

emotion, but struggling to subdue it, she again in a low and faltering voice, repeated her request, to be permitted to retire from court.

"I shall not oppose your wish," said the king, though I would much prefer your remaining to lend attraction to our court. But after the sentiments and wishes I have expressed, I must expect that all intercourse is at an end between you and Mr. Seymour, and that neither shall seek to acquaint the other with the place of their retreat."

Lady Arabella attempted not to speak; she dared not trust her voice to reply to this requisition, which betrayed such a continuance of fear, and distrust of her sincerity in the king's mind, but she bowed her head in token of assent, and he resumed.

"To what distant nest would our truant bird wing her flight? We would not lose sight of her, let her perch where she will, and the choice shall be left to herself. We put no constraint upon her inclinations in matters that come not near our state."

"The stricken deer loves the deepest solitudes," said Arabella, with a faltering voice; "and if it please your majesty to grant me permission, I would repair to my mother's early friend, the sad and widowed Lady Gervase. She dwells shut out from the world, schooled by the fearful discipline of her life into humble and pious submission to the will of Heaven, and in her chastened society I may perhaps find peace, even though happiness has fled."

"An honourable lady, but a rank papist," said the king, shaking his head; "she loved my mother well, and therefore can owe no good will to me or mine—I misdoubt me much, gentle coz, if you will reap any benefit from her counsels."

"Gainsay me not in this, I entreat your majesty; no ill can emanate from the sorrow-stricken mind of the Lady Gervase; affliction has weaned her from the things of earth, and her conversation, and her thoughts are of Heaven. I pray your majesty, grant me permission to go to her, she was my mother's dearest friend, and her arms will gladly receive and shelter her desolate child."

"I prith'ee go, cousin," said the king, moved by her earnest entreaty; "I cannot say you nay, though I would that you had chosen better; but go and teach the melancholy Lady of Archibald Gervase, not to prate of disloyalty to her present sovereign, albeit she was widowed by the decree of his predecessor."

Thus terminated this long and painful *tête-à-tête*, and the Lady Arabella retired from the royal presence with a crushed heart, hopeless of earthly joy, and shrinking with dismay from the prospect of the dark and dreary future. With breathless haste she sped along the corridor, fearful of encountering some one, who should witness her emotion, and entering her apartments, passed on to her private closet, and locked the door. Earth had no longer

hope or comfort for her; impressed with a deep sense of her dependance on that Being from whom alone cometh help and support in life's dark hours of trial, she sank upon her knees, and poured forth her sorrows into that compassionate ear, which deigns to hear the faintest aspiration that ascends from the subdued and smitten heart.

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It was the afternoon of a delicious May day, and two ladies sat on a grassy terrace, fronting an ancient castellated mansion situated in one of the northern counties of England. The elder of the two, a tall majestic figure, past the meridian of life, wore the deep weeds of widowhood, and the pale and sorrowful countenance that was in keeping with such badges of grief. But humble resignation was written on her brow, and the light of Christian benevolence beamed from her large dark eye, shedding its lustre over a countenance more furrowed by suffering than by time.

Her companion was still in the first bloom of youthful loveliness, but in the pensive expression of her soft eye, in the rapidly changing hue of her transparent cheek, in every line, indeed, of her beautiful and speaking face, might be read the tokens of that inward grief, which, "like a worm in the bud," saps silently the springs of life, and steals its glory from the cheeks of youth. The two ladies were earnestly conversing, when a shout of mirth from the happy villagers who were seen in the distance dancing round a may pole, came wafted to their ears, and pausing, their eyes met with a melancholy smile.

"We do not well, to sit here indulging moody thoughts on this gala day, my Arabella," said the elder lady; "come let us go forth and show these happy villagers, that we approve their mirth, even though we do not participate it."

"I will accompany you, dear Lady Gervase, if such is your wish," returned her companion; "but with a sad heart, it is a pain even to look upon gay faces, and listen to the sound of laughter—I would far rather sit here and watch the snowy swans upon the lake, or those pheasants as they bask in the sun at the foot of that old beech, dazzling one almost, with their plumage."

"And so would I, my love, or even listen to the cawing of those rooks as they perpetually wheel above us, flying in and out of their old dormitories, or even watch the gambols of poor Fido, chasing the roving bee and butterfly upon the lawn. But neither you nor I, my Arabella, would refrain from a kind action for the sake of these or any other selfish pleasure. Come, let us walk to the foot of yonder hill, round which the villagers are gathered at their sports, we will not remain here nursing our regrets, when by a slight sacrifice we may enhance the happiness of others."