

deed; nor when you stuck the race course with spikes, to secure to your maaster an unrighteous victory."

"How did you learn these things?" said Ivan, turning white with fear.

"I was at your elbow."

"I did not see you."

"I did not choose to make myself visible—but I suggested the deed."

"Then you must be ——"

"I know what you would say," said the Tartar.

"Admitting that I am he, will you serve me if I condescend to help you?"

"I will make no promises," said Ivan; "I can do the deed without your assistance."

"I defy thee to do that," said the Tartar; "but go thy ways for a hardened villain; I am sure of thee at all times."

"Who art thou prating with, Ivan?" said the Lord of Cracow, suddenly re-entering the apartment; "and who is this fellow, who dares to enter my castle without the permission of the owner?"

"Speak more civilly, if you please, to your superior," said the Tartar, smiling ironically. "You and I have met before." He stepped close up to the nobleman, and whispered something in his ear.

"Is such thy name and nature?" said Lord Lechus, with the same cold immoveable air. "I acknowledge that we have had some dealings together. Leave us, Ivan—I would speak alone with this stranger." The serving man obeyed; and the Tartar, drawing his noble figure up to its full height, confronted his companion. "What do you most desire at my hands?"

"Revenge on the blacksmith."

"That is beyond my power—ask something else."

"How!" exclaimed the Lord of Cracow, angrily; "did you not promise to deliver him even now into the hands of my servant?"

"I did—but no more; I did not say that no other power could rescue him. The spirit who protects him, is more powerful than me—against him I can do nothing. Ask something which I am better able to perform."

"Grant me victory in this day's race, and I will be thy servant for ever."

"You will win the race; and further than this, I shall not disclose."

"It is enough," said the proud nobleman; "my own hand shall determine the rest."

"You are such an adept in evil," said the Tartar; "that old as I am in the ways of sin, I could learn something new of thee. Farewell—we shall meet again upon the race-course."

Whilst the wicked Lord of Cracow was busy plotting against the life and peace of the poor blacksmith, he and Ora were retracing their steps to old Steinulf's cottage. Ora was so delighted with her visit to the palace, that she did nothing

but talk of it; and Lechus was so much engrossed with his own thoughts, that he did not hear her. Ora mistook his silence for deep attention, and redoubled her eloquence. What a pity such words were wasted.

On the threshold of the cottage they were joined by Steinulf and Casimer, who were dressed to attend the horse race, but anxious to hear the news, they all re-entered the hut together. Here Ora recapitulated their adventures; and besides all the embellishments she had added in her conversation with Lechus by the way, she gave many more, that her fertile fancy supplied at the moment. Her narration might have been called a second edition, with additions and improvements. Lechus often cried humph! but Ora did not notice the hint, whilst old Steinulf and Casimer listened in amazement to the wondrous tale.

"Fifty gold pieces, did'st thou say, my child?" cried old Steinulf; "Lechus! Casimer! think of that."

"For shame Ora," said the blacksmith; "what tempts you to mar your good fortune by telling a lie. The prince promised ten, and thou hast added forty—if you go on at that rate, your marriage portion will amount to five hundred crowns before night."

"Ten are enough to turn her brain," said Casimer; "I wish the prince had been less bountiful."

"I am much obliged to you, Mr. Casimer—what do you mean by that?" said Ora.

"Whilst you were a poor simple girl, Ora, an honest country lad might perhaps have won your regard—but with this fine fortune, you will be too grand to look at me."

Ora raised her eyes, and looked at him attentively—she never thought he looked so well before.

"What dost thou think of him, Ora?" said Lechus, slyly; "is he not a handsome man, and rich withal, ha?"

"He is well enough," said Ora; "but he is not to be compared with the gentleman in the grand cap."

"I've always heard women are most in love with fools," said Lechus.

"Then I suppose, Master Lechus, that was the reason I was so fond of you," said Ora.

"Ha! ha!" roared the blacksmith; "why, my little Ora, I did not think there was so much wit in thy head—I could make love to you myself, on the strength of that speech."

"You are thinking of my fortune now, Lechus," said Ora; "but 'tis no use relenting—you flouted me before all the courtiers, and I would not have you if you were to ask me upon your knees."

"Whose loss would that be?" retorted Lechus; "never fear, I shall not put you to the pain of a refusal—honest Casimer will make thee a far better helpmate."