

LIESCHEN.

Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he has.—Merchant of Venice.

"Lieschen," child, I must say adieu. I know not when I shall see thee again.

"Adieu, then, Gustav. A pleasant journey to you! If you didn't come back for fifty years you would find me still here, milking the cows and attending to the household. Life here is much the same year by year."

"And thou wouldst not fret, Lieschen, if I did not come for fifty years?"

He spoke as though he scarcely knew whether to jest or be in earnest, and stood watching her with a wistful, doubtful smile. She was making butter-milk cheeses at the dresser by the cutler's window, and he was leaning in over the window, while the other kept breaking off little twigs and roses that clambered all round the window, and made a pretty frame to his sun-burned face and broad shoulders.

Lieschen laughed at his question, as she shaped the little white cheeses all speckled over with caraway-seeds, and did not look up.

"You would be about a hundred years old when, Gustav, I think," was the only remark she made.

"No, come, Lieschen, that is cruel of you. I am only thirty-eight—more than twice your age, it is true, but not nearly fifty. And it is something to have a fine farm and a good new house, and the only carriage on Regen, even if your husband is old enough to know white from black."

"Yes, I know," said Lieschen, indifferently; "but there is plenty of time yet."

Gustav Baier bit his lip and frowned uneasily as he looked at her.

"Thou dost not care, Lieschen, 'tis plain to see," he said bitterly. "I think thou hast no heart at all, for all thine eyes are so sweet and thy ways so gentle. Thou'rt some mermaid from the sea here, and one day will vanish like the foam. Is it not so?"

"I don't make myself," retorted the girl petulantly, "and I never asked you to come and fall in love with me. If you are not satisfied"—she drew the gold brooch from her finger—"here's your ring. Give it to somebody that has a heart for you."

He left the window abruptly, and she glanced up, flushed and frightened, not knowing what he meant to do. The next minute he came in at the door from the yard, and went up to the table where she stood with the ring in her open hand.

"Come, come, we must quarrel," he said peacefully, replacing the ring, and drawing her onto his knee as he sat on the dresser. "I shall not be satisfied till that ring is on the other hand, and you have come away home with me."

Lieschen hung her head, and her big brown eyes filled with tears.

"What, crying!" he remonstrated, taking her chin in his great rough hand, and turning her unwilling face round towards him. "Thunder and lightning, why, so she is! You spill those eyes my pretty one. What's it all about? Art not happy, Lieschen?"

"Yes, quite," she said, with a gulp, "if you would let me alone, Gustav. I am yours now—what more do you want? You say I have no heart; I can't give you what I haven't got."

"Why, that's true. Give me kisses instead, then," said he, magnanimously,—"enough for fifty years, in case I do not see thee again."

"Stupid old Gustav!" cried the girl, laughing and struggling. "There, that will do! Put me down, Gustav."

"Ach! see, now, these lovers, these lovers!" cried an old shrill voice in the doorway. "Tears and smiles and kisses, kisses and smiles and tears! So runs the world away, and the old folk are forgotten."

"Lieschen counts me one of the old folk, nurse," remarked Gustav, pausing to speak, but holding his prisoner helpless the while in his great strong arms.

"Tut, tut, child! Not many maidens of sixteen can boast of such a fine, brave lover as thine, with his broad farm and nice new house and steading, and everything heart can desire. Not but what thou carst bring him linen enough to stock the house, were it twice the size it is; but he had no need to seek out a simple child like thee to be his bride."

"Gustav is very good to me," murmured Lieschen, slowly turning the ring on her finger. "I think I do love him; he is so tall and broad and strong—he could kill me with one hand, nurse, I so think."

"Behute! What nonsense the child does talk!" exclaimed the nurse. "But see," she said pointing to the window, "is not that thy Gustav come back again? Ran, child, and see what brings him."

Lieschen ran out into the yard, but stopped suddenly short, petrified with fear at the sight that met her eyes.

"Bring him in—quickly," said Gustav, saying; and two farm-gentils followed him, bearing between them the apparently lifeless body of a young man—the head fallen back, the eyes closed, the lips parted, the hands hanging limply down, the clothes stained here and there with blood.

