

your tribe who is ill, and the twilight is already beginning to deepen."

At that instant two gipsies, who had sat unobserved upon the twisted root of an old oak, rose and came forward, evidently, to the chagrin of him whom she addressed. One of them was a lad of eighteen, the other, a sturdy female of fifty, with bronzed features, and long elf-locks, of a raven hue, that, partially silvered by the touch of time, streamed out from beneath a hat of coarse straw, on one side of which, the stripling had stuck a bunch of may-flowers, whose tender and delicate hues contrasted strangely with the masculine face beneath.

"Ha! wild Will," cried the amazon as she advanced; "take heed how thou dost proffer free word or look to this bonny maiden. If I guess aright, she is from the Hall yonder, and to all beneath that lordly roof, we are bound to render homage and respect, for the good Lady Gervase has eye been a kind friend, and a true, to our people, and suffers none to molest or make us afraid, during our yearly sojourn in the glen yonder."

"Far be it from me, mother, to render rude word, or bold look, to this young and peerless lady, but as she passed on, I read that, in the lines of her fair brow, which should not remain untold, and I followed to uncloset her view the book of fate, wherein her destiny is writ. If she will deign to listen to my prophecy, she may hear that, which will be as a sunbeam to the future, and cast brightness even on the shadows of the past."

The Lady Arabella started, there was something in his voice, subdued and constrained as it evidently was, which made her heart thrill, and awoke within it a wild tumult of emotion—she looked earnestly towards him, but he was stooping down, as if searching for something in the grass, and the brim of his large hat hid his face from her searching gaze.

"Cross his palm with a silver sixpence, maiden," said the woman, "and I warrant me, thou shalt learn all that is to befall thee and thy true love till the morning of thy marriage day. Wild Will is but a novice among us, but he has an eagle's eye with which to read the secrets of the future."

"Mother, thou knowest I ask no guerdon for my knowledge," said the gipsy, "silver and gold are unworthy to purchase it, but what I have, is freely imparted to those who ask. Maiden, show me thy tiny palm, and in its lines I will read to thee, the mysteries of the future."

"I have no faith in such charlatanism," said the Lady Arabella, in a voice which in spite of her efforts was unsteady; "yet to put your skill to the test, I will yield my hand to your scrutiny, and challenge you to name one probable event, which the future may have in store for me!"

She drew off her glove as she spoke, and stretching forth her small white hand, turned up the rosy palm

to his eager gaze. As he slightly touched it with the tips of his bronzed but slender fingers, Arabella perceived that his hand trembled even more than her own, and with excited interest she waited to hear his prophetic words.

"I seldom speak of the past, lady," he began, "but I see by this slender line losing itself in those blue veins, that thou hast been a sufferer by it; there is a baleful influence hanging over thee—it has already cast a blight upon fair hopes, and if thou dost not flee from it, thy happiness, like the tempest driven barque, will be wrecked amid the quick-sands of despair. Thou wilt ere long meet one, to whom if thou give ear, thy evil genius shall desert thee—listen to him, lady, give deep heed to his words, and let them guide thee to peace. Regard my prophecy, for more depends on it, than this waning eve will give me time to tell."

As he uttered this last injunction, the Lady Arabella involuntarily looked up—the broad hat was pushed from the brow of the speaker, and their eyes met. That glance contained volumes. The burning glow which rushed to the face of the pretended gipsy was visible through the artificial olive of his skin, while the almost colourless lip and cheek of the lady Arabella, told how deep, how joyous, and yet how agitating, were the hidden emotions of her heart. For one instant she stood irresolute, then sprang down the hill-side, and mingling with the gipsies in the glen, bade one, in hardly articulate accents, lead her to the side of the invalid. She was instantly conducted to a sheltered nook, where, with the aid of old cloaks and blankets, a sort of tent was formed, beneath which the sick girl lay sleeping on a bed of freshly gathered fern. Her quick respiration, her parched lips, and burning hand, indicated a high state of fever, and the compassionate Arabella, absorbed as she was by her own emotion yet felt her interest strongly awakened for the sufferer. She neglected no inquiry that might enable the Lady Gervase to send her proper aid, and enjoined upon those around her, constant watchfulness and care. With her own fair hand she smoothed back the disordered hair from the face of the gipsy girl, and drew over her the scanty covering that sheltered her from the dampness of approaching evening, then promising to send immediately all that was requisite for her comfort from the Hall, the Lady Arabella again made her way through the motley group who were now beginning to kindle the fires for their evening repast, and hastily ascending the hill, passed rapidly on, till again she stood within the shelter of the grove. There, as she paused for an instant to recover breath, the question involuntarily arose to her lips.

"Shall I, dare I meet him, in defiance of the king's command, and of my promise positively given, to hold no intercourse with him? No, I am bound to fly him—let me then begone before my heart betrays me into disobedience."