

Arnold took it out and held it before the old man who beheld it for some time in silence.

"And you wish to take that away with you?" he said at last, "and perhaps frame it and hang it in your room?"

"And why should I not?"

"May he, father!" asked Gertrude.

"If he does not stay with us," laughed the mayor, "I will have no objection—but there is one thing lacking; you must draw upon it the funeral procession which we saw a few minutes ago."

"But what has it to do with Gertrude?"

"There is enough space," said the mayor stubbornly, and you must put it in or I will not allow you to take my daughter's picture with you, for no one will be able to think evil of it when it has such solemn surroundings."

Arnold could not help smiling at this ridiculous proposition, but the old man seemed so determined to have it thus that he complied with his request, knowing that he could again erase it. With practiced hand he quickly sketched the solemn funeral procession on the paper while the entire family watched him in astonishment.

"Did I reproduce it correctly?" he cried as he sprang to his feet and held it out at full arm's length.

"Excellent!" exclaimed the mayor, "I had no idea that you could do it so rapidly. You and Gertrude may go now and see the village for it is hardly likely that you will again have an opportunity to see it. Do not be gone later than five o'clock as we will celebrate a feast tonight."

The streets were less quiet than before. The children were playing and the older persons sat at their doors, but the mist still rested on the roofs of the houses.

"Is there a burning bog near here?" asked Arnold. "One does not notice such a cloud above the surrounding villages."

"It is caused by vapor rising from the ground," she replied quietly; "but have you never heard of Germelshausen?"

"Never."

"That is strange, and the village is already so old."

"The houses look like it, and the people look and act very different from those in the neighboring towns. And are there no longer any swallows here? I do not see any nests."