

(For the CANADIAN ILLUSTRATED NEWS.)

THREE MILLION THIRSTY FISHES.

It is said that of the 100,000,000 people in the world every night an average of 3,000,000 go to bed drunk.

I.
Three million went sailing out into the street
Out into the street, when the sun went down.
None thought of the women, whom some of them beat.
None thought of their children all ragged and brown.
For men will drink,
And women must weep,
And the later he's home, the later to sleep,
And the drunkard's wife is moaning.

II.
To asylums, prisons they've staggered in bands,
And some to their graves prematurely brought down.
Their widows are weeping and wringing their hands,
Their orphans are thieves or gone on to the town.
For men will drink,
And women must weep,
And the sooner it's over the sooner to sleep,
And even in their dreams they are groaning.

III.
But oh! for a land where this curse is unknown!
There all must be prosperous, healthy and free,
For the bitterest woes come from drinking alone.
Tis Alcohol causes the world's misery.
For if men won't drink,
Then women won't weep,
But happily live and in Christ fall asleep,
And good-bye to the bar and its meaning.

Bish. Coll. Lenn. F. C. EMBERTON.

GRETCHEN.

A LEGEND OF THE RHINE.

BY JOHN LESPERANCE.

(Concluded from our last.)

VI.

The marriage of Christern von Vogelstein and Gretchen Kiebler was decided upon. It took place on the festival of St. Michael, about a fortnight after the village celebration. It was solemnized in the parish church with all the pomp and ceremony possible, and those who assisted at it were deeply impressed at the spectacle. An event of the kind had not happened within the memory of the oldest inhabitant. Noblemen sometimes condescended to flirt with country lasses, and had turned the head of more than one of them; but it was unheard of that a man of Christern's rank and fortune had contracted a *bona fide* marriage with a girl of Gretchen's lowly condition. Most of the inhabitants had witnessed the scene of the Jager's courtship on the day of the harvest feast; the rumor of the noble's first visit to Max's cottage had also circulated extensively among them, but all were taken by surprise when they learned that these attentions were sincerely meant, and had this day resulted in a solemn sacramental alliance. Kind words were spoken of the Count, now that it was proven his intentions were upright and sincere, but scarcely a voice was raised in defense of the conduct of Gretchen. "She had risen above her caste," they said, "and would repent of it." "The Lord brings down the proud." She had allowed herself to be dazzled by the false glitter of wealth, and would sooner or later taste the bitterness of destitution. But above all, she had abandoned her first and her true love—her betrothed from childhood—the honest lad to whom she had pledged her virgin affections, and had given her hand and heart to a stranger after less than a month of wooing.

Aye! Gretchen, there was thy real offense.

These reproaches redoubled in bitterness when the cottage issued from the main portal at the conclusion of the nuptials, and Gretchen appeared to view more beautiful than ever for the tinge of excitement and happiness that mantled her cheeks. Her attire was simple, but in exquisite taste. A wreath of natural emblematic flowers entwined her brow—the usual virginal veil was half withdrawn from her face, and her pure white dress was gathered at the waist by a satin band.

When they had taken their seats in the family carriage, the Count gazed upon her with affectionate pride; and well he might, for she was passing fair, his village bride; and, in his own enthusiastic words, she shone before him like a fay of the northland that erst came forth from the primeval woods to cheer the dwellers of the plain by the sweetness of her smiles.

The coachman gathered his ribbons and raised his whip, the footmen mounted their stand, and at a signal from the Count the bridal procession drove out of the village.

It was remarkable that not a cheer was raised among the people, as is customary when they greet the married folk and wish them well.

At an angle of the road leading to Christern's manor, stood Hans, hidden from view by a thick growth of bushes and the trunk of a walnut tree. How altered! His hair was dishevelled, his face white as chalk, his eyes quenched and encircled by a dark line which told of sleepless nights and thoughts of anguish.

The sound of wheels aroused him. He looked up and he saw her—more beautiful than ever—her cheeks flushed with happiness, and her eye brightly glancing. She saw him not, and soon disappeared round the angle of the road.

With a voice stifled by sobs, the noble fellow cried out, "God speed thee, Gretchen!" and casting his bonnet at the foot of the tree, fell like a dead weight on the ground.

