

CHAPTER XXVII.

A YEAR and three months had gone by when Johan Riverius and his wife stood in a terraced garden overlooking vine-clad hillsides and the half-seen windings of a little Saxon river.

Elizabeth Preston had found in the German gentleman the true companion of a life to be satisfied with nothing else than the best honesties of head and heart. Happiness and prosperity had enriched the woman with a riper form, and that serenity of face without which beauty is impossible. So thought the man at her side.

"Ah!" he said, "there is Paul on his pony. He will ride well in time. There is a good soldier in that boy. Some day my old regiment will have him."

"No, no," she said. "His career will be at home, not here. I shall harden my heart and bid him go when the time comes."

"Ah, well," returned Riverius, "the day is not yet, and to harden thy heart when it comes—perhaps. What of mine? I love the boy well."

The woman smiled. "I shall have my way. I can make reason hammer my heart hard enough if there be need. When the time comes, Johan, you will make it easy. I sometimes think I am too indulgent with him nowadays, but love and happiness play tricks with one's moral nature." She stood still, of a sudden thoughtful.