

## Flörsheim.

### The maiden of Flörsheim.

**N**ot far from Tripptown situated old ruin Wilenstein the remains of which still yet overlook the wood-mountains of Westrich, once lived knight Bodo of Flörsheim. He had had a pious, affectionate wife too early taken from him by death, and an only child Adeline, who bloomed in grace and youthful beauty, was the only joy left to him.

When Adeline had attained a marriageable age, the charms of the maiden; and the riches of the knight attracted many suitors, but the maiden's heart disregarded all solicitation, for none of those who courted her had made any impression, and she loved her father too much to wish to leave him. In domestic occupations, and the enjoyment of the beautiful free Nature, she passed her days, and no passion dimmed the clear mirror of her soul.

One day there appeared at the castle a strange young man of noble fine exterior, however in the costume of a shepherd, and begged permission of the knight Bodo to share the protection and tending of his numerous flocks. The situation of a shepherd, added the youth, was the position of his choice, and he could boast of being so known with it, that it would certainly be of advantage, if the offered service was not refused.

During the conversation the stranger displayed so much knowledge not only of cattle-breeding, but of agriculture, and excellent ideas, that Bodo did not hesitate to transfer to him the superintendence of his shepherds and flocks. Only one thing the youth declined to give, his name and home, because he asserted powerful reasons compelled him meanwhile to keep it secret. Till he was allowed to declare himself, he begged to be called Otto. The beneficent consequences of his shepherd's position soon showed itself, the flocks flourished and increased in an until now, unknown manner, and the timely care of the enigmatical stranger extended to other, to him not transferred, objects, so that he rendered the knight important service, for which this remunerated him with benevolent gratitude. But notwithstanding the blessing which rested on Otto's arrangements, the youth was not of a joyous disposition. A deep melancholy lodged in his soul, he was occupied with his own thoughts, sought solitude as much as possible, and not seldom, believing himself unobserved, he shed tears.

Adeline had heard much from her father of the strange youth; and what was related of the shepherd excited her complete participation. Till now she had not yet seen him. It happened accidentally that once passing through the forest, she met him. The impression which her appearance made on the youth was great and surprising.

For a time Otto stood speechless, lost in astonishment and feeling, and as if the remembrance of a distant dear person suddenly stood before his soul, he regarded the maiden with doubt and admiration. Only slowly he recollected himself as it seemed, then he begged to be excused on account of his strange conduct, and ventured, Adeline making herself known as the castle maiden, to offer his company. With the utmost attention he listened to each of her words, and as, not far from the castle, he respectfully took his leave, he expressed the hope that he might soon, be allowed to see her again. Still occupied with the impression which he had just experienced, he retired to his country lodging. He confessed to himself, that if it were ever possible to reconcile himself with the world, with which he unfortunately so early already had quarrelled, if he might still hope happiness would smile on him, Adeline could conduct him to it, whose almost wonderful resemblance with his beloved ah! already departed sister, excited him so powerfully.

Also the maiden felt herself magically attracted to the educated stranger, whose pale suffering features bore the expression of deep grief. His noble conduct, the feeling in his discourse spoke for him, and if she did not confess that she felt more than friendly to him, so had however the still dreamy manner that now took the place of

her former joyous spirits, convinced a spectator that in the young heart love was become awake. It was also more than accident, that already the following day Otto and Adeline met again, they saw each other almost always at the same place, sat themselves on a mossy bank, and talked till the setting sun reminded them of the course of time. From that time, they passed each evening together, soon they confessed their feelings to each other, and nothing resembled the bliss with which they swore eternal love, and fidelity to each other.

In one of these hours of happy meeting; Otto confided to his beloved the fate of his former life. Prematurely losing a tender father, who had been a most respected, wealthy knight in Thuringen; Otto had, with a loved younger sister, suffered the cruellest treatment from an avaricious, unfeeling step-father. Then Death had by the loss of their mother, entirely delivered them into the power of the rude man. To escape the ignominy of being, abused as a shepherd, Otto fled at last to a distant uncle, at whose castle he found opportunity to obtain a knightly education, and to exercise himself in arms. After several years he returned home, and found his step-father in possession of all the property, and the dear sister dead. The monster had continually ill-treated the girl, and as she in consequence became ill, he left her without care, indeed,

according to well evidenced suspicion, had hastened her death by poison. Beside himself with grief, Otto questioned the villain, challenged him, to answer for the death of the sister, and demanded the immediate delivery of the unjustly retained property. A revolting answer was the decision, and the young man stung thereby to the utmost anger, drew his sword, and stabbed him whom the world called his father. But this rash bloody action had for Otto the most fatal consequences. He was obliged (if he would not be bound by the servants of the murdered and killed), to fly, and secure himself from the pursuers, into the thickest woods. His own uncle till now favorable, cursed him, and soon shared the property with a near relative of the murdered. Then Otto wandered long till he found admission as shepherd by Adeline's father.

