

The Goose Girl

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CHAPTER VI. GRETCHEN'S DAY.

GRETCHEN was always up when the morning was rosy, when the trees were still dark and motionless and the beads of dew white and frostlike, for what is better than to meet the day as it comes over the mountains and silence breaks here and there in the houses and streets, in the fields and the vineyards? Let old age, which has played its part and taken to the wings of the stage—let old age lolter in the morning, but not green years. Gretchen awoke as the birds awoke, with snatches and little trills of song. To her nearest neighbors there was about her that which reminded them of the regularity of a good clock; when they heard her voice they knew it was time to get up.

She was always busy in the morning. The tinkle of the bell outside brought her to the door, and her two goats came pattering in to be relieved of their creamy burden. Gretchen was fond of them. They needed no care at all. The moment she had milked them they went tinkling off to the steep pastures.

Even in midsummer the dawn was chill in Dreberg. Gretchen blew on her fingers. The fire began its cheerful crackle, the kettle boiled briskly, and the frugal breakfast was under way.

There was dally one cup of coffee, but neither Gretchen nor her grandmother claimed this luxury; it was for the sick woman on the third floor.

What the character of the woman's illness was Gretchen hadn't an idea, but there could be no doubt that she was ill, desperately, had the goose girl but known it. Her face was thin and the bones were visible under the drumlike skin; her hands were merely claws. She mystified the girl, for she never complained, never asked questions, talked but little, and always smiled kindly when the pillow was freshened.

"Good morning, frau," said Gretchen. "Good morning, liechen." "I have brought you a brick this morning, for it will be cold till the sun is high."

"Thank you." Gretchen pulled the deal table to the side of the cot, poured out the coffee and buttered the bread.

"I ought not to drink coffee, but it is the only thing that warms me. You have been very patient with me."

"I am glad to help you." "And that is why I love you. Now, I have some instructions to give you this morning. Presently I shall be leaving, and there will be something besides crowns."

"You are thinking of leaving?" "Yes. When I go I shall not come back. Under my pillow there is an envelope. You will find it and keep it." Gretchen, young and healthy, touched not this melancholy undercurrent.

that I didn't see you. The sentry resumed his beat.

Gretchen stepped inside the gates, and the real beauty of the gardens



"IN YOUR PRESENCE, HIGHNESS?"

was revealed to her for the first time—strange flowers she had never seen before. It was all a fairyland. There were marble urns with hanging vines and marble statues.

A hand grasped her rudely by the arm. "What are you doing here?" thundered the head gardener. "Be off with you!"

"How dare you touch me like that?" she cried angrily. "Something in her glance cooled even the warm blooded Hermann."

"But you live in Dreberg and ought to know." "You could have told me without bruising my arm," defiantly.

"Hermann!" Gretchen and the head gardener whirled. Through a hedge which divided the formal gardens from the tennis and archery grounds came a young woman in riding habit.

"What is the trouble, Hermann?" she inquired. "Your highness, this young woman here had the impudence to walk into the gardens."

"Has she stolen any flowers?" "Why, no, your highness, but it is not customary."

"We, you and I, Hermann," said her highness, with a smile that gave Gretchen on the spot, "will overlook this first offense. Perhaps this young lady had some errand and lost her way."

"Yes, your highness," replied Gretchen eagerly. "Ah! You may go, Hermann." Hermann bowed, gathered up his pruning knives and scissors, which he had let fall, and stalked down the path.

"Whom were you seeking?" her highness asked, rather startled by the undeniable beauty of this peasant. "I was seeking your serene highness. I live at No. 40 the Krumerweg. 'Krumerweg?' Her highness reached for the note and read it, and as she read tears gathered in her eyes. "Follow me," she said. She led Gretchen to a marble bench and sat down.

was so little. "Neither mother nor father. Our lives are something alike. A handsome girl like you must have a sweetheart."

Gretchen blushed. "Yes, highness. I am to be married soon. He is a vintner. I would not trade him for your king, highness," with a spice of boldness.

Her highness did not take offense. Rather she liked this frankness. It was a taste of the old days when she herself could have chosen a vintner and married him with none to say her nay. She surrendered to impulse.

