

Annette sought to cheer her, and at length succeeded.

Annette gently led her forward to the apartment of the wounded chief, and opening a door, conducted her to a seat, and then withdrew. St. Maury was sitting supported by cushions, his face still deadly pale, and his whole appearance attesting how much of suffering he had endured. He bowed respectfully, and a pensive smile played over his face; but for some moments he spoke not, but sat as if awaiting what his fair visitant might say. But the remembrance that the being in whose presence she sat, held in his hands her future destiny, chained the tongue of Isabella; she felt a trembling dread of his decision.

"Lady!" the bandit at length exclaimed, "tis said that you were torn vilely from your home and native land, by one less merciful than even an outlawed bandit! from his power my men wrested you, and conveyed you hither! Say, would you be restored to him who held you in captivity?"

"Not for the wealth of worlds!" she cried. "Sooner, far sooner, would I welcome the most horrid death! rather would I remain, immured for life, amid these mountain wilds, than become again the captive of Gustavus de Lindendorf!"

A bright smile played over the pale face of the bandit, as he asked, "And why, fair lady, might you not learn to love even these mountain wilds? is happiness and joy confined to lordly halls, and courts of monarchs? or do they not smile on the lowly as well as great? Say, lady, couldst thou not learn to love our rude, our humble home?"

"No!" she timidly replied, "my heart would ever languish for my own loved home, my parents, my brothers, and my native land, until nature sank beneath its load of misery, and in the welcome embrace of death, I might find a release from sorrow!"

"And what fair maiden, should I grant to you your liberty, would be my reward?"

"You have but to name it, and you will find, that Glenelvin's Earl, counts as his greatest wealth, his long-lost child!"

"Then would I ask, the kindly remembrance of his lovely daughter, as of more value than all her father's gold, and in the moments of happiness that await you, think that to St. Maury, the robber captain, you owe somewhat of your joy!"

"Kind, generous man! think not that I shall cease to cherish with warm esteem, one to whom I owe so much. No, not one hour of my future life, shall pass unmarked by thoughts of thee, and in my prayers to heaven will I implore its

power, to shield you from the dangers which hover o'er your path!"

"Then have I nought to fear!" replied St. Maury, "for if aught could propitiate the favor of heaven 'twould be the prayers of such as thee! but thy father's home is far away; and something of danger hovers over the heads of the followers of the blood-thirsty St. Maury, and though they would hazard their lives in thy service, or rush to death in obedience to their chief, yet would I fear to send them so far away, least evil might befall them! But when all others of those who once called themselves my friends, deserted me, one only remained faithful. He, a powerful noble, and distant relative, remained true, and sought to save me from my coming fate, but in vain. But by his former generosity dare I confide in him, even now, and to him will I send my lovely captive; and from him you may hope for the accomplishment of your dearest wish. Confide in him, fair lady, for he is the very soul of honor, and as he would wish his own fair daughter restored to him, were she torn basely from her noble home, so will he restore thee to the halls of thy father!"

Isabella retired to her apartment, overcome by the tide of joyous emotions which came rushing o'er her. Home, and all its endearments, again burst upon her fancy, and she felt the blissful certainty that for her they might smile as in days gone by. And then came fears that all she loved might not now cheer the paternal hearth; but she determined to banish care from her heart, nor let the vagaries of imagination damp the joy of the present moment. She thought long of the noble generosity of St. Maury, so different from what she might expect from the fierce leader of a robber band; but by the hand of woman, the soul of St. Maury had been wounded not. Handsome in person, nobly descended, and ranking high among the noblest of the land, he had been the especial favorite of the gentle throng, and when the rude hand of adversity was laid heavily upon him, and flight alone had saved him from an ignominious death, woman had deeply mourned his fall, and had even ventured to plead his cause, and two, the dearest of all to his heart, had followed him to his retreat, and lived but for his happiness. To him the female name was a sacred sound, and although feelings of stern, bitter hate, dwelt in his heart, against his fellow men, woman had never suffered by him. And when the hopeless Isabella asked his compassion, and expressed her wish to be restored to her home, every feeling of his heart prompted him to comply with her desire; and yet it was no easy task; and often had he perplexed his mind, to divine the means by which