

you of your charge ! We have somewhat to say to our fair sister—a legend to recount which may not be without a moral, to her maiden inexperience."

The duke fell back a pace with a haughty, yet scarcely perceptible inclination of the head, while his flashing eye, and the marble hue of his noble countenance, told how keenly he felt, and longed to chastise the insult offered by his sovereign. The princess, terrified by the angry glances of her lover, and the frown which, notwithstanding his affected gaiety, lowered on the king's brow, trembled so excessively, that she could with difficulty retain her seat ; the rein hung loosely in her relaxed grasp, and when, by a resolute effort, she strove to grasp it more firmly, she gave it a wrong direction, upon which the animal, already irritated by the rude pressure of the king's horse against his flanks, made a sudden bound, and darted away with inconceivable rapidity through the forest.

But a short distance of his mad flight was accomplished, when the princess was thrown with violence upon the turf, where she lay, pale and motionless, when the agitated Bourbon, who was the first that came to her assistance, though all spurred hastily forward, knelt down and raised her in his arms. Gently disengaging her riding hat, the broken feather of which had fallen over and concealed her features, he fixed on her a wild and haggard look, as though he indeed gazed on the face of the dead. He could discover no sign of life, and a strange mist blinded his aching eyes, as he raised them imploringly to ask for aid. Many now pressed around to offer it—but he would not resign her to their care, and there he knelt, fanning her with the green boughs that fell around him, till the stern voice of Francis ringing in his ear, roused him to prompter action:

"Take her from him, D'Alençon," was the royal command. "She will die in his arms—there is water near, let her have it freely, and she will recover."

At the sound of these words the duke abruptly rose, and cradling the fairy form of his beloved upon his breast, bore her to the brink of the rivulet, which at no great distance murmured through the trees. Again kneeling on the turf, he still sustained her, while he bathed her deathlike face with the cool and limpid wave, and a thrill of exquisite joy shot through his heart, when, in answer to his cares, he saw the veined eyelid gently quiver, and then from beneath it, caught the soft glance of the awaking eye. For an instant her look was bewildered, but as recollection returned, and she saw in whose arms she was reclining, a burning blush crimsoned her cheek, and she sprang eagerly to her feet.

But instantly a cry of anguish escaped her, and again she would have fallen to the ground had not

the duke caught her ere she reached it. When thrown from her horse, her ankle had received a severe sprain, and overcome with shame and extreme suffering, she once more sunk into insensibility. As Bourbon cast around him a despairing glance, he met the fixed and withering gaze of the Duchess d'Angoulême, who, with every evil and malignant passion ranking in her heart, and written on her haughty brow, had been a silent observer of the scene. The king, likewise, had marked with stern displeasure the unequivocal demonstrations of Bourbon's passion for the princess, so fearlessly displayed in despite of his expressed disapproval, and command to the contrary. With a gesture of impatience he signed to the Count du Fresnoy, and immediately the attendants approached with a litter, which had been hastily prepared, and furnished with cloaks, for the accommodation of the princess.

"I will myself convey her highness to the palace," said Bourbon, jealous lest any save himself should render her service. "It would be perilous to change her position now, and none can bear her more gently," and rising, he prepared to move forward with her in his arms.

"Will your majesty stand by, and tamely brook this open defiance?" angrily demanded the duchess.

"Peace, madame!" exclaimed the king, impatiently,—then turning to the duke—"My lord, it is our pleasure that the princess be placed upon this litter, and so conveyed to the palace, where the queen's physician waits to attend her."

The duke withheld not instant obedience to his sovereign's command, and though the red blood burned brightly on his cheek, he laid down his precious charge as tenderly as a mother cradles her infant to its rest,—and so the gentle princess was borne from his sight, attended by all save the king, and his personal suite. Bourbon was in the act of mounting his horse to follow the departing retinue, when the king said, with an ill-suppressed sneer:

"Trouble not yourself, my lord, to attend her highness—she shall be well cared for, and when recovered, we pledge our royal word she shall render you fitting thanks for your kind offices. They were scarcely to be looked for from the betrothed of the fair queen Eleanora."

Bourbon cast from him the rein which he had grasped, and turned his "lion-port" towards his sovereign, with an air of such insulted dignity, that even the eagle eye of Francis quailed beneath his glance.

"Sire," he said, "I understand you not—nor know I, why I should so foully dissemble, as to wear love in my heart, and on my lip, for yonder fair and guileless princess, and yet, with solemn mockery, give to another, as your majesty insinuates, my plighted faith."

"Ambition, as you are well aware, my lord, plays