

soberer hues of evening, while in the east a full orb moon was just appearing above the horizon, silvering the hill tops, on which still lingered the purple hues of sunset, and lighting up the dark masses of the stupendous Alleganies, with her ascending beams.

Mowbray walked slowly on, lost in deep thought, and utterly insensible to the beauty and the harmony that was so bounteously diffused around him. As the lane wound onwards in many graceful curves, it gradually lost its distinctive character of beauty, and became merged in a tangled thicket, through which it seemed almost impossible, in the absence of sunlight, for the feet to find their way. Mowbray however, from the celerity with which he threaded it, seemed familiar with its intricacies. Parting the low matted boughs of the evergreens with his hands, he descended a steep and slippery path, to a deep glen, through which brawled a noisy rivulet, that was hidden from the eye by the damp vegetation that overgrew its banks.

Crossing the stream, he directed his steps towards the deepest and dampest part of the glen, where stood a miserable looking hovel, that would have been scarce distinguishable to the eye of a common observer. The door was open, and directly in front of it, basking in the purple twilight, sat an aged crone, whose wrinkled features bore the impress of evil passions, and whose small grey eyes glanced restlessly around, with an habitual expression of jealousy and distrust. At her feet, lay a half starved mastiff, to judge by his ferocious aspect, of the true Cerberus breed, and on her hand sat a loathsome toad, which she was caressing, and pampering with crumbs of black and mouldy bread.

"Good evening to you, Mabel," said Mowbray, patting the head of the surly dog, which civility the animal answered by a low growl, and turning fiercely round, he shewed his huge teeth, as though he would repay with a savage grip, the hand that caressed him.

"Down, Firebrand, down!" exclaimed the woman with a scowl, and a voice that grated like the creaking of a rusty hinge upon the ear, and the mastiff crouched submissively at her feet, his fiery eyes glancing like sparks of living fire, maliciously upon the intruder.

"What brings ye to the Wizard's Glen this eve, young man!" she asked, "it cannot be to crave aught of my wisdom, since you have made bold to scoff at my art, and turn away from the predictions I would have uttered in your ear."

"Nor do I care aught, Mabel, for what you may affect to tell me of the future, for I have not a particle of faith in your pretended lore. But there are those who have, and therefore I come to ask your aid,—for I speed not as I wish in my wooing, and there is a rumour afloat, that some of the crew

of the Fearless are alive, though held in slavery by the Algerines."

"Ha!" exclaimed the hag with a malicious laugh, "heard you of that at last? weeks ago was it known to me, but let the winds whisper it in the ear of the pretty Annabelle, and your game is up at once."

"Knew it, say you? why then in the name of all that is good, did you not tell it me before this?"

"Wherefore should I! you asked me not,—and if you had, I tell no secrets except for gold—line my hand with the yellow dust, and you shall have more I warrant me, than you know how to keep."

"Miserly witch! what can gold do for you—they say it is your joy to hoard it, and that this glen is sowed thick with your sordid gains. Help me to win this heiress, or by heaven, I will upturn every inch of this soil to find it,—your pelf, or hers, shall enrich me, so choose, whether to lend me the aid I ask, or to see me here before midnight with mattock and spade, to dig deep for you buried treasure."

"Satan himself, with a shovel forged in his own fires, could not upturn a single sod here, while Firebrand guards the glen. But as for the story of the gold, it is all false, wicked people have maligned me, and because I have crept away here to hide my poverty, they think my deeds must be evil—ay, gold forsooth,—were it mine, think you, I would cower beneath that wretched roof, and feed upon the stinted dole of charity," and so she muttered on to herself in low unintelligible tones, expressive of her ill humour and discontent.

Mowbray well knew, that over all the unholy passions, which burned in Mabel's breast, the demon of avarice presided, and for the glimpses of futurity which she pretended to grant to the weak and superstitious, who constantly came to consult her, she was in the habit of demanding an exorbitant equivalent in money. Yet her extreme poverty, her actual want of the merest necessities of life, induced a common belief that her accumulated gains were safely buried in the earth, reserved not for use, but, that miser-like, she might in secret, feast her eyes upon the sordid hoard.

Mowbray, however, was too solicitous for her aid in the present instance, to hazard giving her offence, by dwelling any longer on the subject. He had observed, that though Annabelle disowned any faith in the woman's prophecies, yet that she had a superstitious dread of her, which he thought might be made of use, in leading her to consent to his wishes; he therefore turned to the old Fortune-teller, and addressed her in a more soothing tone.

"Mabel," he said, "I did but jest, so never heed the slander of busy tongues, let them say what they will. And now tell me, if for a reasonable recompense, you will lend what aid is in your power,