VII.

We need not seek exclusively among the high-born and the favorites of fortune for examples of magnanimity and greatness. There are innumerable instances of genuine nobleness among

the children of the poor. No man had been more cruelly served than Hans—no one had ever been more deeply wounded in his purest affections—and yet how nobly did he bear up under the stroke.

A half-dozen of peasants were gathered round a beer stand, quaffing copious draughts of their national beverage. Hans happened to be among them.

"Poor boy," said Casper Surz.

"Yes, in thy place, Hans, I should have acted differently," added Wilhelm Mozer.

Hans raised his head a little and looked at them with cold eyes.

"I should have stood up for my rights and bound her to her promises."

"She loves me no more," replied Hans, almost in a whisper.

"Then I should have demanded reason of Count Christern. No peer or peasant should rob me of my bride."

"His person is sacred whom Gretchen has chosen to love; nor I would I grieve her by touching a hair of his head," was the boy's beautiful reply.

The rude men who heard this language could not understand or appreciate the delicate sentiment which animated the bosom of Hans. Their words of resentment and plans of vengeance made no impression on the noble youth. His resolution was taken, and faithfully did he adhere to it. If Gretchen was not his married wife, she was to be the wife of his soul. If he could not see her ever present at his hearth and board, her image would abide with him still wherever he went, and at all hours of the day and night.

There is a poetry of sorrow. Hans' untutored mind revelled in it. He lived in an ideal world, whose drapery was funeral, whose echoes were dirges, and the central figure of which was Gretchen, the lost love of his heart. He complained not, uttered no reproaches, but moved through life, silent and solitary. One vision, one memory absorbed him. He nursed one sorrow; and who knows that Providence even then gave him one strong, vivifying hope to foster. He was ever the same. Whether he guided the plough in the steaming furrows of Spring—whetted his scythe knee-deep in the yellow corn of Summer—brandished the flail in the chaff clouds of Autumn—or swung the axe in the piled snows of oak forest—he was ever calm, gentle, patient, lovingly thinking of Gretchen. No exterior change appeared in him—only his face was always pale, and he allowed his beard to grow till it swept his breast.

When his parents died and the paternal farm passed into his hands unencumbered by any debt, and greatly improved by his own skill and industry, many of his friends advised him to shake off this sorrow and marry.

On such occasion he would smile sadly and reply:

"My heart is given away long ago."

VIII.

The honeymoon is the halcyon period of life; for as the sea swallow announces the calm between two storms—one that precedes and the other that will follow its appearance on the waters—so first love in two wedded hearts consecrates an interval of peace and happiness amid the inevitable tempests of life from youth to age.

Christern and Gretchen resolved to celebrate their marriage by the custom, long afterward universally introduced, of a bridal tour. After a week spent at their manor in banquets and festivals of all sorts, they proceeded to Switzerland and Italy.

There were no railways or steamers in those days, and they journeyed in short stages by coach. A tour of the kind was at that time a rare occurrence, and only the wealthy could undertake it. We cannot follow them in all their windings over mountain and plain, or stop with them at the various inns and public houses on the way. It is sufficient to know that Gretchen was happy when her carriage passed through the last Alpine gorge and left the limits of Vaterland for the blooming valleys of the south.

Was this happiness to last? Was the "God speed" of Hans to be realized—are questions more important for us, who wish to follow the operations of Providence even in a simple story like this.

Every now then and during the course of the five succeeding years, the old dowager Countess received tidings from her son Christern, which, as they were favorable, she deigned to communicate to her attendants. Through them Max and Katrin heard from their daughter. It is not to be supposed that the young Countess forgot her parents, but somehow or other they received no direct news from her. It was surmised at the time that the fault lay with the people of the manor, who wilfully neglected transmitting such messages as were intended for the old gardener and his wife. Grief and old age told so heavily upon them that they both died at a short interval of each other. As for Hans, there was no token for him, either direct or indirect.

At the end of the aforesaid period, all further intelligence ceased. People wondered what the Count was doing away from home so long. His domains were going to decay from the want of management, and the rents were all in arrears. First there came a rumor, traceable to no definite source, that Christern and Gretchen had come to grief. Others said it was Gretchen alone who was the victim. At length the terrible intelligence arrived that Christern von Vogelstein was dead. He had died at Leghorn of the plague brought to that port by a Cypriote galloon.

