

Like her, he was alone in the world, and he was rich, and his time was his own. No irksome duties called his thoughts away from that still valley and simple household, where his mind, half-spoiled and shrunken by contact with the world, and by that sickening adulation which is paid to the rich and young, expanded and shot upwards like a healthy tree in the pure atmosphere of Lisa's presence. All in her was so simple and pure; she was like fresh, clear water. And her mind grew and opened like a flower under his teaching; all the poetry inherent in her German nature gained new life under the touch of culture which he gave it. When her work was done and she could take her knitting, he would pay her with a poem, or a story of other lands, for a song in her sweet, rich, thrilling voice. A new colour and life came into the girl's face; a new grace and vivacity into her movements. It was so fresh, so delicious to find that anyone cared for her; that her singing, which had only been used hitherto to lull a child to sleep, could give pleasure to some one. And perhaps there was a deeper feeling still.

But quietly and unconsciously this inner life went on; though the young man had sometimes asked himself how it should end, no definite answer had come, and he had not sought long for one.

But there came a day, when he was seated, with his book, beside the spring. It gushed out of the living rock into a stone trough fringed with ferns. The bank behind was gemmed with delicate flower-bells, blue, and purple, and pink, and white; and drooping trees overhung the nook. Lischen came up with her pitcher, as she had often come before. He looked up, expecting to meet her calm, bright smile,—perhaps of late a little less calm, a little more bright. But now, there was only a faint trembling feeling for a smile on her lips, and her eyes were red. She did not speak, and as she lifted the pitcher to the spring and Harry Thorpe sprang up to help her, he saw that one of those firm, rounded arms was waled with red streaks. He set down the jug, and took her hand tenderly.

"What is this, my Lischen?" he said.

The lips quivered like a child's and two great tears rolled down.

"The mother! I broke the best dish; it was wrong of me, but I could not help it, and she beat me."

"Beat you, Lischen!"

"Yes," she answered, shaking her head and looking down on the injured arm. "But it was very provoking of me to break the dish."

The young man's heart swelled with horror and hatred at the thought that this sweet maiden, his queen, should be so ignominiously treated. Resting on the broad stone trough, yet half kneeling before her, he looked up into her face, clasping both her hands.

"Oh! my child, come to me!" he said, "and I will make you so happy, so happy."