

When, a short time after the struggle we have partially described, Henry entered the ladies' apartment, his manner was as composed, and in fact more cheerful than had of late been usual. He briefly informed them that private letters just received, informed him that their liege had need of every loyal sword and heart, that he purposed proceeding immediately to join the army; but should Bourdasière wish a longer leave, or the ladies desire his protection till the return of the Marquis, he doubted not, he could readily obtain it. Philippe's face flushed with excitement at these tidings; he could scarce restrain questions which might have betrayed their carefully guarded secret; eagerly, however, he professed his desire to join the king immediately, modestly underrating the advantage of his protection to the ladies, and in fact clearly proving their perfect safety. Gabrielle's face was also glowing at Henry's words, but even had he glanced towards her, which perhaps he did, he would not have perceived it, for as she bent forward, with of late unwonted assiduity, to disentangle the skein with which she was embroidering, her heavy ringlets completely shaded that face, which, as yet, too clearly mirrored her heart. Philippe thought she showed but little feeling to labour thus, when her preserver announced his departure. But the keener eye of the Lady Margaret detected that those small hands trembled so violently that their labour was fruitless, and that for a few moments her breath came short and quick, as though the balmy air were laden with noxious vapours. But soon these outward tokens of feeling were subdued; when she raised her face the flush had passed, its hue was perhaps somewhat less bright than usual; but none, save the watchful eye of love, that had marked from infancy each hue and shade of that face, would have dreamed that the words which told of the Count's departure, spoke more sorrow than those which had said of any other stranger, "Again we are strangers."

Frequently during that short morning, did poor Gabrielle glance towards the dial; and, as swiftly the minutes waxed into hours, her face now glowed with hues that spoke not of the heart's health, or again was pale as marble.

And now the last minute has come, and with strong effort, both Count and Lady will control to silence the emotions which struggle in their breasts, as though they must escape in words. The Count holds the Lady's hand, and amid her adieus she murmurs, she knows not what, of thanks and hopes, and as he held, he thought it trembled; but then he smiled sadly at the fancy, for was it not his own which had lost its nerve? Henry's words, though scarce more audible than Gabrielle's, have met her ear and sunk into

her heart. It was a whispered timid hope, a prayer that she would sometimes think, not unkindly, of Henry d'Albret, while he would strive—the words died away upon his lips.

They are gone, the boy looking forward into a future, which seems all bright, panting for the battle field, as though nought but the laurel ever blossomed there,—no express ever sprang from its soil!—happy, for he judges the future by the past, and over that has passed no angry cloud,—fearless in his faith, for as yet, he has had no cause to distrust himself or others. But his companion, now in all the glorious strength of ripened manhood, all his powers in their meridian perfection, heir to a prouder sway than his boyhood's wildest dreams had ever dared to grasp,—he is sad! no flush of excitement on his cheek, no smile of triumph on his lip. For, while his ambition had, in many instances, met with a success, which once might have seemed as the dreams of a visionary, yet those deep feelings of the heart, which not only help to make, but do almost or entirely make happiness, those silent, though profound aspirations, for a more refined and spiritual existence, even here, had all been disappointed—were wrecks. He had been forced, while yet a boy, and with his murdered mother's knell still ringing in his ears, into a marriage with the daughter of their foe, a union from which both shrank with a disgust which they were at no pains to conceal; then, for years, constrained to indolence, a prisoner under the surveillance of Catherine, who fiendishly exposed him to every temptation likely to debase, and finally ruin, a young impetuous soul. Nor had her cares been fruitless; torn from his kingdom, surrounded by spies, who regarded with suspicion each nobler act, while they smoothed and garlanded the paths of vice, unhappy in his domestic relations, Henry had fallen, and for a while sunk in unworthy and degrading indulgence, forgot or smothered each holier sentiment. When he was at last released from the direct action of Catherine's moral poison, it had entered too deeply into his being to be at once eradicated, and Henry had been guilty of actions, which, though almost sanctioned by the lax morality of the times, in moments of calm reflection, appeared to his naturally pure and noble soul, as matter of deep humiliation, alike to man or monarch. Not often in the camp, however, amid the bustle of strife, or the schemes of policy, could reflection be an honoured guest. But now deep thoughts, awakened by memory and nursed in quiet, had long been busy in his soul, inciting it to action, not mere passive dreaming.

That veil had long been torn from Henry's eyes, through which the young see obstacles in