

did he not share in the universal joy at Ninette's deliverance? why was he not the first to assist his brother? No? the selfish youth stood at a distance regarding the gratitude and kindness lavished upon Rupert with feelings of envy, almost akin to revenge. Never before had Ninette appeared so lovely in his eyes—her dark glossy tresses had fallen over her shoulders, white as the lily of her native vale, terror and thankfulness had sent the blood in blushes to her cheek—she stood like a seraph descended from Heaven to minister to his suffering brother.

From that night he resolved that Ninette should be his own, and during the confinement of Rupert, he spared no opportunity to pursue his suit—his attentions were unremitting, and the simple and confiding girl felt proud and happy at the thought of having won, at last, the affections of the only man she loved.—When Rupert had recovered enough to behold her, she hastened to his presence, and in the fullness of her heart, informed him that she hoped, ere long, to call him her *brother*.

The feeble Rupert could not define the true meaning of her words. The hope that she might be his bride was the grand incentive which had carried him through his illness—but now the mystery of her words sank heavily into his heart, retarding his recovery. Gervais, with his characteristic hypocrisy, faithfully attended the couch of his brother, but he hinted not a word of his intended marriage with Ninette, nay, whenever her name was mentioned, by some artifice he contrived to change the conversation, and divert his brother's attention to some other object, and when Ninette did visit him, he took especial care ever to be her attendant.

Rupert's health being at last restored, he again pursued his avocations. He, however, soon saw that Ninette's regard for him was engendered only from gratitude, and that her affections were placed upon his brother. The blow was a severe one, yet his generous nature, after a secret and severe struggle, conceded the treasure to Gervais, consoling himself with the thought that she would be ever near him, and if not his *own*, she was, at least, the wife of his dear brother, the idol of his affection, the sacred charge bequeathed to him by their departed mother.

It was resolved that on the following spring, Gervais and Ninette should be united. The young folks thus considered as plighted lovers, were received by their neighbours with kindness and rejoicing. Rupert, deeming himself

the *confidant* of his brother, and the saviour of Ninette, freely intruded himself on all occasions, on their society.

It happened that one evening a *fête* was given by a neighbour, whose daughter had just been wedded. Gervais, Ninette, and Rupert, were of the party. In the midst of the festivities, Ninette was particularly attentive to Rupert—called him her “dear Rupert”—“her guardian brother”—and in the enthusiasm of the moment, when her deliverance by one of the guests was alluded to, she took from her neck a little locket, and placing it around Rupert's, bade him “wear it in remembrance of one who should ever love and esteem him.”—Poor Rupert's eyes filled with tears, and in the extacy of the moment, he innocently clasped her to his bosom, imprinting upon her lips a fervent kiss. Gervais beheld the action with a savage glance; the fiend of revenge took possession of his heart, and feigning illness, left the apartment, telling Ninette he would return ere the festivities were concluded.

Sick at heart, and burning with jealousy—feeling too, that his brother was a barrier to his extravagant indulgencies, he resolved, in a moment of passion, to rid himself of him, and placing himself at a certain portion of the road, where he knew he must pass, awaited his coming. The night was one of uncommon loveliness, the full moon careering through the fields of heaven, and peace reigned all around. Yet the tranquility of the hour soothed not the sea of passion raging in his bosom. He had not waited long, ere Rupert approached. His feelings burst forth in the most passionate exclamations. He accused his brother of treachery, of supplanting him in the affections of Ninette, nay, denounced him as the individual who had fired her father's cottage, on purpose to win her heart by a display of his courage. Rupert listened to him with surprise, deigning not to exchange one syllable of explanation or recrimination. At last he referred to the locket presented to him by Ninette, and demanded its return.

Like a smouldering volcano, burst forth the feelings of Rupert, and he fiercely declared he would surrender it but with his life. Gervais, aroused to madness, averred he would have instant redress, and drawing a poniard, told Rupert to defend himself; but Rupert coolly folding his arms, smiled contemptuously upon him. Irritated by his calm demeanor, Gervais plunged the weapon in his bosom, and Rupert fell senseless and bleeding on the ground.

With the dawn of the morning, he awoke to