

"Blessed lamb," she mentally said, "she is indeed too good for this world—how little dreams my lady of the remorse awaiting her. Oh, Marguerite, but for you, never would I have been tempted to use such deceit—fear has alone deterred me from revealing the truth long ago—but tomorrow, so help me heaven, I will brave all, when my young master will be taught that he has no right to lord it over us so imperiously as he has been wont to do hitherto. Tomorrow. Aye tomorrow. Ulrica, why postpone the duty which ought to be done today—the hours which intervene are brief, it is true, yet may they not involve an eternity of happiness or woe—waste them not then—redeem thy time—keep thy lamp trimmed that when called upon the marriage feast ye may be prepared to enter."

The morning was so warm for the season, that after having partaken of the breakfast, which Ulrica had prepared for her, and she had withdrawn, Adelaide opened the window of the turret, and sat down with her work, to enjoy the refreshing air which sprang in, emitting fragrance with every breath she drew. Her reflections were full of peace. She had earnestly petitioned at the throne of grace, for those who were her oppressors, and implored that the divine blessing might attend the nuptials of Frederica. Ulrica promised to acquaint her when the wedding scene was over, and she felt deep interest, as the hour approached which she knew had been fixed on for the solemn ceremony. The court yard of the castle was distant from where she was, nor could she hear aught that was going forward within—many guests she knew had been invited, but amongst them all she possessed no friend save the Baron, and one other on whose image she dared not now dwell. While thus musing, a gun was suddenly fired, and in a minute afterwards a little bird flew into the room and alighted on the floor. Adelaide had started at the sound, and now rose to catch the flutterer, whose leg she perceived was broken.

"Poor innocent," she said, caressing it, "you are come to share my prison—whose ruthless hand has thus wounded you?" She looked out, and beheld the light form of Albert ascending the craggy sides of the rock in his sporting dress, and with his gun resting on his shoulder. "Ah, wanton sportsman," she continued; "how little reck you of the sorrow you have inflicted—this may be a parent bird, in quest of food for her young at home—and you have robbed them of her tender care—they will behold her no more. Oh, it is sad to lose a mother. Albert, you know not this, but alas I do."

The attention she bestowed on her new companion served to beguile her time and thoughts—she bound its slender leg, placing it in a small basket, and looking at it occasionally to see how it fared. It was not until late in the afternoon that Ulrica returned to her, when she informed her that Frederica had departed, in the gayest spirits, with her husband.

The rest of the guests were to remain for the evening banquet, and it was preparing for this which had prevented her attending earlier upon her charge. She brought with her a salver, filled with choice dainties, which she placed upon the table, telling her that the goblet of wine and piece of cake, were sent her by her lady, with a special request that she would drink the health of the young Baroness Lubenstein.

"The Baroness was kind to think of me, at such a time," said Adelaide in reply; "and I beg you will convey to her my respectful thanks, and my intention to fulfil her desire. I hope Albert, my brother, attended at his sister's marriage?"

"Yes, my child, he did—but he would not even throw off his sporting dress for the occasion, but entered the chapel soiled as he was, and looked withal so stern that in spite of his youth and beauty, the ladies seemed to shrink from him in fear."

"And my father?"

"He appeared ill and unhappy, and no doubt will rejoice when these gay doings are over, and his favourite child is again permitted to resume her place—but I may not linger," continued the Dame; "for my hands are full today, and if I do but turn my back for an instant, every thing stands still and all are idle. There is that sot, Rodolph, already under the table—and Warbeck, seems little better—if the ale gets into the maids' heads I may look in vain for help. See, I have brought your lamp, which you can light when you please, so fare you well till tomorrow, when all shall be rectified that is now wrong. God bless you." And with these words the worthy house-keeper bustled out of the room, to proceed with all speed in her confections and rich viands, while Adelaide, smiling, softly said:

"Martha, Martha, thou art cumbered about many things, but Mary has chosen that better part which shall not be taken from her."

During the day she had felt uneasy at the thoughts of Albert's promised visit, but when hour after hour passed and he appeared to have made no effort to see her, a slight sensation of disappointment succeeded to this. "Yet light, volatile, and in the command of every pleasure, how can I expect him to think of me?" she mentally said; "tomorrow he will leave the castle, when Adelaide and her sorrows will be wholly forgotten."

She sat down to her solitary repast and after offering a fervent ejaculation in favour of Frederica, she drank of the wine sent her by the Baroness, and then lighting her lamp, she resumed the book she had been reading before the entrance of Ulrica, which soon so absorbed her that she heard not the opening of the panel in the next room, or the gentle stealthy footstep of one approaching, until a touch on her shoulder occasioned her to start, and on looking up she beheld Albert by her side attired in the fanciful costume of a bandit, which he had selected for the