"Run, away, child, run away! 'Tis no sight for thee," Gustav called out, when he saw her standing there white and frightened. "We want the nurse."

Then he turned to the old woman, who had come out, and explained rapidly; Lieschen, instead of running away, listened eagerly to every word.

"There has been a duel—unless it was darker work. We found him in the wood up yonder, bleeding to death. Where can we lay him down? The nearer the better—here on this sofa."

"Oh, anywhere—yes!" cried Lieschen, brimming over with pity.

And so they laid him down on the sofa in the little sitting room, and then Gustav, not unkindly, but quite irresistibly, put Lieschen outside the door.

She stood there with her hands pressed together, every nerve strained to interpret the sounds that came from within, half-muffled by the loud beating of her own heart.

"Ach, Gott! If only he be not dead!" she murmured, as the stillness seemed to grow into a roar. Then there came a low gasping moan of pain, and she heard Gustav say:

"He is coming to: water now, and linen." Then the old nurse came out hurriedly, her eye fell upon the girl's white face, and she sent her to fetch a bundle of old linen from the press in the garret as quick as might be, while she herself went for water.

When Lieschen came flying back the nurse had returned to the side of the wounded man, and she stole in after her with the linen. She could hardly repress the cry of pain and pity that rose to her lips when she saw the deathlike pallor of the face lying back on Gustav's supporting shoulder; but she felt that she must be very quiet; if she would not draw attention to the fact that she had come in unbidden.

The nurse took the linen from her hands without noticing her at all, and then Gustav fastened with his disengaged hand, gently unfastening and laying open the young man's coat, disclosing a white shirt all soaked with blood.

"Cut it—cut it!" said Gustav impatiently; "there's no time to lose."

"What a pity! and the linen so fair and fine," lamented the nurse, in an undertone. "The lad is noble, no doubt."

"No doubt," echoed Gustav; "but, noble or not, he must die if we can't staunch this bleeding at once. If only I had both hands free!" he muttered, exasperated at the tremulousness of the old woman. "This won't do, and not a soul in the house to help! Here, Lieschen, you must be useful. Come and hold up his head—so, so—upon your shoulder. Lucky I've seen so much of this in the war, and know what to be at, he took the heavy, fainting head upon her bosom, and closed her eyes to shut out the sight of blood that almost overcame her.

Now and then, when one of those gasping moans broke from him, she opened them quickly, and gazed in fearful distress at the white face so near her own, and yet seeming, too, so far away—half-way into those cold domains of death that are so very far off to those that are strong and young.

"Yes, he is noble," she thought to herself, trying to keep still and patient, under the weight that began to make her limbs ache and tremble. "His hair is like the sunshine, and all waving—like that picture of an angel in my Bible," she thought, noting him curiously; "and his forehead is so white that the veins show through. No doubt he is an officer,"—this she inferred from the nightly growth that iringed his upper lip,—and how beautiful he is! Gustav is handsome, but not like him; and she could almost have laughed at the idea of a comparison between great, broad Gustav, with his sun-browned face, fine rough-hewn features, and his red beard, and the delicate refinement and almost womanly fairness of the other face. At length Gustav released her, and laid the lad as he called him—she looked about five-and-twenty—gently down on the pillows.

"He may do now," he said, after watching him a while. "I must leave him to your care, nurse, and that of Herr Uterhart. You will explain it—what little we know—when he returns to-night. Good-by, heart's darling! Thou'lt be a first-rate nurse ere I come again," and he kissed his betrothed on either cheek, and went away.

It was drawing towards evening. A familiar clatter of wooden shoes on the outside told Lieschen it was time to go amiling. She stole out, tied on her great sun-bonnet, took up her stool and pail, and followed the women away to the meadows, as she did morning and evening all the summer through.

The shadows were growing very long and the colors fading in the western sky when they came back; and Lieschen still had her young ducks and fowls to shut up for the night. As she crossed and recrossed the yard—now with a can of water, now with the pail and stool ready for the morning—she sang in a shrill, sweet voice some of those lovely, plaintive volklieder—those "songs of love and longing," of endless wandering, seeking, and yearning, that have sprung from the heart of the German people.

