

sion, and, withal, dreamy and wistful as a child's eyes.

"And who art thou, dear child?" he asked presently.

"I am Elise Uterhart—Lieschen they call me. This is my home: I live here with my father and nurse, and keep the house."

"And hast thou nursed me all these weeks?"

"Yes," she answered, "and I have prayed for you when I thought you were dying, and see, the dear God has heard. You live, and you will grow strong again."

"Dear child! I owe thee my life. What can I give thee or do for thee?"

Lieschen blushed, her eyes faltered from his face, and she looked down in silence.

"Nay, ask what thou wilt, 'tis thine, if I have it to give."

"Indeed, I know not; 'tis nothing I have done, only watching," stammered Lieschen. "Tell me your name," and she once more raised her eyes to his.

He tried to hold out his hand, and she put hers into it. "Let it be, then," he said, slowly; "there is time enough. My name? My name is Otto von der Lanken; I—"

"Ach! You are tired," interrupted the girl, seeing a helpless look come into his eyes as he broke off. "Drink this, and do not speak any more."

She raised his head with one arm, and he drank the milk she held to his lips. Then she laid him down upon the pillows, and went back to her seat by the window, he watching her with the idle look of a man still too weak to speculate about things, or think any thoughts, but one or two that seemed of themselves to pass in and out of his brain.

Lieschen smiled and shook her head at him. "Shut your eyes and sleep," said she with a pretty little authoritative air.

"Sing, then," he murmured, inclined to dictate his own terms, and watching her every gesture with passive enjoyment; "sing to me."

Lieschen could think of no song but the one she had been singing when he woke, which was still running in her head, and she sang it.

"Ach! wie ist's möglich dann
Dass ich dich lassen kann?"

"Ah! can it ever be

That I should ever part from thee?"

When she had finished she turned and looked at him, and saw tears standing in his eyes.

"'Tis very sweet," he murmured, "and plain to see that thou knowest what love is. Sing again—the last verse again."

"Were I a birdie wee,
And by thy side would be,
Fearing not hawk nor kite,
To thee swift I'd fly.
Pierced by the hunter's dart,
I'd nestle next thy heart;
If one tear dimmed thy eye,
Glad then I'd die."

And he closed his eyes and slept.

So the slow summer days went by. Every day he grew a little stronger, and by degrees she gathered from him the story of the duel which had so nearly been fatal to him; how he and his friend had quarreled about a lady and had fought.

"I suppose they thought me dead and left me," said Otto. "One has not much time to waste on these occasions. Poor Rudolf! He will have fled; but he can come back now, since no harm is done."

"And the lady?" asked Lieschen, breathlessly.

"She will marry Rudolf, no doubt," replied Otto, with a hard laugh; "and I shall dance at the wedding."

Lieschen said nothing; but the great, dark eyes that rested on his face were lighted with a new fire, a burning worship, an unspeakable devotion; her heart beat and her pulses thrilled with a new, sweet, mysterious pain. The die was cast.

At last there came a day—oh, those days, those few days that make up the earthly history of a life! Some all in white and garlanded with fresh flowers of spring; some flaming in gold and crowned with sunshine; some—some there must be—draped deep in black. There they are, within the veiled future, coming slowly, surely on, each in its appointed time, neither sooner for our longing nor later for our agony of fear; and we can not choose but take them all and bear them till the last sands have run, and there are no more. There came a day when Otto von der Lanken bade farewell. He went through the garden looking for his little nurse to say good-by to her, but could not find her; then he saw little foot-marks in the sandy path under the roses and syringas that led down on to the shore. He followed them, and found Lieschen standing by the tide looking out to sea.

"Lieschen," he said, coming up to her. "I am come to say good-by!"

"Oh, not to-day!" cried Lieschen, clasping her hands and looking up at him with her great, piteous eyes; "not so soon!"

"Doch ja, liebes kind," he answered, kindly; "I am well again and strong, thanks to my good little Lieschen. And it is time to be up and doing. And now," he added, seeing the tears rush to her eyes, "now what can I do for