

Ernst is expecting so anxiously from Rome. And he was driving Ernst's grey's, Oscar and Harold."

"Do you you think he knew us?"

"That was not possible, Katrine dear. It must be years since he saw us, and I sat a child of six years old on his knee, and he was a boy of fourteen. How many years ago is that, ten or twelve?"

"Twelve, it must be; of course that makes a wonderful difference between a little girl of six and a woman of eighteen."

"It must be Eric. We will ask the landlady when she comes in again, if she knows him. How surprised he will be when he finds out who we are, and that it is his brother's bride whom he has rescued from such a fearful death."

"We must not let him know who we are, Marie," said Katrine. "Only fancy what his surprise will be when Ernst presents him to us."

"But how can we keep our name from him? He must know it already."

"No, I do not think he does; the people here do not know us. We will give him our mother's name."

"But Fritz and Wilhelm, Katrine?" pleaded Marie.

"O, I will give them their lesson. I must go and see poor Fritz when he comes in; I am afraid he is badly hurt. O, here comes Madame Wirkmann; let us ask her about Eric."

The landlady came in preceding the servants, bringing in the equipage for tea and coffee, and fresh wood and coals for the fire.

"It was a wonderful escape, gracious ladies," said the smiling landlady, in answer to a remark of Katrine's, "and he is a noble gentleman who came to your rescue. But it is just what one would have expected of a Walderthorn. They are all brave; all strong; all handsome. God bless him and his brother, the young Baron of Kronenthal."

"So, this is young Eric Walderthorn?" said Katrine. "We had our suspicions it was he; it was so very likely to be him."

"He is very like the young baron, saving your presence, gracious lady; only he is taller."

"Will you tell him that when he is at leisure, Katrine and Marie von Mellenthin would like to see him, to express their gratitude to him for the great service he has rendered them to-night?"

"Ah, that I will, noble lady—ah, that I will. Beautiful ladies' thanks are due to handsome, noble gentlemen, who risk their lives for them. As soon as he returns, I will let him know your wishes."

"Return!" said Marie. "Is he gone?"

"He is gone to look after his friend, who remained behind to conduct your Grace's sleigh and your wounded servant. He was uneasy about him because of the storm. Ah, how it rages!"

It was true. The storm was raging fearfully. The wind swept up the streets, and howled and raved round the houses. Marie from the window, saw nothing before her but thick darkness, through which the lamps in the streets of Stettin glimmered faintly and flickered to-and-fro in the strong blast; as she stood there vainly striving to pierce the darkness with her eyes, the hail rattled against the window, the fierce sleet cut the glass, the wind raged, the thunder rolled.

Meanwhile Eric rode for life, for death. His heart sank within him when he thought of Carl, exposed to the whole fury of the storm! How it raged in his face! The fierce wind blew into it that fine, sharp-cutting, pointed snow, so well known to those who have been out in a like storm; and hurled at his head frozen branches, which it had snapped off in its fury as it swept past him howling madly. On, on he rode, his gallant horse answering the spur, with fresh bounds, though it was with great difficulty he could keep his feet; and once, when a gust of wind came up fiercer than ever, the poor creature turned completely round; he could not see it. It was well for both horse and rider that their road lay alongside the forest; the tall black skeletons served as a landmark for them in the wild dreary waste of snow before them, though it was no shelter to them, as the storm swept over the wide plain which lay to their left. "Carl! Carl!" shouted Eric; "He never can weather such a storm," he thought; "he has never seen anything like it! Why did I leave him!"

At length he thought he saw something black moving slowly towards him. To his infinite joy and relief, he discovered it to be the sleigh he had come in search of. "Steady there, steady!" he heard, in the native language and deep tones of his friend's voice; "Woho, my brave lad!" as his horses shied at the approach of Eric; and then there was a shout of recognition.

"I knew," said Eric, "you would clear the