

fall before becoming the husband of Thekla, to leave this unhappy country and to take refuge abroad.

"Before his death I had an interview with my nearest kinsman, who has taken sides with the Imperialists, and to him I offered to resign Thekla's rights as heiress to the estate for the sum of 10,000 crowns. As this was but three years' revenue of the estates, and it secured their possession to him whether the Imperialists or Swedes were victorious in the struggle, he consented, after having obtained the emperor's consent to the step, and I have this morning received a letter from him saying that the money has been lodged in the hands of the banker at Hamburg, and Thekla and I have this morning signed a deed renouncing in his favour all claim to the estate. Thus Thekla has a dowry of 20,000 gold crowns—a sum not unworthy of a dowry even for the daughter of a Count of Mansfeld; but with it you must take me also, for I would fain leave the country and end my days with her."

"Do you keep the dowry so long as you live, countess," Malcolm said earnestly. "It is more than the richest noble in Scotland could give with his daughter. My own estate, though small, is sufficient to keep Thekla and myself in ease, and my pleasure in having you with us will be equal to hers. You would wish, of course, that I should quit the army and return home, and, indeed, I am ready to do so. I have had more than enough of wars and fighting. I have been preserved well nigh by a miracle, when my comrades have fallen around me like grass. I cannot hope that such fortune would always attend me. The cause for which I have fought seems lost, and since the Protestant princes of Germany are hastening to desert it, neither honour nor common sense demand that I, a soldier of fortune and a foreigner,