

instead of alarming me, they sunk into the depths of my heart, and melted into the sweet feelings which agitated it like one strain of harmony into its kindred tones. Leaning against a rocky fragment at my side was a young stranger; and as I gazed upon his pure and spiritual countenance, I almost believed that my prayer had been granted; that in very truth some spirit from the skies had come down to satisfy my soul's thirst, which I had never been permitted to quench at earth's springs. But even that thought failed to make me shrink or tremble before him, and I seemed to find my soul grow and spring beneath his clear glance as if it had that moment been purified from the dust which had hitherto choked it. So I answered "I desire not the knowledge of evil, but let me be satisfied with good, for surely good must abound in so fair a world."

The stranger shook his head sadly, "It cannot be thus," he said, "the fruit of good and evil grow together and together must they be tasted."

"And am I not to learn to choose the good and reject the evil?" I asked.

"That is the great lesson of life," he replied, "But you cannot reject the sorrow which must accompany it, as the shadow does light. Know you not the words of the Holy Book: 'He that increaseth knowledge, increaseth sorrow.' No mortal alchemy can separate them."

"Then let it be so," I said. "Feed my hungry spirit, and let that sorrow which you say is the shadow of knowledge come also. For the sake of the one, I will welcome the other."

"I take you at your word," he answered, moving a step towards me; "give me the lily you hold in your hand, and take this rose as the sign of the compact between us."

Without a hesitating thought I placed the lily in his hand and received from him the rose.

"Come to this spot to-morrow evening when the shadows fall across the stream as now," he said, and waving his hand in farewell, he disappeared among the trees, leaving me in a state of wild and excited curiosity and wonder which it would be impossible for me to describe.

Often as I slowly descended the hill I would have believed the whole a dream, but for the rose which I held in my hand. When I reached home I shut myself up in my own room, and abandoned myself to the wildest imaginings. I had from infancy drank in with delight the wild tales in which all German peasants believe, and legends of nixies, gnomes, oak-kings, elves, and wood-demons, floated through my mind as I looked forth on the mountain where I had met the stranger, its hollows looking dark and mysterious

beneath the gathering twilight. I asked myself if it were possible that he could be one of those treacherous and malicious beings, or perhaps a demon of still more evil nature. But then I remembered the truth which seemed to dwell in his eyes, the nobleness impressed on his forehead, the persuasive tones of his voice, and I rejected the idea with scorn. Besides had he not repeated the words of the Holy Book, which no evil spirit could do with impunity; a demon, a hobgoblin he could not be. He was then either a holy spirit or a being of earth like myself; if the former, his purpose could only be good, if the latter he must be one of earth's noblest creatures from whom I could fear nothing. My imagination however, rather delighted in supposing him an inhabitant of a purer world whom my passionate invocation in an auspicious hour had drawn down, and who would impart to me truths which would enlighten my dark mind. These were strange fancies, but perhaps not very unnatural in a girl of sixteen, whose imagination and feelings were so vivid and keen, whose intellect had been checked in its efforts after aliment, and who was totally ignorant of human nature and of the world.

I slept none that night, but in the moonlight which streamed in through my window, I seemed to behold the calm figure of the stranger, and those features which so strongly bore the impress of a great soul. The next day I was like one in a dream, till the hour approached, at which I was again to meet him. I found him leaning against the same fragment of rock, while the little stream flowed softly at his feet. His countenance brightened at my approach, and as he sprang eagerly forward to greet me, he said,

"See how safely I have preserved your flower," and he drew the lily from his bosom with its freshness scarcely faded.

"I also have kept your rose," I replied, and I shewed him the faded petals which had fallen from their stem.

He smiled somewhat sadly as he asked.

"How is it that my gift has withered so much sooner than yours?"

"But its fragrance still remains," I said, eagerly.

Now he smiled more brightly than before, and causing me to sit down, he asked,

"Do you still love knowledge and woe rather than ignorance and peace?"

"Yes," I said, "more than life itself."

"And yet is there another maiden, beautiful, rich and happy as thou art, who could make such a choice?"

"Beautiful!" I exclaimed, "I care not for