"Gretchen, I do not think I shall marry the king of Jugendheit." Gretchen grew red with pride. "You love some one else, highness?" Her highness did not blush.

"You must not ask questions like that, Gretchen." This was not understandable to Gretchen, but a locket the princess wore pleased her eye. Her highness, observing her interest, slipped the triket from her neck and laid it in Gretchen's hand.

"Open it," she said. "It is a picture of my mother, whom I do not recollect having ever seen. I will open it for you." Click!

Gretchen sighed deeply. To have had a mother so fair and pretty! She hadn't an idea how her own mother had looked. Indeed, being sensible and not given much to conjuring, she had rarely bothered her head about it. Still, as she gazed at this portrait the sense of her isolation and loneliness drew down upon her, and she in her turn sought the flowers and saw them not.

After awhile she closed the locket and returned it. "So you love music?" picking up the safer thread. "Ah, yes, highness."

"I will give you an opera ticket for the season. How can I reward you for bringing this message? Don't have any false pride. Ask for something."

"Well, then, highness, give me an order on the grand duke's bead vintner for a place." "For the man who is to become your husband?"

"Yes, highness." "You shall have it tomorrow. Now, come with me. I am going to take you to Herr Ernst. He is the director of the opera. He rehearses in the court theater this morning."

Gretchen followed the princess. As her highness entered the Bijou theater the herr direktor stopped the music. In the little gallery which served as the royal box sat several ladies and gentlemen of the court, the grand duke being among them.

"I have brought you a prima donna, Herr Direktor," pointing to Gretchen. Herr Direktor showed his teeth. "What shall she sing in, your highness? We are rehearsing 'The Bohemian Girl,'" he jested.

left well enough alone? Read this! The duke hung the note down on his desk.

Herbeck picked it up and worked out the creases. "Well! The query tingled with rage." The answer on the chancellor's lips was not uttered. Hildegard came in. He embraced her and kissed her brow.

"Read," said the duke to her. She slipped from her father's arms and looked with pity at the chancellor. "What do you think of this, Hildegard?"

"Why, father, I think it is the very best thing in the world," dryly. "An insult like this?" The duke grew rigid. "You accept it calmly in this fashion?"

"Shall I weep and tear my hair over a boy I have never seen? No, thank you. I was about to make known to you this very evening that I had reconsidered the offer. I shall never marry his majesty."

Herbeck explained the situation. "Your highness, the regent is really not to blame, for his majesty had given him free rein in the matter, and his royal highness, working as I have been for the best interests of the two countries, never dreamed that the king would rebel. The king has been generous enough to leave the publicity in our hands—that is to say, he agrees to accept the humiliation of being rejected by her serene highness."

"That is very generous of him!" said the duke sarcastically. "Send for Ducwitz." "Ducwitz, your highness?" cried the chancellor, chilled.

"Immediately!" "Your highness, if you call Ducwitz I shall surrender my portfolio." The chancellor was firm.

"Do so. There are others to take up your work." Hildegard flew to the duke's side and snatched at his sleeve. "Father, you are mad!"

"At least I am master in Ehrenstein. Herbeck will have the kindness to summon General Ducwitz." "Your highness," replied Herbeck, "I have worked long and faithfully in your service. I can not recollect that I ever asked one personal favor. But I do so now. Do not send for Ducwitz tonight. See him in the morning. This is no time for haste. You will throw the army into Jugendheit, and there will follow a bloody war."

"I will have my revenge!" stubbornly. "My dear child," he said, "I have suffered too much at the hands of Jugendheit. It was my daughter the first time: it is my honor now, proudly."

"Will it balance war and devastation?" the girl asked quietly. "Is it not pride rather than honor? The prince regent made a pardonable blunder. Do not you, my father, make an unpardonable one?"

"A Portia to the judgment!" said the chancellor, his eye kindling. "Let alone am to blame. It was I who first suggested the alliance." Notwithstanding that he was generally hoarse, the duke was a just man. He offered his hand, with half a smile.

The duke stared at the rug. Presently he said: "Let her be buried in consecrated ground. Wrong or right, that chapter is closed, my child. What is in the letter, Herbeck?"