Before going into the house, all her work done, she wandered through the garden, under the heavy-laden syringas and bowery wilderness of roses, down on to the seashore, and stood there, dreamily looking over the smooth water into the fading sky, and listening to the plash of the little waves falling on the sand. She thought of what Gustav had said about the mermaid, and thought it would be sweet to float away on the quiet tide, under the glimmering sky, and see the little stars light up one after another in the golden green up there, and watch the flights of birds winging over, and singing beside the boats of fishermen at their nightly toil, and dip down at sunrise—down, down among the seaweed forests where

strange wild creatures swim in and out, and the sea a flowers bloom, and the mermaids sit combing their long, golden hair under the tideless Baltic sea.

She was a strange, romantic child, this Lieschen, full of dreams and longing fancies; and this seemed better to her than to be a creature of flesh and blood, with a human heart and human hope and blessed with the love of man.

"And they live three hundred years," she murmured half aloud, as the light died off the sea, "unless they strive to win an immortal soul by the love of a living man; if they fail they vanish in the sea-foam on the day when he weds another. But there is never, never found a man. He gives his love to a creature of his own sphere, and the foam ever gathers on the sea. If I were a mermaid, though,"—a shy, proud smile gleamed across her face,— "I would not fail."

Lieschen was sitting in the sick-room one hot summer afternoon, her patient asleep on the couch, and the warm, fragrant air floating in with the murmuring of bees at the open window. Her work lay in her lap, but her hands were idle, and her eyes gazing dreamily out at the sky, while very, very low and softly, she sang: "War' ich ein Vogelein."

"Brava! brava!" murmured a voice from the couch behind her. "A sweet voice and a sweet song!"

Lieschen colored at his praise and went and knelt by his side.

"I thought you were asleep. You are stronger—you feel better, life is coming back!" she said, in a voice quite tremulous with joy. "Ach, Gott! you have been so ill; do you not know it?"

He smiled faintly.

"How long have I been here?" he asked. "Nearly three weeks," she answered. "See how thin!" and she lifted up the hand that lay on the coverlet and showed him how wasted it had grown.

He looked at it with a languid sort of curiosity, and then let it fall heavily by his side, and turned his head on the pillow to look at her.

She was a good sight for sick eyes to rest upon, with her pretty brown hair, and great, gentle brown eyes so full of womanly pity, tenderness and submission, and, withal, dreamy and wistful as a child's eyes.

"And who art thou, dear child?" he asked presently.

"I am Eliso Uterhart—Lieschen they call me. This is my home; I live here with my father and nurse, and keep the house."

"And hast thou nursed me all these weeks?"

"Yes," she answered, "and I have prayed for you when I thought you were dying, and see, the dear God has heard. You live and will grow well and strong again."

"Dear child! I owe thee my life. What can I give thee or do for thee?"

Lieschen blushed, her eyes falttered from his face, and she looked down in silence.

"Nay, ask what thou wilt, 'tis thine, if I have it to give."

"Indeed, I know not; 'tis nothing I have done, only watching," blushed Lieschen. "Tell me your name," and she raised her eyes to his.

He tried to hold out his hand, and she put hers into it. "Let be, then," he said, slowly, "there is time enough. My name is Otto von der Lanke; I."

"Ach! You are tired," interrupted the girl, seeing a helpless look come into his eyes as he broke off. "Drink this, and do not speak any more."

She raised his head with one arm, and he drank the milk she held to his lips. Then she laid him down upon the pillows, and went back to her seat by the window, her watching her with the idle look of a man still too weak to speculate about things, or think any thoughts, but one or two that seemed of themselves to pass in and out of his brain.

Lieschen smiled and shook her head at him. "Shut your eyes and sleep," said she with a pretty little authoritative air.

aw little foot-marks in the sandy path under the roses and syringas that led down to the shore. He followed them, and found Lieschen standing by the tide looking out to sea.

"Lieschen," he said, coming up to her, "I am come to say good-by!"

"Oh, not to-day!" cried Lieschen, clasping her hands and looking up at him with her great pitous eyes; "not so soon!"

