

blighted by the sea wind, or gallop on the great gray horse over the stony fields about the castle; but it was not safe to wander far, for fear of our wild Scots neighbors.

Save in the first days of my returned consciousness my husband and I met little. Constant warfare with the neighboring clans busied him, and I had long leisure to meditate on my position. No one came near me, save the silent old woman and the half-deaf old man who saddled my horse. I knew the whole story now, and meditated on it, and wondered if the end might in any way be altered. My husband hated me, I knew, and I saw that my hate made little difference to him. He had me in his power, and it was only a question of time till the bird should be tamed to its cage. All discourtesies possible he did me. He denied my request for a maid servant, and when I prayed for leave to quit the house and take the air, he answered with a sneer.

So things went on, and the autumn wore to winter. The days grew colder, and the sun shone more often. Once or twice there came flurries of snow, and at times in the silence of the night the voice of the sea rang loud from the sea-beach miles away. I might not leave the house now, but sat a prisoner in my room, desolate and disconsolate.

One morning the old woman came early to my door. "My lord says you are to ride with him to the hunt to-day," she snarled, and went her way. A change at the least, at least a road to the fresh air whence I had been so long a prisoner. I made ready in haste, and went down to the court. There stood the earl, ready to mount, impatient at my delay. He was dressed in a light hunting dress, a little unfitted, I thought, for his massive form and square face with the heavy moustache and frowning brows where a battle-helmet were far more in place than the light-blue cap.

Out we rode at last, neither speaking a word. I rode first; he followed with his hawk on his arm, and his hound running by

his horse's side,—a fine figure, I could not but think, even while I hated him so. At a widening of the path by a ford he came to my side. "Is my lady fond of hunting, or had they no good sport in her own land?"

"My lord should know that best," I answered. "Has he forgotten the noble game he slew by craft on Bentham Moor? Never in Scottish land have I seen stag so goodly as that."

His face darkened with anger. He raised his whip, and with the handle struck me lightly on the cheek.

"Have that for thy wise answer, my lady, nor think that a Scotch lord's wife may be an Englishman's love."

I answered nothing. I do not think I shed a tear. I felt the blow burning on my cheek, and I sat silent and waited. He fell back to his place behind me. I do not think he believed that I was angry. He knew how to tame a woman, my lord of Rossness.

There came a turn in the road, a sudden winding and plunge into a little wooded ravine, hollowed by a tiny brook, whose black pools, broken by white little cascades, were strewn with the yellow willow-leaves. The opposite slope was sudden, and the path was shadowed by black over-arching of fir and spruce. I had crossed the brook, and was entering the cavern of woven shrubbery, when my eye was caught by a sudden glint of steel far in among the branches, a flash as of the sun on moving armor, and, as I looked closer, I saw the red silk pennon of the house of Altrith.

An ambush! There they waited. A moment more and they would be upon him. One cry, one word, one gesture, and he was safe,—the slightest sound or sign,—but I sat silent, and turned neither to the right nor to the left. On I rode, deeper and deeper into the wood, and listened to the beating of his horse's hoofs up the road behind me. I had no thought of mercy. "Remember Bentham Moor," I whispered to myself, and waited.

On he came; step after step I heard his horse advance—one, two, three,—and then