Herbeck was a strong man. He was always far removed from tears, but there was a mist over the usual clarity of his vision. He ripped down the flap. It was only a simple note to her serene highness begging her to give the inclosed banknotes to one Gretchen, who lived in the Krumerweg. The notes represented a thousand crowns.

"Take them, little goose girl," said the duke. "Your ship has come in. This will be your dowry." An icy shiver ran up and down Gretchen's spine, a shiver of wonder, delight, terror. A thousand crowns! A fortune!

"And I shall add to it another thousand," said Hildegard. "Give them to me, father." In all this fortune amounted to little more than \$400, but to Gretchen, frugal and thrifty, to whom a single crown was a large sum, to her it represented wealth. She was now the richest girl in the lower town. Dreams of kaleidoscopic variety flew through her head. Tears sprang into her eyes. She had the power to do no more than weep.

The duke was the first to relieve the awkwardness of the moment. "Count, has it not occurred to you that we stand in the presence of two very beautiful young women?"

Herbeck scrutinized Gretchen with care. Then he compared her with the princess. The duke was right. And the thing which struck him with most force was that, while each possessed a beauty individual to herself, it was not opposite, but strangely alike.

When the duke was alone he slowly passed on to his secretary and opened a drawer. He laid a small bundle on the desk and untied the string. One by one he ranged the articles—two little yellow shoes, a little cloak trimmed with ermine. There had been a locket, but that was now worn by her highness.

Hermann Breunner lived in the granite lodge just within the eastern gates of the royal gardens. He was a widower and shared the ample lodge with the undergardeners and their families. He was a man of brooding moods, and there was no laughter in his withered heart. He adjusted his heavy spectacles and held the note slantingly toward the candle. A note or a letter was a singular event in Hermann's life.

This note, left by the porter of the Grand hotel, moved him with surprise. It requested that he present himself at 8 o'clock at the office of the hotel and ask to be directed to the room of Hans Grumbach, whoever he might be.

He decided to go. Certainly this man Grumbach did not urge him without some definite purpose. The concierge at the hotel, who knew Hermann, conducted him to room 10 on the entresole. Hermann knocked. A voice bade him enter.

"You wished to see me?" "Yes," offering a chair. "You are Hermann Breunner," began Grumbach, "and you once had a brother named Hans."

Hermann grew rigid in his chair. "I have no brother." "You did have." Hermann's head dropped. "My God, yes, I did have a brother, but he was a scoundrel." "Perhaps he was a scoundrel. He is—dead!" softly.

"God's will be done!" But Hermann's face turned lighter. "As a boy he loved you." "And did I not love him?" said Hermann fiercely. "Did I not worship that boy, who was more like a son to me than a brother?"

GALLAGHER TO PLEAD INSANITY

Alienist Holds Conference With Would-Be Assassin's Lawyer.

LAY GROUNDWORK OF DEFENSE.

Mayor Gaynor is Gaining Strength and Bulletins Do Not Vary in Their Tone of Optimism—Brother Leaves for Three-Day Visit to Baltimore—No Cause for Alarm.

New York, Aug. 12.—Because of alarming rumors regarding Mayor William J. Gaynor's condition, Dr. Arlitz, who was in charge of the patient, issued the following bulletin:

"Pulse, temperature and respiration remain unchanged. Everything is satisfactory." Mayor Gaynor showed greater strength than at any time since his life was attempted on the steamship Kaiser Wilhelm der Grosse on Tuesday. Not only were the physicians encouraged by the mayor's condition, but Thomas L. Gaynor, the mayor's brother, left for a three days' visit to Baltimore.

The two sections of the bullet fired by James J. Gallagher, the discharged dock employee, remain embedded in the mayor's neck and throat. The possibility of danger from these fragments grows less each day. If the infection period be safely passed practically the sole apprehension of the medical men will be from the possibility that one of these fragments lies so near an arterial surface that dangerous hemorrhages may result. Such a rupture might come without warning.

