

nestled in the snowy folds of the handkerchief that shaded her bosom.

"Sir Minstrel," said Queen Catharine, gaily, as he closed his song, "thou art master of thy art, and if Harry of Monmouth had not already won me, and borne me from my dear sunny France, I would refuse to listen to his suit 'till he could win me with a lay sweet as thine. Now sing us a somewhat merrier ditty, and then we must dismiss thee, for the long shades which begin to be cast upon the floor, would remind me, did not my heart do so, that the hour is at hand for me to visit the young Prince."

"Your Grace's command shall be obeyed," he replied, "though I have little cause, and still less heart, for a merry song."

"Ah," said Catharine, "thou must go to France, where the sons of Appollo find favour as well as those of Mars."

The minstrel was about to commence his second song, when a stir was heard in the passage. The door was thrown open, the King announced, and the next moment Henry V. entered the apartment. At the first intimation of the King's approach, the minstrel had received permission from the Queen to withdraw, and had sunk back into the shadowy part of the room, that he might glide thence, unnoticed, as soon as the passage through the door should be unobstructed. He was in the act of executing his intention, when he caught the eye of the King, who commanded him to remain.—He obeyed, retreating still further into the gloom. Joanna Beaufort turned pale, and without knowing what she did, plucked the leaves from the beautiful rose in her bosom, and then bent over the leafless stem, as if the bloom and perfume still remained.

"It is only a poor minstrel from Scotland," said the Queen, "whom I suffered to enter for mine and Mistress Beaufort's diversion."

"It would better content me," replied the King, "to entertain one soldier, than a dozen minstrels, and I would prefer to see a parcel of right active lads play a game at leap-frog, than to hear a song from each of the dozen."

"Ah, your majesty never heard this minstrel. If you would only please order him to sing, you would surely alter your mind."

"Thy sweet voice, Kate, and the prattle of the young Prince, are music enough for me, but I will not cross thy desire. Stand forth, Sir Minstrel, where thou canst catch a glance of light from yonder window, and sing us a soldier's song."

He stepped forward with a reluctant and em-

barrassed air, and commenced singing with a fluttering voice. Gradually his embarrassment subsided, and as he finished, with a look of majesty and grace of which Henry had never been proud, he turned to the King and requested leave to withdraw. Henry raised his hand in token of assent, and kept his eyes fixed upon him 'till he had quitted the apartment. He sat a few moments apparently absorbed in thought, and then abruptly addressing Joanna Beaufort, demanded if she knew the minstrel's name.

"I never saw him 'till this evening," said Joanna, "your majesty," she replied.

"I shrewdly suspect he is no more a wandering minstrel, than the wandering Jew," said Joanna. "A lad in waiting stepped forward, and said—"

"Go to the hall," said Henry, "and demand that the minstrel be there, say that I command him to receive liberal entertainment, but that a more important matter must be set over him for the present."

Joanna Beaufort made a movement as if she too, intended to leave the room soon after the departure of the page.

"Nay, Mistress Beaufort," said Henry, in a playful yet decided tone, "we shall not permit thee to leave us at present. A handsome young man should not be trusted in company with those minstrel boys, or ten to one there will be some love passages between them."

Thus rebuked, with cheeks glowing with mingled shame and indignation, she sunk again into the recess of the window. Henry, in truth, suspected that the minstrel was no other than his royal prisoner, for, although many years had passed away since he had seen him, the last and only time being long after his accession to the crown, the grave, thoughtful, yet handsome countenance of the captive Prince made an impression on his memory which the jovial and reckless manner in which he spent his time, had never thought to efface. Though naturally of a frank and generous disposition, the King seems to have been actuated by a narrow and illiberal jealousy with regard to the Prince, for he refused to liberate him after the alleged cause of his captivity no longer existed, Scotland having entered into an alliance with France.

In a short time the page returned with information that the minstrel, before he had descended to the hall, had departed, no one could tell whither. However quiet and content Joanna Beaufort might be in her general demeanour, at this intelligence, had not the increasing gloom prevented, a marked