"Doch ja, liebes kind," he answered, kindly; "I am well again and strong, thanks to my good little Lieschen, and it is time to be up and doing. And now," he added, seeing the tears rush to her eyes, "now what can I do for thee, sweet child? Ask what thou wilt."

She looked up at him a moment, standing there so tall and straight and fair, with the sun on his bright hair and the blue sky shining in his eyes, and then she put her hands over her face and sobbed aloud like a little child.

"Donner!" ejaculated the young count softly to himself, in great perplexity. Then he drew a step nearer. "Dear little Lieschen, don't cry, for pity's sake! What can I do for thee? Tell me."

"Oh, give me your love—your love!" she cried out passionately. "Love me, if only a little!" and then she broke down utterly and leaned her little brown head against his arm, crying bitterly.

"Why, that thou hast, dear one—not a little, but a great deal. Who could help loving thee?" he answered soothingly. "Ask something harder, for my love thou hast."

After a long pause she looked up through her tears. "And thou wilt—thou wilt come back one day?"

"Why, surely," said he, "I am not worth all these tears, pretty one! Be happy, right happy, till I come again. Adieu now, sweet child! Auf Wiedersehen! auf baldig Wiedersehen!" He stooped and kissed her on the forehead, and went away up the sand, turning under the syringas to wave another farewell, and then she heard his horse's hoofs clattering up the yard, and he was gone.

Gone! How it haunted her day after day as she passed in and out of the house, empty of his presence; down the garden and the meadows, which knew his step and voice no more; and upon the shore, where he had bidden her farewell! Weeks passed before she at all turned to the hope of his return. He had said "Auf Wiedersehen!" Perhaps in a week, a month—perhaps at harvest-time—perhaps at Christmas—she would come, she thought, as the time went by.

But he did not come—not even when it was spring, and the early leaves came out, and the clouds lifted and shone white in the young sunshine, and the birds sang merrily.

Gustav came and went, and began to urge the marriage. Perhaps he saw that his betrothed was losing the pretty roses in her cheeks, and that the light in her eyes was growing sad and strange; and he—knowing as none but he knew how much he loved her—logged to take her to himself in his own home and make her happy.

So they fixed a day at last, and Lieschen, like one in a dream, helped the old nurse to make all preparations, and plied her needle busily.

All was ready at length, and two days before the wedding Lieschen stood on the shore, her work done, and no more to do but to wait now for the dawning of the day that was to bring Gustav and make her his wife.

As she stood there she seemed to hear a voice answering her own thoughts:

"Thou wilt lose all, bethink thee well—all if thou fail. Thy father's love, thy peaceful home, thy fair name, thy good, honest husband—all will be lost!"

"Alas, alas, I know it!" she answered, weeping; "but I can not, will not fail!"

She went into the house and looked into the sitting room. There sat her father in his chair asleep, the pipe still between his fingers, and the room dim with smoke. Her lips seemed to frame some word they vainly sought to utter, and then with a choking, stifled sob, she turned and stole away—away out of the house, across the meadows, and on toward the shore of the other side of the promontory, on which lay her father's farm. She was not strong, but something within her gave her power to walk all night in the chill spring weather. Long before noon next day she had caught the Stralsund steamer on its backward way, and was being carried across the water to Helsingland.

She felt no weariness, no hunger, thirst, or cold, and only longed to be on foot once more. She was quite familiar with the quaint old town, and hurried up the quay, across the Water street, and up under the dark, shadowy Zemlower gateway, along the quiet streets where grass grows between the stones of the pavement, and the old gabled houses have looked down for hundreds of years upon the simple burgher life below. She went through the town and out into the country beyond, past many a pleasant little farm, where the storks were patching up their great nests on the thatched barns and oow-houses, and making their curious rattling cry as they flew to and fro. She remembered that the storks used to bring summer in old days and all good gifts when they came back, and that this spring they had not yet come to her home on Rugen. In one little village she asked for a drink of milk, and they made her eat and rest a little while; but she was restless and anxious to be gone, so she let her go, though the wind was rising and blowing sharp and keen, and little flakes of snow were flying through the air.