Gallagher, the would-be assassin, in prison in Jersey City, is beginning to lay the groundwork of his defense. It will be insanity. His lawyers and Dr. E. S. Potter, an alienist, held a conference with him. Alexander Simpson of Jersey City, of counsel for the prisoner, says he has investigated the man's record and finds a basis for a trace of hereditary insanity.

FROZEN EGG KILLS GUINEA PIG

Philadelphia Dealer Who Sells to Bakeries Arrested.

Philadelphia, Aug. 12.—As the result of an experiment upon a guinea pig that died twelve hours after being inoculated with frozen eggs, J. Buschel, an egg dealer of this city, was arrested. Harry P. Cassidy, special agent of the dairy and food department, alleges Buschel sells frozen eggs that have been removed from the shell and in a solid body are disposed of to bakeries, which thaw out the product.

Mrs. McCaughan Dies of Injuries.

Belfast, Ireland, Aug. 12.—Mrs. William John McCaughan, who was injured by jumping from the window of a burning hotel on July 26, died. Mrs. McCaughan's husband, pastor of the May Street Congregation and formerly pastor of the Third Presbyterian church of Chicago, was a victim of the same fire and died July 31 from the injuries he received.

SHARP ADVANCE IN WHEAT

Buying of Options Is Active, Especially on Part of Foreigners.

Chicago, Aug. 11.—Largely increased imports probably needed by France because of crop damage from rains narrowed the gap today between wheat prices in this country and Europe. Buying of options here was active all day, and especially so on the part of foreigners. In consequence there was an advance of 1 1/2¢ to 1 3/4¢. Corn also advanced, but for an exactly opposite reason, absence of rain in the west. The cereal closed 1/4¢ to 1 1/2¢ higher than last night. Oats and provisions sympathized, the former with a final gain of 1/4¢ to 3/8¢ and the latter 1 1/4¢ to 1 1/2¢. Close: Wheat—Sept., 1.02 1/2@1.02 3/4; Dec., 1.06@1.06 1/2; May, 1.10 1/2@1.10 1/2. Corn—Sept., 64¢; Dec., 63¢@63 1/2¢. Oats—Sept., 37¢; Dec., 38¢. Pork—Sept., 21.40; Jan., 18.50. Lard—Sept., 11.70; Jan., 11.35. Ribs—Sept., 11.57 1/2; Jan., 9.62 1/2. Chicago Cash Prices—No. 2 hard wheat, 1.02 1/2@1.04; No. 2 corn, 65 1/2¢; No. 2 oats, 35 1/4@35 1/2¢.

South Omaha Live Stock.

South Omaha, Aug. 11.—Cattle—Receipts, 3,610; steady; beef steers, \$4.55@7.40; cows and heifers, \$2.65@4.25; stockers and feeders, \$3.00@4.85; calves, \$1.00@6.25. Hogs—Receipts, 7,307; steady; heavy, \$7.70@7.75; mixed grades commanded \$7.90 or better; good lights ranged from \$8.10 up to the high price, \$8.40; bulk, \$7.65@8.00. Sheep—Receipts, 13,580; dull; fat wethers went at \$4.00 and grass yearlings at \$5.00; it took good lambs to sell at \$6.25 or better.

Chicago Live Stock.

Chicago, Aug. 11.—Cattle—Receipts, 7,000; 5@10¢ lower; beefs, \$4.55@8.25; western steers, \$4.00@6.75; stockers and feeders, \$3.50@6.25; cows and heifers, \$2.50@6.40; calves, \$6.50@8.50. Hogs—Receipts, 14,000; 15¢ lower; light, \$8.40@8.80; mixed, \$7.80@8.85; heavy, \$7.50@8.40; rough, \$7.50@7.75; bulk of sales, \$7.80@8.20. Sheep—Receipts, 18,000; 10¢ lower; natives, \$2.25@4.25; westerns, \$2.50@4.15; yearlings, \$4.00@5.40; lambs, \$4.25@6.50.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Steal Safe With \$6,500 in It.

Cheyenne, Aug. 12.—An army paymaster's safe containing \$6,500 was stolen from the maneuver camp at Pole mountain and carried away. There is no trace of the robbers. Officers are searching the hills.



"WILL IT BALANCE WAR AND DEVASTATION?"