

All the Baron's politeness, and his care to cultivate Emilie's favour, could scarce preserve him from a burst of laughter.

"Love Rolando as much as you please," he said, on recovering his composure. "I promise you that I will not interfere with him. In resigning you to him, however, I warn you to be ware of your rival Angelica! When you have given over reading, by day and by night, the poem of Ariosto, or the history of Agnes Sorèl, I may venture again to present myself before you. Meantime, noble Marchioness, adieu!"

Next day, the gossips of the servant's hall determined that the Baron de Lireas had "transferred his attentions" from the Marchioness to her sister, the fair MarceLINE de Thionville. Nor was this opinion altogether without foundation, for the Baron and MarceLINE had a long interview, at the close of which each appeared with an expression of suppressed mirth, that gave great annoyance to the Marchioness, and she repaired to her favorite balcony, to find consolation in her dreams of chivalry.

II.

That evening, when the Marchioness retired to her chamber, she abruptly dismissed her attendant. Her regard for the Baron de Lireas was deeper than she had imagined, and her trouble at his seeming happiness with another had taught her this. As she paced to and fro with agitation, her foot struck against an antique curiously carved coffer, which she had never noticed before. Who could have placed it there? What did it contain? With all the curiosity pertaining to the daughters (aye! and to the sons too) of Eve, Emilie hastily opened the coffer, which she found unlocked, and drew forth, piece by piece, a handsome and picturesque costume of the middle ages. To curiosity succeeded coquetry; she had soon donned the white satin robe, with its wide hanging sleeves, the broad hat, with its long white plume, and the rich girdle with its buckle of emeralds surrounded by seed pearls. When she had completed her toilet she regarded herself approvingly in the mirror, and the moonbeams that shone brightly through the window, seemed to invite her to her "throne of beauty" on the balcony. She obeyed the summons, and opening the door that led into the garden, soon reached the quiet nook.

It was now midnight—the hour of robbers, bats, nightingales and serenades. Emilie felt, however, despite the impulse that had brought her there, that it was no hour for her to be abroad, and she was about to turn away, when a slight noise caught her ear, and a figure,

clad in the costume of the reign of Charles VII. sprang from the shade, and seized her hand, at the same time exclaiming:

"Thou wilt follow me, Madame!"

The Marchioness shrieked, and called for help, though with little hope that the sounds would reach the house.

"Silence, for pity's sake!" cried the stranger; "shouldst thou refuse to accompany me I will kill myself in despair. For I love thee, Emilie! I adore each hair of these clustering locks, each fold of that flowing robe!"

"Sir," stammered the Marchioness, "this language—at such an hour—I have never seen you—I know nothing of you."

"But I have seen thee, beloved one! I have admired thee, without even obtaining a look in return. Such as thou seest me, I am a descendant of the famous Raoul de Coucy, and count amongst my ancestors some of the bravest heroes of the age of Charles VII. I am called Sire Olivier. Regarding with horror all modern innovations of costume and of manners, I have resolved to shut myself up in the fortress of my ancestors, and to adopt those of the good times of old. Wilt thou be the lady of my castle?"

During this speech, the marchioness had ventured to look at the daring stranger, and her anger somewhat diminished. His costume was that of a Seigneur of the middle age, with a clasp of rubies on his heaver, and his velvet pourpoint sown with silver stars. The face of the stranger was handsome, manly and intelligent. The sight of a figure advancing from the house revived her courage; she snatched away her hand, and running towards it, recognized her sister, and threw herself into her arms.

"What is the matter, Emilie?" asked MarceLINE.

"I have come," interposed Sire Olivier, who had followed close behind, "to claim this lady's hand, and bear her off as my bride."

"Alas! my sister!" said Mademoiselle de Thionville, "I fear we are in his power; we are far from all assistance. But fear not," she whispered; "go quietly, and I can the sooner send to rescue you."

The two sisters embraced each other again and again. Tears rolled down the cheeks of the Marchioness, while MarceLINE's agitation was betrayed by fits of short hysteric laughter. Sire Olivier at length separated them, and raising the Marchioness in his arms, bore her, with the vigour of a Rolando, to a small gate in the garden wall, through which he passed, and placed her on the back of a stout steed, which was in waiting for them. Having carefully enveloped her head in a thick veil, he mounted before her, and the pair rode off in a style, which, however romantic it