

in his plan. Every one who approached Athenais was instructed in the secret, and commanded not to divulge it, thus she had not the most remote suspicion of the truth. Feeling one of the timidity which would have characterized her intercourse, with him had she dreamed of his rank, and grateful for his respectful attentions, Athenais soon extended to the young tutor her confidence and regard.—

As time was long ere a warmer sentiment sprung up in her heart and lent a new charm to her life. When indeed all things wore a smiling aspect, and time sped by on the wings of joy. Athenais became daily a greater favorite with the Empress, and, receiving from her constant the most unequivocal marks of regard, she ceased to feel her dependant situation, and banished from her mind all thoughts of care.— She was grateful and happy—her heart, like a summer bird, warbled forth incessantly the music of delight. She was surrounded by every comfort and luxury of life; she loved and was beloved! What a contrast with her former friendless condition. With what happy dreams and anticipations she looked forward to the future. One day, while indulging in this pleasant frame of mind, she received a message from the Empress, bidding her to an interview. With a light step and a lighter heart she entered the presence of her benefactor.

"Well, my bird of beauty," said Pulcheria, "art thou not happy in thy new bower?"

The maiden's face was radiant with the sunshine of the soul as she replied—"Not even in the days of innocent childhood, when I wandered by the shores of my own blue sea or decked my brow with the flowers of my dear native plains, did my heart revel more gladly in the joyous sense of existence. I am no longer a friendless, houseless exile; for thou, dear lady, hast supplied the place of country, and home. What can I do to serve thee?"

"Listen, my dear Athenais; have I not in all things studied thy comfort? Have I not given thee a home that the greatest might envy, and clothed thee in raiment that queens might wear? Have I not bestowed attendants to obey thy slightest bidding and surrounded thee with luxuries that only the noble can gain?"

"Yes, my Sovereign, you have done all this and more. You have wiped the tear of woe from my eyes and plucked the arrow of grief from my heart. You have soothed my wounded spirit with the voice of consolation, and dispersed peace when despair was at hand.— You have converted fear into hope, and regret

into joy. You have awakened love in the heart where sorrow before reigned supreme, and made the life that was fast becoming a burden, a blessing and a delight. All this you have done, dear lady, and now what can I do to testify my gratitude? Name but the price, and, though it were life itself—the very life you have so cheered—it shall be sacrificed for your good."

"I want no sacrifices, Athenais; I am fully rewarded by seeing you happy, and to show my sense of your gratitude, I am about to confer a favor greater than any you have yet received. I am about to give you in marriage to my imperial brother, the young Emperor of the East."

As if a mighty spell had suddenly converted the maiden into stone she stood, pale, speechless, motionless, her hands clasped, her head bent forward, her eye fixed despairingly upon the Empress and her whole appearance indicative of the most intense amazement. At length she spoke,

"I pray thee, dear lady, unsay those fearful words. Mock not my misfortunes with such an offer. I am too humble and too unworthy to share the splendid destiny of thy brother.— Choose him a bride more suited to his birth, and more befitting his exalted station."

"Not so, Athenais—thy beauty, thy virtue, thy learning make thee his equal, and render thee, in all respects, worthy to be a monarch's consort. I have willed it, and thou must be his bride."

Then an expression of the deepest sorrow passed over the features of the maiden—she went forward and bent lowly at the feet of the Empress. "Lady, I entreat thy forgiveness, but I cannot obey thy bidding. My heart is already united to another."

Pulcheria received this announcement with the greatest apparent displeasure. She reproached Athenais for her ingratitude, and threatened her with punishment and persecution, if she did not instantly renounce her love. Finding reproaches and threats alike powerless to call forth this renunciation, she tried other means. She described her brother handsome, wise, valiant and noble. She represented the greatness, the pomp, the power his consort would enjoy—the splendors that would surround her, the luxuries that would minister to her comfort, and pictured all the charms of a regal station, in their most fascinating colors. But to all these temptations Athenais seemed insensible, and when Pulcheria had finished, she rose from her humble position, dried her