

ing of many valiant acts performed by brave knights, especially those of Edward, the Black Prince, whose great gallantry was filling Europe with his renown.

It will readily be believed, that when at length the young knight retired to rest, his slumbers were broken and disturbed. The events and conversation of the evening had excited his mind to a degree that sleep could not compose; or, if for a few minutes he closed his eyes, it was to start wildly from the dream, in which he fancied himself at the head of a brave band, storming the Castle of Evreux; or sometimes the scene changed, and, clasping the hand of Gabrielle, he roved with her through vales and groves, of such enchanting beauty as only live in the fairy-land of sleep.

CHAPTER III.

Her beauty princes durst not hope to see,
Unless like poets, for their morning theme;
And her mind's beauty they would rather choose,
Which did the light in beauty's lantern seem.

She ne'er saw courts, yet courts could have undone,
With untought looks, and an unpractised heart;
Her nets, the most prepared could never shun,
For Nature spread them in the scorn of art.

DAVENANT.

THE morning found Sir Enguerrard early astir, and after partaking with his kind host the substantial breakfast that awaited him, he mounted his good steed, and, followed by Denys, rode forth into the streets of Evreux—not, however, till he had exchanged a cordial farewell with Master Philip, and promised to be his daily guest so long as he remained in the neighbourhood. In departing from the city, he purposely crossed the spacious square fronting the fortress, his mind filled with one thought, his heart with one hope, which, for the sake of glory, loyalty, and love, he burned to verify.

Slowly he paced over the broad and open space before the castle, the shadow of whose dark and massy walls chilled, for a moment, the ardour of his purpose. The grim battlements and heavy bastions, seemed to defy the assault of thousands—what then would avail the puny force he might succeed in bringing against them? or what possible stratagem could he hope to devise, which would gain him entrance within those ponderous gates? These were questions for deep and long study, and he made them so, for with every discouragement the project was not abandoned.

Yet, for the present, he spoke of it to no one, but he ceased to hasten his preparations for joining the forces in Normandy, and, day by day gathered what information he could respecting

the number and state of those who garrisoned the castle. Nor was his sorrow great, to learn that it was badly manned, and that, secure in their position, its defenders were almost constantly abroad in search of pleasure and adventure. Moreover, he obtained the knowledge, that its governor, Sir Bertrand de Mortemar, was a noted *bon-vivant*, who divided his time between the enjoyments of the table, and the diversion of several favourite games, particularly that of chess, in which he piqued himself on being an overmatch for the most skilful; also, that he maintained a very lax state of discipline, and, in short, if suddenly surprised by a resolute force, would, in all probability, be compelled to surrender. Garnering every trivial detail in his memory, Sir Enguerrard was silently maturing a plan, which, when fully ripe, he trusted would not fail him in the execution. In the meantime circumstances occurred which made him feel that happiness or woe was to be the fruit of its issue.

Willingly complying with the urgent invitation of Philip de Rosay, the knight now became his daily guest—sitting familiarly at his table, sleeping oftentimes beneath his roof, and seeming ever by his society to heighten the enjoyment of his kind friend. Yet, though evidently inclined to love and confide in him, the merchant had never yet presented him to his daughter; he rarely even alluded to her, for as he kept a bountiful table, and extended a cordial welcome to those friends who loved to circle around it, Sir Enguerrard was seldom left to enjoy a *tête-à-tête* with his host.

One day, when the knight had been unexpectedly detained in the city till a late hour, he found, as he prepared to quit it, the evening closing in so tempestuously, that he thought best to seek the hospitable dwelling of Master Philip, and remain with him till morning. Anxious to gain the comfortable dwelling of his friendly roof, the knight rode briskly on, the tempest all the while beating violently in his face, till the pavements of the old courtyard rung beneath his horse's feet, when, leaping from the saddle, he flung his rein to Denys, and turned to enter the house. The darkness had by this time become almost palpable, and the storm raged with increasing fury, driving the blinding sleet like so many needles into Sir Enguerrard's eyes, so that even had there been a ray of light to guide him, he could not have availed himself of its aid. As it was, he became bewildered by the many gables and projections of the irregular old edifice, and in haste to escape the pitiless pelting of the elements, he with some difficulty pushed open a door, which he conceived to be that by which he was accustomed to enter, and was surprised