what a hole this festive evening was going to make in his slender treasury. But Gertrud sat near him and drank with him from the same glass; and how could he find a place for such cares? But suppose her Heinrich should come to-morrow!

CHAPTER IV.

The first stroke of eleven sounded, and again the tumult was calmed,—again the breathless listening to the tiresome strokes. A kind of horror came over him—he knew not why; and thoughts of his mother, and home, darted through his mind. Slowly he raised his glass, and bowing, emptied it as a greeting to his far-away loved ones.

"To whom did you just now drink?" asked Gertrud, as she again laid her arm on his.

Arnold hesitated with the answer. Perhaps she would laugh at him if he told her. However, with a gentle voice he said to her, "My mother."

Gertrud said nothing to this, and went silently back to the other room—but she smiled no more;—and before the dance had begun again she asked him, "And is, then, your mother so very dear to you?"

"More than my life," he said simply.

"And does she love you just as much?"

"Does not a mother always love her child?" he answered solemnly.

"And if you were never to go back to her ——?" she continued.

"Poor mother!" said Arnold; "her heart would break."

Just then the dancing began, and Gertrud said quickly, "Come; we must not lose a second of this;" and wilder than ever the dancing went on. The young men, heated by wine, were boisterous, and the hilarity increased amid great uproar, in which the music was drowned. Arnold disliked the din and noise, and Gertrud had also become very still and quiet; but with the rest, the excitement waxed only greater and greater.

In the midst of a new dance Gertrud suddenly stopped, and taking his arm, whispered, "Come!"

Arnold lost no time in asking whither, for she had slipped away from him again, and was on the way to the door.

"Where are you going, Gertrud?" said two of the dancers to her.

"I shall soon be back again," was the short answer; and a few seconds later she stood with Arnold out in the cool evening air before the house.

"Where are you going, Gertrude?" asked Arnold.

"Come!" she said; and, seizing his arm, conducted him through the village, past her father's house, only stopping to dart in and bring back a small bundle.

"What have you there?" questioned Arnold, horrified.

"Come!" was the only answer; and they went thus together until the outermost limits of the village were passed, when Gertrud turned off from the path to a small flat knoll, from which the brightly-lighted windows and doors of the Town Hall could be seen. Stopping here she put out her hand to Arnold, and said, feelingly, "Greet your mother for me. Farewell!"

"Gertrud!" cried Arnold, as astonished as he was dismayed, "are you going to send me away from you thus in the middle of the night? Have I displeased you in any way?"

"No, Arnold," said the girl, calling him for the first time by his first name; "it is just—just because I like you, that you must go away."

"But I cannot let you go back to the village alone, and in the dark," besought Arnold.

"Gertrud, you do not know how much I love you—how deeply you have obtained possession of my heart in the past few hours. You cannot know——"

"Do not say more," Gertrud interrupted him quickly; "we will take no farewell. When the clock has struck twelve—it can hardly be more than ten minutes of it now—come again to the door of the inn; I will wait for you there."

"And until then——"

"You must remain here in this place. Promise me that you will not move a step to