

CHAPTER IX.

THE holy calm of the Lenten season was gone, and joyous springtime was fast circling into summer warmth and sunshine. Eager hearts, weary of biting sky and pallid fields, were greeting the gayer adorning of trees and shrubs and green meadows dotted with golden dandelions. Nature became a universal joy, and all delighted in its grand reviving gifts. Who could picture the happiness of those two inmates of Frau Kercher's little cottage? Erica's bright sunny temperament brought joy to all with whom she came in contact, and Marjorie's tender care and understanding of girl-nature won Erica's grateful recognition. To Marjorie Erica was a delightful picture, natural and light-hearted, fearless and noble, so that her growth truly answered Ruskin's grand interpretation of girl-training: "She grows up as a flower does; she will decay in