

ment, the inspection of the castle began. Halls and chambers were duly examined, and at last the party ascended the rampart of the loftiest tower, whence an enchanting prospect met the eye. Far below them the Murg rolled its restless waters, now flowing peacefully between banks of lively green, now toilsomely forcing its passage between wild masses of rock. On either side the dusky hills towered above the scene; and here and there now glimmered out of the shadow of the forest a solitary mountain village, now a mass of mighty cliffs; and as the eye descended the rapid mountain stream, it rested on the blooming plain of the Rhine, where, in the violet tints of distance, arose the awful barrier of the Vosges. Lost in the magnificent spectacle stood Rosowina, unable to satiate her eyes on the glorious picture, and unaware that Otto was close beside her, contemplating with secret pleasure the beautiful spectatress. At length the involuntary exclamation escaped her, "A paradise indeed!"

Then found she herself softly clasped in a gentle arm, and her hand affectionately pressed, while a well known voice uttered softly, "And would not Rosowina make this place 'a paradise indeed,' were she to share it with me!"

Unable now to repress her feeling, Rosowina replied by a glance more expressive than any words. She returned that evening with her father to Waldenfels the happy affianced bride of Count Otto of Eberstein.

On a bright spring morning, symbolizing well the feelings of the lovers, the marriage solemnity was held at the Castle of Neueberstein, with all the pomp and state of the period, which few understood better than Otto to display. From towers and battlements innumerable banners, with the Eberstein colors and blazonry, floated gallantly in the morning breeze, and the portal, adorned with wreathes and arras, cast wide its hospitable gates. Toward noon appeared, in the midst of a glittering pageant, the bride, magnificently arrayed, but brighter in her incomparable beauty; and all praised the choice of Otto, and agreed that he could have selected no worthier object to grace his halls. Rosowina however, felt unaccountably distressed. It was not the confusion of maiden modesty—it was not the embarrassment of the bride—that troubled the

serenity of her heart. She knew not herself what it was; but it weighed upon her mind like the foreboding of a threatening misfortune. An image, moreover, arose to her thought which long had seemed to have vanished from her memory, even that of the unhappy Heinrich von Gertingen. She endeavored to repress her anxiety, and succeeded so well that the happy bride-groom saw not the cloud of sorrow that shaded the fair brow of his bride. But when the priest had spoken the words of blessing, the last spark of gloomy foreboding was extinct, and with untroubled tenderness she returned her bride-groom's nuptial kiss, reproaching him smilingly, and yet seriously, for exclaiming, as he did, with solemn appeals, that all the joys of paradise and all the bliss of heaven were poor and insipid pleasures in comparison of the happiness which he enjoyed in calling her his own.

The nuptial banquet followed. It was served with profuse splendor; but when the joy was at its height, and the castle resounded with jubilant voices, and the dance was about to begin, a page announced a stranger knight, who wished to speak to the bridegroom; and forthwith a figure walked into the hall. The stranger's armor and mantle were black, and he wore his visor down. He proceeded with stately advance to the place where the newly wedded pair were seated at the table, made a low reverence, and spoke with a hollow and solemn tone:

"I come, honored Count of Eberstein, on the part of my master, the powerful monarch of Rachenland, to whose court the celebrity of this occasion and of your bride has come, to assure you of the interest which he takes in your person, and his gratification in the event of this day."

His speech was interrupted by a page, who, kneeling, presented him with a goblet of wine. But the stranger waved aside the honor, and requested, as the highest favor that could be shown him, that he might lead the first dance with the bride. None of the company had heard of Rachenland; but the knowledge of distant countries was not then extensive, and the representative of a mighty prince could not be refused the usual courtesy.

Rosowina, however, at the first appearance of the stranger knight, had experienced an unaccountable shuddering which amounted almost to terror, as, lead-