By nightfall a fierce storm was blowing, and the air was thick with driving snow. Lieschen asked shelter at a farm lying a little back from the high road.

"How far is it to Friedenhagen?" she asked.

"What, hast thou friends at Friedenhagen? In the service of the Count von der Lanke, then?"

heads over it; and they put it away, forgot all about it and her.

Meanwhile she pressed on till it was long toward noon, and then the wretched turrets of the great Schloss Friedenhagen rose dimly through the falling snow, every step her tired feet grew heavier, and snow glared upon her aching eyes, and cold winds seemed to pierce her heart and through; but still she struggled on, stood at length under the great porch, and rang the bell. She had thought of her soiled and dragged dress, or of the impression she might make on the servants; no thought of all that, only of him, of Otto von der Lanke, that another moment must bring them to face.

She heard bells ringing merrily—only phanton music in her tired brain—then the door opened, and a rough, bald-headed man, and a woman in a blue dress, demanded her name and her name.

"Who are you, and what are you about on such a day as this?"

Lieschen vaguely fancied he was talking to the snow, and timidly asked to see young Herr Graf.

"The man laughed aloud. "A pretty request, truly! Come to-day, mein fraulein. Know you not that young Herr Graf has just brought home his bride, and is to-day receiving the congratulations of all his town friends? The countess would be somewhat astonished if she saw a beggar-maiden like you among the train. Make way, make way, and be pushed her hastily aside as a carriage came rolling up the drive."

Lieschen looked away faint, stunned, haunted, broken-hearted, and she went laughing and chatting up the stairs and into the great hall, and the door shut.

Two days later a big, broad-shouldered man, with a sun-browned face and a beard, came riding along the sabbay toward Friedenhagen. The storm was over, but the great drifts still lay piled by roadside—deep, broad, and white, green buds of spring were withered and blighted; sullen clouds moved slow and leaden sky, and huddled in great masses about the south and west; it was dreary, but the bitter wind was still. The man's face was sad and stern, and he was absent at the snow as he rode along, suddenly a great cry broke from his lips. He flung down the reins and sprang to ground.

"Ach, nimmermehr! Ach, ach, Gott! Lieschen, Lieschen! my little Lieschen!"

For there, covered but not hidden by snow, he discovered something—something that told him all, almost before his eyes, fully seen it—a few shadows, a few lines, a sweeping tress of dark-brown hair, he fell down beside the still, unheeding form, and put back the matted hair, and was blown across the face, and kissed frozen eyes, the frozen parted lips, and little frozen hands in vain; dead, dead, his little Lieschen—frozen in the snow.

That was the end of it all. His ring was gone from her hand, but why he could not guess. He only knew had fled from her wedding-day and left him, and dimly felt that Otto von der Lanke might be the cause—whether innocent or guilty he could not tell, and little to know, since all was lost.

And Otto von der Lanke never knew that pretty child will have forgotten me," he said once to himself that spring when something reminded him of his promise at parting from her, "and will be married the good Baier by this time, might send for her to wait upon my wife."

ALL SORTS.

A "fly" fellow—The angler. High art—The labors of the hangman's mitre. A regular poser—The photographer. The blind pool is a poor place for a fry. Queen of the May—the scrub-girl. Reducing the price of gas has no effect on the meters. The speculator loses hope when he has "soap."

A man without a future—a bursted broker. When a man's head swims there is generally more water than whiskey about it. Wrangle land appears to be an appropriate destination for the Jeannette survivors. Of all sad words, the bankers say the saddest are these, "We can not pay."

Darwin says there is a living principle in fruit. We suppose he refers to the worm. "Amateur actor" is informed that the first অপ mentioned in history is Gokuladev Bouillon.

There is a man in Kentucky who has a bone in his body. What a splendid ball umpire he would make. A new kind of monster potato is called "white elephant." This is carrying adulteration of food a little too far.

It ain't what a man knows er 'bout his own dat makes him feel proud. It's what he imagines other people thinks of him. Never speak ill of a man if you can help it. If you must say something bad be sure to say it in a way that will pay your witless fee.