With the deepest sympathy the beloved heard the tale. Then she sketched plans for the future. Otto was to discover himself to Bodo, a faithful friend to be sent to Thuringen, to obtain information of the uncle, and the state of things and the property belonging to the young man, and leave no means untried, to obtain an agreement with the uncle, and what could be obtained of the paternal property. The lovers hoped that no obstacle would oppose their early union.

On the day following this confidential communication, Bodo sent for his daughter, and said

to her: „Hitherto you have refused all offers of honourable knights, and I have pardoned this from regard for your youth and inexperience, but retain to myself to assert my paternal respect by the next acceptable suitor, and hope that no longer childish obstinacy, or affectation will be an obstacle to your advantageous connection. Such a connection now offers itself. The knight Siegebart has solicited your hand, he is the richest in our district, and has obtained great renown in Palestine, whence he is lately returned. To morrow he will come to solicit for you, and I confidently expect that you will gladden him with a friendly promise.

Adeline stood as if annihilated, she could not love the strange knight, however rich and renowned he might be, and she abjured the father to force on her no husband, to whom her heart did not incline, and not to hazard the happiness of her life, but to leave the choice of a husband to herself. But the knight Bodo remained inflexible, and excited by the resistance of Adeline he forgot himself so much, that he ill-used her, and even locked her up.

The next day the knight Siegebart magnificently accoutred and with a splendid retinue made his entry into the castle. He had chosen Adeline, whose beauty had been praised to him, and hoped to find in the maiden joy at the prospect of such an advantageous, brilliant connection, but

the striking paleness of her face, and the weeping eyes were not witnesses of a joyful meeting, and Siegebart was disagreeably affected by these discoveries, his vanity was most sensibly offended by his friendly words finding no response in the course of the day, and not being favored with a favorable regard.

This behaviour embittered the knight Bodo. He confined Adeline in a dark room, and swore that he would send her to a convent, and disinherit her if she did not give, even on that day her promise to Siegebart. At the same time arrangements were made for a splendid marriage-feast, and invitations sent to the neighbouring castles.

Meanwhile Otto passed tormenting days. He had, since his last meeting not seen his lover, heard of the visit of a strange knight, and of preparations for a grand banquet. Besides it was not unknown to him how anxious Bodo was for Adeline's marriage, and therefore with increasing anxiety he expected the hour when he could again speak with the beloved. But Adeline came not more. He was seized with unspeakable pain, and the thought the beloved had thoughtlessly forgotten her oath, made him take the resolution to leave the country for ever. Like a madman he wandered through the woods, and distant plains, cursing himself and his fate, that had destined him to misery, and so he strayed about

days and weeks; till at last the irresistible power of ardent desire brought him into the neighbourhood of Flörsheim. He wished to hear at least news of Adeline, in fact, he wished to speak with her father, discover himself to him; and if the beloved had not forgotten all faith, beg for Bodo's consent, but as he went to the castle with such intentions, he heard from shepherds whom he met, that on the next day the marriage ceremony with Siegebert was to take place. He was seized with despair on hearing this news, without giving any answer to the shepherds, he turned to a bridge, which led to a deep stream, now swollen by violent rains, and threw himself into the raging-flood.

Adeline was, to the day on which her marriage with Siegebert was to take place, so much the more strictly watched, because meanwhile, she had declared to her father her love for Otto. This severity, as well as the exhortations and menaces with which Bodo unremittingly tormented her, and still more so the news, that since some time her lover had disappeared, brought her at last to such a state of mind, that she unwittingly yielded to her father's will. But as she should go to church, dressed in her wedding-garments, as the marriage bells chimed for the nuptial ceremony, the poorest believed to be obliged to escape her misery, and watching a favorable moment she hastened, unobserved out of the