

and to be a participator in his glory; but ill should I requite the generous offer of the noble Swede, by giving him my hand when my heart owned a decided preference for another."

"Rash girl, what have you dared to avow?" said the prince, grasping her arm and speaking in a stern voice.

"That I love!" returned the princess, gathering courage from despair; "that my heart at this moment feels the deepest, truest passion, that ever trembled in a woman's breast."

"For whom do you entertain this fatal partiality?"

"For him, to whom I am indebted both for life and honour, whose independant and generous spirit has obliterated from my mind the bright and beautiful vision that once possessed my youthful fancy—the brave and noble Dahl."

"Unhappy girl!"

"Nay, call me not unhappy," said the princess, her spirit regaining its usual lofty tone, and the colour flushing her pale cheek; "I may be unfortunate, but never while I possess the love of such a heart as Count Dahl's, can I be wholly miserable."

"Has he then dared to address his suit to a daughter of the princely house of Brandenburg? The audacious villain shall answer with his life for his presumption."

"George," returned the princess with a solemnity in her voice and manner which made the blood flow in calm temperature to the heart of her impatient auditor, "raise but one finger against the life of my generous preserver, and you entail upon you and yours, the bitter curse of a heart-broken sister; I will never wed another did he possess the diadem of the world. Deny my wishes, and I will seek the protection of the Church of Rome."

"Oh, Eleonora! Eleonora!" answered the prince his heart softening towards the sister he fondly loved, "What woe and trouble and endless wars will your blind infatuation entail on your country and kindred. Are you so mad as to suppose the King of Sweden will receive such an insult without resenting it? Will not the blood of your lover be the first libation poured forth at the altar of vengeance? You tremble, Eleonora—you turn pale—Behold, Gustavus comes in the strength of his invincible spirit; our armies are scattered at his presence—our cities yield before him, and the members of our ancient and noble house are led into captivity by the conqueror."

Before the princess could answer this appeal, which sounded in her ears like the knell of all her fondly cherished hopes, the sound of approaching footsteps rang sharply against the stones, in the narrow street they had just entered, and six armed men emerged from under a dark archway fronting them. Eleonora clung trembling to her brother's arm, and a faint scream rose and died on the lip of the countess.

"It is he!" said one of the men, in a low deep voice, to the leader of the band; "shall we strike?"

"Peace, babbling fool," returned the foremost of the group; "you mistake your quarry—this gallant is at least three inches in stature above him whom we seek. Pass this young springald in silence, and take no notice of his frail companions."

"Some deed of a dark and questionable nature is to be perpetrated tonight," said the prince, drawing a freer breath, as the clang of their armed heels died away.

Eleonora did not speak—a fearful thought flashed across her brain; and she felt relieved, when she regained her own apartment, in giving way to the anguish which oppressed her spirits.

Ill satisfied with himself, and dreading the worst from his sister's obstinacy, Prince George threw himself upon his couch, and had hardly closed his eyes in troubled slumber, before he was roused by the page springing into his apartment, (which communicated by the balcony with that occupied by the King of Sweden,) and imploring him, in the most pathetic manner, to succour his master, who was attacked by ruffians at the astrologer's tower.

Half stupefied with sleep, the prince gazed vacantly for some moments upon the pale and afrighted boy, and in no very courteous tone, bade him begone and cease to trouble him.

"I beseech your highness, rise and come to his assistance—in a few minutes all human aid will be too late—oh save him! save him!" he cried in a tone of bitter anguish, and wringing his hands in despair, while his expanded eyes were fixed in tearful entreaty on the half recumbent figure of the prince, who, at length recovering consciousness, sprang in no very gentle mood from the bed, and recognized the page of the man, who in spite of the friendship he had once entertained for him, he at that moment wished most out of the world.

"If Count Dahl engages in such midnight frolics," he said in an angry tone; "he must expect these results—away young sir, I cannot listen to such idle tales."

"Alas!" returned the agitated boy; "you know not whom you refuse to succour; ere this a crowned head will be low in the dust. Oh, my master!—my brave, my royal master!—who now shall save you? Oh, that I had staid and died with you!"

The page turned to leave the room, but a strong arm detained him. A suspicion had darted into the mind of the prince—the next moment brought conviction—and hastily dressing himself and seizing his sword, he called together a few of the household guards, and followed the page to the scene of action, and succeeded in rescuing the king from the weapons of his enemies.

As they returned, the king found that by some means his secret had transpired; and he convinced the prince of the truth of his pretensions, by shewing