

but ever and anon exchanged low words with the damsel who sat upon a cushion at her feet. The knight scarcely drew his breath, lest the sound should jar upon his ear, as he bent forward to catch those whispered accents.

"Yes, it is a fearful storm," said the maiden. "I shudder at the thought that my dear father is abroad in it."

"He went not willingly, fair mistress," said the girl; "but Master Simon, being ill, sent in haste to crave his presence; though, I will vouch for it, his ailment is naught more than a sudden surfeit, brought on by the haunch of fat venison he discussed with my master yester-noon—the honest burgher loves well a dainty dish."

"May it prove naught worse," said the maiden; "for he hath been a friend of long-standing, and such are sorely missed. Think'st thou my father will be back ere long?"

"I trust so truly—yet he parted in such haste that he could not come to thee; but he bade me say he would strive to return ere bed-time, that he might hear one of thy songs for a lullaby."

"He would sleep ill without it, methinks, and I as ill, too, if I missed his parting kiss. But, Bertha,"—and she made a sudden pause.

"But what, sweet mistress? what is it thou hast upon thy mind—pritheo out with it—for I see something is there, that was not wont to be."

"Thou art prone to spy marvels where there are none, girl; yet if thou had'st not broke in upon my words so pertly, I would have asked thee only, if the young knight, Sir Enguerrand, came not hither this morning?"

"He did, fair mistress; but tarried not long. In truth, I wish my master would keep him here, to amuse thee with stories of the wars, for, by my faith, thou hast never been the same, since the day of thy meeting with him, near the wood of D'Artay."

"Tush, girl! why should that have changed me?" asked the maiden, quickly. "Is it any marvel to meet young knights in these days, that the sight of one should cause change for better or worse to come over me, forsooth?"

"Thou might'st see a thousand, mistress mine, and yet *one* only have power to move thee!"

"And that one—what is there in him, pray, to move me more than I might find in those gay gallants of France, who prance by us in their dazzling armour, and their glittering surcoats, whenever we ride abroad."

"In truth, I wot not—they please my sight well, and might find favour with most fair dames, I trow. Yet this young knight of Navarre,—"

"And what of him, pritheo?" asked the maiden, with a quick blush and a hurried tone.

"Naught, gentle mistress," said the damsel,

with pretended meekness; "only he hath an eye such as women love, and cowards fear. My master, they say, takes mightily to him. But I weary thee with my prattle; shall I fetch thy lute, sweet mistress? or what wilt thou have me do to divert thee?"

"Tell me some of thy wild legends, Bertha; this is just the night to listen to them. Hark! how the storm howls. I wish my father were returned."

"Wilt thou hear the 'Maiden of the Tower,' or the 'Enchanted Sword,' or —?"

"Neither; I have heard them scores of times. Hast thou learned nothing new of late?"

"Thou wert not wont to love new tales like the old, fair lady," said the privileged attendant, with an arch smile; "but if thou dost now affect them, I shall recount one shall please thee well. It is of a young knight—a young knight of our own fair Navarre—who —"

"Who hath taken captive the heart of a silly serving-wench, so that she can speak of naught else," interrupted the maiden, with a sweet laugh, and a glowing blush, that lent new charms to her beauty.

"And wherefore should she? since she is beholden to find pleasure in whatever pleasures her mistress; therefore —"

"Nay, girl, spare thy breath; and to put a stop to thy chattering, I will that thou give me a song." So it be not in the same strain, I may chance to endure it."

"Thou shalt have it, mistress sweet—a fine new song, which I heard a fair lady warble as she sat alone in her bower." And, in a clear melodious voice, she carolled forth these words:

Thou bring'st me flowers—I heed them not—
Why should they charm my care?
With one alone my thoughts find rest—
The knight of gay Navarre!

Around me sparkle jewels rich,
Gathered from lands afar,
Less bright they gleam than thy dark eye,
Young knight of fair Navarre!

And music pours its thrilling strains,
Of love it tells, and war;
But only minds me of thy voice,
Oh, knight of sweet Navarre!

Fair morning fields her fragrant breath,
And ere her glorious stars;
But sweeter, brighter, beams thy smile,
Knight of my own Navarre!

"Now, out upon thee, for a malapert minion!" said the fair Gabrielle, in a tone between vexation and laughter, as the last note of the song died away upon her attendant's lip. "Go to, I have had enough of this, and patience passing belief to hear thy folly to an end. Haste thee,