

"And do you intend to go away again?"

"Yes, tomorrow or the day after, but I will come back again."

"Tomorrow?—indeed?" laughed the young man, we will talk of that tomorrow." He then took Arnold by the hand and led him through the house which was by this time full of guests. In one room card-players sat at a table on which lay large piles of money, another room was fitted up as a bowling-alley, and in a third room various games were being played by the children. In one of the rooms he met Gertrude who said to him:

"Come, it is time for the dance to begin; as the mayor's daughter I must lead the dance."

"What a strange tune! I cannot find the time," said he.

"That will come to you in a few minutes," laughed she.

He danced with the beautiful maiden again and again, the ecstasy caused by holding her in his arms banishing all thoughts of the other dancers from his mind. Only one thing disturbed him; the church stood near the inn and the discordant sound of the cracked bell could be heard tolling the hours. Each hour as the first stroke was heard, the music suddenly ceased and all the people stood still and counted the slow strokes, but after the last one the dance continued as before. This strange performance was repeated at eight, nine, and ten o'clock, and when Arnold asked Gertrude for an explanation she looked at him sadly without answering.

At ten o'clock there was a pause in the dancing and all of the people went into the dining-room where refreshments were served. Things were rather lively there; the wine flowed in streams, and Arnold was already calculating to himself how much this evening would affect his purse, but with the beautiful maiden at his side he could not worry long about such a matter. At the first stroke of eleven, the merriment again ceased and the guests counted the strokes breathlessly. He felt a peculiar horror, but he could not account for it, and the thought of his mother at home worried him very much. He slowly raised his glass and drank her health. With the last stroke of eleven, the dance began with renewed vigor.

"To whom did you drink?" asked Gertrude as he took her arm.

"To my mother," he replied quietly and somewhat abashed.

Gertrude did not say anything more and she seemed to have lost her liveliness. When they re-entered the dance-hall, she asked: