

# "BEACON LIGHTS."

BY EMILIE SEARCFIELD.

## THE VINE GATHERER.

"Do to others as you would wish them to do to you."

IT was late autumn, golden and crisp. The very atmosphere seemed as the elixir of life, and the scent of the luscious vintage literally floated here, there, and everywhere. Bertha Allendorf, who was descending the hill from the "gathering," formed a part, too, of the joyous, life-giving evening and evening scene. She was an orphan, and had earned her own livelihood from childhood, but what of that?—everybody loved her, everybody had a kindly word to say to her;

but the void will soon be filled, for Carl's love, Carl's smile and his presence will make up for her the perfection of life, the happy ending of a happy dream.

"Bertha, my own!" and the young man greets her in true, lover-like style, taking the basket from her, and himself bearing it onward. Their steps were in unison, and their hearts throbbed evenly together, till Carl pausing said, "A stranger has been inquiring for you, Bertha, and is now at our house, awaiting your return."

"A stranger! what is she like?" It seemed that the girl had quite settled in her mind that the stranger was a "she."

"Like! I scarce know; but nothing to be compared with my love," and Carl passed his disengaged arm around waist. "She says that she is in somewise related to you—how, I cannot tell, only her name is Elise Hermann."



why, even now the master for whom she had been toiling since sunrise, had given her a basket of fruit for her very own, well knowing that the girl would share it with every child or aged woman she might chance to meet.

Oh, it was as though the year, in growing old, was giving of his mightiest, his most precious and best-beloved, to the people of the earth; as though he, like some folks, was growing more beautiful in the mellow time before hoary age, in the shape of wintry frosts, should come and nip the warmth of his sunlit blossoms and fruits. But what quickens the girl's steps? What causes the rich blood to rise, suffusing cheek and brow with its crimson tide? What causes the almost unearthly tenderness in her full, dark eyes? Even this—Carl, her lover, approaches; her lover, whom she is soon to wed, and henceforth be no more lonely. She misses a something in her quieter moments, has missed it for years;

"Ah, I know!" and Bertha's face grew grave. "Father's sister married one Jakob Hermann, and then they both went away to Paris; but it was all before my memory. Last year, however, a letter came to me from my aunt; she said that she was dying, and that Hermann, her husband, had deserted her, so that very soon her daughter (yes, she called her Elise) would be alone, and that it was her wish that she should come to me, if I could in any way befriend her."

"And she is come?"

"Yes. I sent back word that she would be welcome, but as I heard naught afterwards, I gave her up long ago. She is welcome, though, and I am very glad," and Bertha spoke the truth; for her heart warmed at the bare thought of standing face to face with her own flesh and blood. Therefore they both hastened on, pausing not to linger by the Rhine as was their wont, for the very reason that Bertha was longing to