

lonely echo of the place; but, though the sound seemed near, no object met his eye, but the broad expanse of moving water, and the deep shadow of the rock beneath which he stood. He began to think something of magical illusion prevailed. At length the following ditty was chanted in full chorus, by manly voices, in his native tongue:

Where the sun warms, or the tempest lowers,
The treasures of ocean and earth are ours;
Freedom and conquest attend our sail,
And the prize shall be ours ere the moon turns pale.

The wind that ruffles the breast of the deep,
And howls round our cavern, shall lull us to sleep;
We sail by the glory of moonbeam and star,
And shout to the billow that bears us afar.

Bear a hand! bear a hand! unmoor the boat,
With the wind and the tide to our vessel float:
When the black flag is hoisted rude warfare is nigh,
Where its dark shadow quivers the boldest will fly.

Then, courage my mates! the wind sings loud;
The moon has burst from her swarthy cloud;
Again must we dash through the angry roar
Of the foaming surge, ere the night is o'er!

This wild burst freed the Emperor from doubt as to the profession of the revellers; and he rightly concluded that he was near the rendez-vous of one of the notorious hordes of pirates which, in that dark age, infested every island and shore of the Mediterranean. Finding he was likely to escape from Scylla only to fall into Charybdis, he was about to bend his course in a different direction, when his horse, with the natural sagacity of the species, finding himself near the haunts of men, neighed long and loudly. The sound had scarcely gone forth before all was silent in the cavern; and Otho had only time to disengage the royal diadem that encircled his plumed helm, and commit it to the deep, ere a huge stone was rolled from the mouth of the cave, artfully concealed by a projecting angle of the rock. A flood of light instantaneously bursts forth, revealing a group of men, variously attired, feasting round a table, hewn from the solid rock, which blazed with goblets of precious metal, filled with the sparkling juice of the grape.

In another moment the Emperor was surrounded by armed men, whose fierce and menacing gestures indicated that little mercy or forbearance was to be expected at their hands.

The prince, accustomed to command a turbulent and warlike people, bent not from his native dignity in addressing the lawless band before him. Courage could not rescue him from his perilous situation; but a bold and resolute carriage was more likely to succeed with such men, than cowardly supplication or mean submission. Turning, therefore,

to the foremost in the group, whom, by his proud bearing and fierce demeanour, he concluded to be their leader, he said:

"Chance and my evil destiny have thrown me into your power: my rank is noble; aid me in my present need, and I will so amply reward your services, that henceforth you may abandon the lawless life you pursue."

The pirate tauntingly answered: "Methinks, the fortunes of an unhelmed knight would pay us poorly for exercising the rites of hospitality! What sum could you offer, of sufficient magnitude to tempt the rover to forsake his traffic on the deep? The wealth of nations is ours—we have bought our freedom on the wave with our blood, and derive our treasures from the most remote regions of the earth."

"Peace, Theodoric!" exclaimed a voice from behind, which made Otho start, as a tall martial figure emerged from the cavern. "Is it thus," he continued, addressing his comrade; "that you prove your boasted freedom, by playing the tyrant to a stranger, whose misfortune it is to have fallen into our hands? Now, by Saint Nicholas! the patron of the mariner, I find man is the same arbitrary being on the throne, in the camp, or on the deep. Give him power, and he abuses the prerogative with which he is invested."

During this speech, Otho examined, with an air of troubled interest, the dark, but intelligent countenance of the outlaw. His figure was lofty, well and strongly formed. Though plainly attired in the coarse garb of a seaman, he possessed a firmness of step, a grandeur of deportment indicating high lineage and early acquaintance with arms. His complexion had suffered from the scorching influence of a hotter climate and constant exposure to weather; but the fire of genius pervaded his features, and flashed through the dark and piercing eye, which spoke of deeds, boldly resolved and fearlessly executed. His brow was marked with an expression of deep and settled melancholy, whose gloomy power had stolen the glow of health from his cheek, and shed its blight on the rich masses of raven hair, which, in the full meridian of manhood, were already mingled with silver. His countenance, once seen, could not easily be forgotten; and the remembrance of its lineaments recurred to the mind of the Emperor like a troubled dream, recalling the calm sports of boyhood, the rash and impetuous career of youth, and the fierce tyranny that had marked his entrance on manhood.

"It is only fancy, or he too would recognize me," he exclaimed to himself, as the pirate, turning to him, said, in a courteous tone—

"Sir Knight, you are welcome to our rugged cheer—follow me."

The cavern was strongly illuminated with torches, which gleamed on arms and trophies won from re-