

and her attendants fled, as they perceived him, yet, as though his *familiar* gave speed to his horse, in a few seconds he rode by the side of Marion, and throwing out his arm, he lifted her from her saddle, while her horse yet flew at its swiftest speed.

She screamed aloud, but her attendants had fled. He held her upon the saddle before him—'Marion!' said the wizard lover, 'scream not—be calm, and hear me. I love thee, pretty one! I love thee!' and he rudely raised her lips to his. 'Fate hath decreed thou shalt be mine, Marion—and no human power shall take thee from me. Weep not. I love thee fiercely, madly, as a she wolf doth its cubs. As a river seeketh the sea, so have I sought thee, Marion: and now thou art mine—and thy fair cheek shall rest upon a manlier bosom than that of Branhholm's beardless heir.' And then he rode furiously forward to his castle.

He locked the gentle Marion within a strong chamber—he 'wooed her as the lion wooes his bride. And now she wept, and tore her raven hair before him, and it hung dishevelled upon her shoulders. She implored him to restore her to liberty—and again finding her prayers in vain, she defied him—she invoked the vengeance of Heaven upon his head; and at such moments the reputed sorcerer stood awed and stricken in her presence. For there is something in the majesty of virtue, as they flash from the eyes of an injured woman, which deprives guilt of its strength, and defeats its purpose, as though Heaven lent its electricity to defend the weak.

But finding his threats of no effect, on the third night he clutched her in his arms and bore her to the haunted dungeon, that the spirit might throw its spell over her and compel her to love him. He unlocked the massy door. The faint howls of the dog were still heard from the corner of the vault: he put the lamp upon the ground: he still held Marion to his side—and her terror had almost mastered her struggles: he struck his clenched hand upon the huge chest, and cried—'Spirit! come forth!'

Thrice he repeated the blow—thrice he uttered aloud his invocation. But the spirit arose not at his summons. Marion knew the tale of his sorcery; and terror deprived her of consciousness. On recovering she found herself again in the strong chamber where she had been confined, but Soulis was not

with her. She strove to calm her fears, she knelt down and told her beads, and begged that her Walter might be sent to her deliverance.

It was scarce day-break when the heir of Branhholm, whose sword was terrible in battle, with twenty armed men arrived before Hermitage Castle, and demanded to speak with Lord Soulis. The warder blew his horn, and Soulis and his attendants came forth and looked over the battlement.

'What want ye, boy,' inquired the wizard chief, 'that, ere the sun be risen, ye come to seek the lion in his den?'

'I come,' replied young Walter, boldly, 'in the name of our good king, and by his authority to demand that ye give into my hands safe and sound my betrothed bride, lest vengeance come upon thee.'

'Vengeance! beardless!' rejoined the sorcerer; 'who dares speak of vengeance on the house of Soulis? The crown is mine—thy bride is mine, and thou also shalt be mine—and a dog's death shalt thou die for this morning's boasting.'

'To arms!' he exclaimed, as he disappeared from the battlement, and within a few minutes a hundred men rushed from the gate.

Sir Walter's band quailed as they beheld the superior force of his enemies, and also in dread of the sorcery of Soulis. But hope revived in them when they saw the look of confidence on the countenance of their leader.

As hungry tigers, rushed Soulis and his vassals upon Sir Walter and his men. No man could stand before the sword of the sorcerer—even Walter marvelled, and he pressed forward to measure swords with him. But ere he could reach him, his few followers who had escaped the hand of Soulis and his host, fled and left him to maintain the battle single-handed. Every vassal of the sorcerer, save three, pursued them; and against these three, and their charmed lord young Walter was left to maintain an unequal strife. 'Back!' cried Soulis, 'thy hand alone must Branhholm's young heir meet his doom. It is meet that I should give his head as a toy to my bride, fair Marion.'

'Thy bride, fiend!' exclaimed Sir Walter—'now perish!' and he attacked him furiously.

'Ha!' cried Soulis, and laughed at the petuosity of his antagonist—'take rushes for thy weapon, boy; thy steel falls seckless!'