

beauty. Gertrude did not answer him and without a word led him across the street to the stone steps of her father's house.

"I live here," she said finally. "If you will allow me to present you to my father, he will be pleased to have you dine with him." Before Arnold had time to answer her, her father appeared in the door-way and cried:

"Why, Gertrude, you stayed rather long today. Who is the handsome, young man whom you have brought with you?"

"My dear sir —"

"No ceremonies on the stairs; come in before the dinner becomes cold."

"But he is not Heinrich!" exclaimed the old woman who at this moment had looked out of the window. "Didn't I always say that he would never return?"

"Hush, mother," said the mayor as he grasped the hand of the young man and bid him welcome, without allowing him to continue his apologies. He then took the young man by the arm and led him into the sitting-room.

The narrow hall through which he led the way was far from inviting in appearance. In a number of places the plaster had fallen from the walls and had been hastily swept into the corners. It was dimly lighted by a small window in the rear and it was pervaded by a damp, earthy odor. Arnold had very little time to make observations for the mayor at this moment threw open the door of a large, airy room whose cleanliness and sanded floor were a decided contrast to the hall. A large table covered with snow-white linen stood in the middle of the room. Besides the old woman he had seen at the window, he found in the room two red-cheeked boys and a younger woman, who wore a costume entirely different from those worn by the women of the neighboring villages.

A maid soon brought in the dinner and all drew their chairs up to the table but they remained standing, the children looking anxiously at their father who leaned on his chair and stared silently and gloomily before him. Was he praying? Arnold saw that his lips were pressed firmly together and that his right hand hung at his side;—surely this was not an attitude for prayer. Gertrude laid her hand softly upon his shoulder and the old woman, who stood silently opposite him, looked at him beseechingly.

"Let us eat!" he exclaimed harshly, as he nodded to his guest