It is a foolish girl who will ask her lover which he likes best, her beauty or her wit. No matter which way he answers she is to get mad.

When a man falls in business there is nothing like having a wife to own the estate; and if there is too much of that one wife to own, he ought to have two or three wives.

There was a girl with a fine voice but poor ear living in the flat above him. Bellini composed that tender aria in "Bambini." Still so gently er in singing.

Anybody who has examined a doctor's handwriting on a prescription on will wonder that a drug clerk frequently puts up with the pen when the receipts call for carriage-pine or some such harmless drug.

"Will you have roast-beef or corned beef?" asked the pretty waitress to Jones the night at his new boarding house. "I'll have a full man blushed and remarked that he loved he would, thanks."

My son, I heard you speak of other day as "the old man's highness." What's the matter that you do as your father an' I mother as your parents should suppose your parents should do the kid, or "the fly?" so think you had been in a family. The son who's parents ought to be ashamed of their ways are old-fashioned grammar a little off, an' like keeping up with the day. Not my father or mother, an' you enjoy the advantages you walk to a country school to pick up a few letters, while now you are at college. They began poor at and labored and saved for a just remember that thing changed in this country. A dress was seen at church in a silk. Men went to meetings. The rule in most of the children to stand up to eat pieces of pie went to father. Children were not allowed to open clock at night, or to sleep after the head of the bed. Boy, don't get any foolish head. If your father is to bet—if your mother is to bet and has no cares for the day, it is his which has brought hard work and nights for their children might be a slavish life. Where they you have broadcast. W you have sweet calves their mode of life and prevented them from enjoying themselves or books, just think the shilling fly, and what let's have a word to say. I've been right among you, you want this, and that, and that it bad." Up to the time of the boys of that day he well fixed. The boys want a piece nowadays, and the we got a new book it was a piece of extravagance. I cash enough to walk into a shop, buy a pair of skates, and eat sweet meats was looked at as a Jay Gould. "Ach, nimmermehr! Ach, ach, Gott! Lieschen, Lieschen! my little Lieschen!" Be sure that if you really say. Ask yourself if you'll the wheels on which the world are the habit of throwing it out brought out and you'll a second-hand museum and make a stinking boy, but w planking his nickels down a wings bank I know that he men who is going to build and do our wholesale business difference between being economical. The richest are liberal in giving to charity and to the unfortunate, but they don't indulge in charity because they have more money, if you are about 15 years of age, a sneaking idea into your head, to use an oath occasionally, to make a greater mistake! men use more or less of it, and like to have you find me ashamed of it! It's a mean habit. I know you can't get men in the land and get out oaths, but that's no should follow suit. There is in this country who do not satisfaction in setting a curse with a man whose language is pure. There's nothing more out. Swearing is about you hear from the lips of a hard. Even a heathen can't get the idea that it's too good. The too good to be forgotten to splice on the wire. Certainly! I know you in this world who look up the next thing to a visit from hell, but they ought to have ago. If you were my brother, show you every animal that we'd take a reserved seat. When a man has a dog or dog to obey him with intelligence he has proved the value of patience and persistence shade of men will stop of a man lift, or to watch a man. Then why deprive you of the performance of an athlete years to bring his strength to perfection? Could I take you to the theater play—yes; to a Buffalo morning burrah—no. Five or six are healthy in sentiment, and so plainly that even a child want my boy to rub against a little while he is a buffalo steaks and victrola. I'm going to send him into a week to live on woodchuck in his head and be jumped. The first time an owl hoots I'm going to give it a shot to sit down of a Saturday. No, he's spent it, and show his gains. If he was a billow I know of a man who take him on a trip from New York, and if he can't cure him nobody else need try. I'd down and talk to your brother. Don't you happen to be his father? Argue and reason to make assertions and back to back truths. I'm backing. Teach him what to cultivate and turn him into a good man. If he seeks the good of his fellow-men, if he works after his own interests, if he has asked you naturally by that failing.

Oh! how tired and weak I feel. I don't believe I ever get through this Spring house-cleaning! Oh, how will it take a bottle or two of Dr. Cassell's Bitters to purify your blood and tone up the system. Large bottles 50 cents.