

"Gertrude!" cried Arnold in a beseeching tone.

She hesitated for a minute and then suddenly threw her arms about his neck and pressed her ice-cold lips against his. But she immediately tore herself away and was hastening back towards the village while Arnold stood as if spell-bound on the spot to which she had led him. He noticed for the first time how the weather had changed in a few hours. The wind howled through the trees, the sky was covered with storm-clouds, and rain was beginning to fall in large drops. He could still see the lights of the inn and he could occasionally distinguish strains of music, but at the first stroke of twelve, it ceased, and the storm became so wild that he was thrown to the ground. On the ground beside him, he found his knapsack which Gertrude must have placed there beforehand. The hurricane had died out, but he could no longer see any lights, and he could no longer hear the howling of dogs, and a heavy, damp mist rose from the earth.

"The time is up," murmured Arnold as he threw his knapsack over his shoulder, "and I must see Gertrude again. The dance is over and I ought to meet her on her way home if she is no longer at the inn. But can I find my way in the dark?"

He walked cautiously down the gentle slope up which he and Gertrude had come, but he found tangled bushes instead of the broad, white road which had been there a few minutes before. The ground was soft and swampy, and he sank into it over the ankles of his thin boots. No matter how he turned, he sank deeper and deeper into the treacherous ground until he finally reached a dryer spot where he decided to remain until the clock struck one, thinking that the sound would furnish a clue as to the direction in which the inn lay. The bushes had torn his hands and face as well as his clothes. But not a sound came to him from the village. Wet through and through, and almost overcome with cold, he made his way back with difficulty to the mound where Gertrude had first left him. After several futile attempts to reach the village, he gave up in despair and sought a tree under which to spend the remainder of the night. And how slowly did the hours drag by! He tried to sleep, but he always imagined that he heard the bell.

At last the darkness began to dispell in the east and the clouds disappeared, disclosing a clear, starry sky, and the awakened birds sang blithely in the trees. In vain did he look in all direc-