with the spirit of a knight. To stir the lazy current of a dastard's veins, and to kindle a blaze of martial ardour in a clod of mere dull earth, will be an exploit worthy of the loveliest maid who ever smiled upon a warrior's suit." The count then calling for his armour, sallied out of the gate as Jacqueline ascended the rampart.

The plain below was enlivened with the careering steeds of Waldenheim's men at arms, as, with pennons