

he thought of faithful friends who might be seeking him.

But a long, lean hound was baying hoarsely, and its red eyes gleamed like chrysolites, and it led, step by step, the shuffling feet of a haggard man who long had sought St. Udo.

And the skulker came to his side, and looked in his face with demoniac eagerness, and plunged the dastardly dagger hilt-deep into his breast, and stood erect with a long, wild, triumphant laugh.

So the moon rode on in clearer majesty, and the night-dewes dripped upon the slain—for "the dearest tears which heaven sheds are her dewes upon the dead hero's face."

CHAPTER X

MARGARET AGAIN A WANDERER.

Heavily passed the days of Margaret Walsingham, having, as we know, that secret apprehension on her mind which the vision of the battle-field had cast, and waiting with sick anxiety for news from the war, which might explain to her what that vision might mean.

Heavily pass the days, and October's brown era came sighing down to strip the trees.

Lady Juliana was having her last ball at Hautville Park before her visitors should throng back to the city for the opening season, and for the second time she insisted upon her companion being present. She was so determined to have her way that Margaret had perforce to obey, all unconscious of the trap which was making ready for her. The mighty rooms of the chateau glittered with a thousand wax tapers; garlands of richest flowers festooned the walls; bewildering strains of music intoxicated the senses.

My lady, the loveliest being there, shimmered about here and there, the beauty of the ball, the adored of half the gentlemen.

Miss Walsingham, seeing no reason why she should be among the revelers, when her heart was so heavy with cares for the last of the Brands, soon glided into a small Saracenic cloister, which was lighted dimly by a single iron lamp, and from it watched with wistful and still tender interest the fairy-like figure of her Lady Julie.

She had not been there a quarter of an hour, when the Duke of Piermont, passing through hurriedly, as if late for some engagement, caught sight of her, and stopped short before her.

"My dear Miss Walsingham! To see you among us is a pleasure indeed. You'll waltz with me?"

"I am strictly a spectator, your grace—thanks."

"What! Not even walk through the Polonaise with me? Well, I shall forswear the mazes also. Will you come to the conservatory?? I think there is some amazing flower of Lady Juliana's out—blooms once in a hundred years or so. Come and see it."

"I think that your presence is expected in the ball-room. Lieutenant Falconcourt has been dispatched to seek for you."

His grace glanced at his tablets and frowned.

"Too late to keep my promise now," he muttered, "so I may as well follow my own inclinations. I shall remain conveniently invisible, with your permission, Miss Walsingham."

"Your grace must not count upon my permission."

"Hulloa!" cried a voice "Cousin Julie is on the tenterhooks of impatience for you, Piermont. You are too late to open the ball with her. Oh, do I see Miss Walsingham?"

Lieutenant Falconcourt joined the pair with looks of curiosity, and rendered his respects to my lady's companion.

"Remain here a few moments, while I see Lady Juliana," said the young duke, hurriedly pressing her hand.

In a moment he was gone, and Harry Falconcourt was in his place by her side.

"My dear Miss Walsingham," he said, half gayly, but with a slight appearance of anxiety in his manner, which did not escape her notice, "do you know that you have cast a spell over our duke, which he seems inclined to wear under the very eyes of my Cousin Julie?"

"You cannot surely mean——"

"He is perfectly bewitched; and as I know you are quiet unconscious of it, I forewarn you."

Margaret sat silent for some time, plunged in an uneasy reverie. This thing gave her a disagreeable shock for which she was not prepared. She inwardly reviewed her position at Hautville Park, and a cold chill of disappointment crept into her heart.

Must she leave her giddy darling, Lady Julie?

"I cannot believe it—I will not!" she exclaimed, with momentary fire. "His grace is not so foolish as to intend this thing. You exaggerate his emotions in regard to me."

The fairy-like form of my lady floated past the draped door on the arm of Piermont, and as she passed, her eyes sought the pair in the cloister with visible triumph; then she turned to his grace again.

"You see," said Margaret, eagerly clinging to the first straw of hope, "they per-