

guest became the object of her deception. 'Tis true he had acted a part on the arrival of Gustavus and Isabella, but he had been instructed to feign surprise, and when his part in the scene was acted, it passed from his mind.

Somewhat weary with his long, toilsome walk, he sat down beneath a large tree, upon the mossy turf. At the foot of the tree a cooling fountain burst forth, and a gentle murmuring rill went bustling onward among the rocks and shrubs, chaunting forth its merry murmur, as unconsciously happy and free from care as the mountain rustic, who now rested beside its source. A long draught of the wholesome liquid had refreshed the wayfarer, who, apparently well pleased with the place, stretched himself out on the turf, to take a long rest ere he proceeded on his journey. He soon fell asleep, and was likely to prolong his rest for some considerable time, had not a voice beside him called his name, and, starting to his feet, he stood in the presence of Gustavus de Lindendorf.

"How, how varlet, what do you here?" asked Gustavus, as the honest rustic rubbed his eyes to recover from the quiet nap which had been so unceremoniously disturbed. "Haste! tell me, how fares my bonny bird? Speak, sirrah! I command thee!"

"The lady is ill, very ill, my good lord! and is hastening to the castle to tell thee!"

"Now, evil betide such haste as thine, thou idle knave!" cried Gustavus, his eyes flashing with alarm and anger; "the lady ill, and thou art sleeping on thy way to tell me! Thou art the veriest knave that lives, to think thus lightly of thy duty to thy lord! By our holy Lady! I could smite thee to the earth which thou hast defiled by resting thy filthy carcase upon it. Out of my sight! But stay! has the lady been long ill?"

"For some days, my noble lord" answered the alarmed Peter, who felt as if he had committed a crime too heinous for pardon. "We feared to alarm you by bringing you word but my mother fearing she might die, bade me this morning at the early dawn, haste to the castle to tell thee."

"Humph! and I were likely to get the message, and thou sleeping beneath the tree! but I must waste my time no longer with thee! I must away to my suffering Isabella, while I leave thee to finish thy long sleep ere thou seekest me at the castle."

Gustavus de Lindendorf walked hastily up the path in the direction of the dell, while the simple Peter burst into tears, and wept long and bitterly, he had incurred the just displeasure of his lord, and this was to him the very height of evil. When

his burst of grief was at last over, he arose from the stone where he had been seated, and with a heavy heart began to retrace his steps homeward. With eager haste did Gustavus pursue the mountain track which led to the humble abode of his suffering Isabella, but the way seemed to lengthen before him, as he rushed onward, and mourning the sad intelligence which he had received, and cursing the idleness of the messenger by turns, he reached at last the height, which commanded a view of the dell, here he paused a moment, ere he descended, and sad were the thoughts which rushed through his mind; before him was the abode which contained his Isabella, the dearest treasure of his heart, perhaps to be torn from him by death's relentless hand; perhaps she was even now dead, and he should hear no more the voice which thrilled his heart, and lingered on his ear, sweeter than the softest music; he felt that her death would drive him to madness, for would he not be the murderer?

"Alas! he cried, "why did I not leave her to her happiness? Why did I drag her from her home, from the parents who loved her well, and the brothers who fondly cherished her? Alas! why did I rob the hated Francis of his plighted bride? Why did I subject her to suffering which well might crush that tender flower, and bring her to die within this dreary wild? Would, would that I could restore her to thy home! and to the happiness of which I barely robbed her! Would that I had foreseen this!" And then a smile passed over his handsome face, a strange flash of joy shot from his eye, and darting onward he exclaimed, "perhaps 'tis even so! perhaps my hasty departure was to her a source of grief! a feint ray of affection may perchance begin in her heart, while dazzled by her preference for Francis, she knew not of, until I left her, as she thought, forever!"

The thought was joy and gladness to his heart, and he hurried onward with impetuous speed, until he reached the cottage, and stood in the presence of the woman to whose care he had consigned the important trust.

"Lord love us!" she exclaimed, "but here is the young lord! and where is my Peter?"

"Sleeping, no doubt, like an idle knave, beneath some greenwood tree; but how is the lady, the lovely Isabella?"

"She is very ill, my master; but my care has not been wanting to save her! Indeed, indeed, I have well fulfilled my trust!"

"Then why is she ill, nay, even at the door of death! Ah! much I fear me thou hast obeyed me not, and better hadst thou never lived, than