

pleased smile, by the elder maiden. And beautiful exceedingly was that young maiden, her form so slight yet so voluptuously rounded, with snow-white swelling arms and a straight slender ancle, revealed by the short sleeves and somewhat brief proportions of her plain russet frock; her long and swan-like neck, gracefully rising from the blue kerchief that veiled her struggling bosom; her dark and glossy hair folded in simple braids around her broad, smooth brow—her soft, bright, hazel eye, full ruddy lip, and delicate complexion—and, even more than these, her tiny hands, and feet that scarce seemed equal to support her sylph-like frame, seemed to betoken rather some scion of a proud, time-honoured race, than a woodman's daughter. Such was picture on which the young man gazed with wistful eyes for a brief space, through the boughs of the birchen thicket which veiled it on the southern side; but so great and so imminent was his peril that he might not expend much time in feeding his eyes or his imagination upon a scene, so sweet to fill a poet's day-dream. He gazed, it is true, for a minute wistfully; but, though his mind was fraught with many a touch of poesy and wild romance, and though his eye was one which loved to dwell on all varieties of natural beauty, it was not poesy nor admiration of the beautiful that fixed his eye or his mind now. It was a wandering, restless, scrutinizing glance, which he cast into every nook and angle of the domestic scene before him; until, convinced, as it would seem, that he had taken every feature of the picture, satisfied that there were no other persons present than those whom he had seen already, and that they were of no formidable character, he drew the tangled branches quite asunder, and stepped at once, though with a quiet unobtrusive air, into full view.

"Be not alarmed, fair maid," he said, seeing that she was not a little startled at his sudden appearance. "Be not alarmed—I am alone, a fugitive, helpless, and wounded, and in search of safety. My enemies—the avengers of blood, are close upon my heels—the blood of my two brothers and my father are red upon their hands and weapons—and mine will flow, unless you can conceal me. You would not look upon my slaughter—conceal me, if you can, for one short hour, so shall I thank you for my life, and so shall you win favour before God. For I am guiltless of all wrong unless adherence to the faith of my fathers, and loyalty to my king, be a sin as the Puritans avouch. There is no time to lose, for they were scarcely a

mile distant, when I looked back from the last hill-top."

The blood which had ebbed from her cheeks, as he appeared, returned at his words, and although fluttered slightly and somewhat tremulous, she answered in a clear and distinct voice: "I can conceal you, sir—happy am I to say it—where all the malice of your enemies would in vain strive to find you. But you must promise me," she added, "never by word, or sign, or token, whether for good or evil, to divulge the secret of the hiding place which I will show you. This must you vow, upon your plighted honour as a gentleman and soldier—for ruin would come of it, and perhaps bloodshed, if you should fail in this.—Moreover, see what you may, or hear, you must rest satisfied and ask no questions."

"Be it so," he replied instantly; and laying his hand on his heart, he made the promise she required, using the very words which she had uttered, with a manner so impressive, that it could hardly fail to convey a full belief in his sincerity. Scarce had he finished speaking, however, when a distant shout was heard, followed by the thundering gallop of a squadron, and in a moment a second clamour, so loud, and seemingly so near, that the young man perceived at once that his pursuers had come up to the spot where his horse had fallen.

"It is too late!" he said; "thanks for your good will, maiden; thanks, and may heaven reward you!—but it is all too late!—at least, I will not die before your eyes, nor unavenged"—and as he spoke, he laid his hand upon his rapier's hilt, and turned as if to rush upon his foes. Quick, however, as light, the fair girl interrupted him, catching in the earnestness of her anxiety, his hand in her small snowy fingers. "No, no!" she said, "no! it is not too late!—rush not, for God's love, rush not on your doom; but follow me and be silent. Philip," she added, addressing the boy who had been shooting on the green, "you are old enough, and have sense enough to understand this, and to keep silence—go now and play with little Mabel, and the dog, till I return, which I will instantly—do you comprehend me?"

"Yes! yes!" exclaimed the boy eagerly—"Ycs! yes! I understand you, Constance; and you may be quite sure I would not tell the rogue Roundheads one word about this gallant gentleman, though they were to tear me with wild horses—go you and hide him, and I will quiet Mabel."

She said no more, but led him rapidly round the corner of the cottage, between the wall and