But where was Gretchen?

No one knew, and possibly no one cared. Yet, there was one who cared.

IX.

A barge was moored in front of Coblenz, under the shadow of the rock which is to-day the famous fortress of Ehrenbreitstein. While the boatmen were engaged in fastening their barge, there issued from the hold a young woman, leading a child by the hand and carrying another on her arm. She was poorly though neatly dressed, and her whole appearance betokened grief and destitution. On perceiving her, one of the watermen stepped up to her with the awkward politeness of his craft, and taking up her eldest child into his arms, conducted her to a small tavern on the bank. He informed the host that she was a German lady of rank who had been shamefully abandoned by her husband, and left without a thaler to support herself and children in the land beyond the mountains. Desirous of returning to her native country, she had exchanged all her jewels and finery for a paltry sum, which Jewish brokers had given her.

"She has nearly reached her journey's end," said he. "From Coblenz she will proceed to her native village in the mail-coach. She is a little deserving little woman, and you must do her a good turn, friend Hermann."

"What is her name?" inquired the host.

"She never revealed it. When we asked, she said they called her Gretchen at home."

"Gretchen—Gretchen," murmured Hermann; and reflecting, as though he remembered that common name in connection with some remarkable event.

"Yes—Gretchen," resumed the waterman; "and I desire you to procure her a seat in the next chaise."

Saying which, he set off hurriedly for the barge where he was wanted.

The boatman's story was too true. It was indeed our Gretchen.

Her husband, in proportion as he had become more acquainted with Italian society, began to be ashamed of the rank of his wife, of her lack of education and elegant accomplishments. Her wonderful beauty and excellent character could not counterbalance this want in his mind. His aversion soon degenerated into contempt—contempt begot neglect and ill-treatment. Pride changed the naturally good heart of the Count, and passion soon corrupted it. He fell in with a Tuscan marchioness whose black eyes captivated him, ejected Gretchen and her children into the streets of Florence, married his Italian beauty and went to Leghorn, where, by a just punishment of Providence, he was suddenly carried off by an Eastern pestilence.

Left thus alone in the world, poor Gretchen returned the best way she could to her native country. She recognized the hand of the Lord thus pressing heavily upon her. Her gorgeous dream was effaced, and literally, she realized that she was left alone with the night.

After much fumbling in his memory and some adroit questioning of the stranger, the inn-keeper of Coblenz discovered who Gretchen was. He had heard at the time and now perfectly remembered her history, but promised to keep to himself the secret of her presence in Rhineland.

The post-chaise in which he introduced her, with many hearty good wishes for herself and children, broke down at some distance out from the city and the few travelers it contained had to shift as they could. Gretchen being feverishly anxious to pursue her journey, accepted the invitation of a farmer, who, as he happened to be going in the direction she desired, offered her a seat in his cumbersome cart. Oh! the changes of this world! In this miserable vehicle she was about to return along the same road which she had passed in a coach and four on her journey South! All was reversed for her, and the more that everything she saw around her remained unchanged—the same fields, the same woods, the same quiet farms, the same spire gleaming among the pines. It was twilight when she passed before her father's house. She knew that her parents were dead. That was a change indeed; but it was a happy one, for they were at rest. She pressed her children to her bosom, praying and weeping silently, as they went along the garden, and gazed at the green trellis and the white thorn hedge. Further on, at a turn in the road, which separated their parish from the next to which they were going, they passed before Hans' door. He sat alone on his threshold, and his sad, calm face was distinctly brought out by the light which burned on a table in the room. Gretchen huddled her children together and stifled a scream in the folds of her dress. Her heart seemed to break, and her unconscious children took part in her agony.

Weep on, O Gretchen! He is nigh who will wipe away thy repentant tears.

X.

As we have said, Hans had come to be one of the substantial farmers of his canton. In addition to his other stock, he raised large flocks of sheep, from whose frequent and abundant clips he managed a handsome profit. He thus gave employment to a great number of women, who carded, dyed, spun and knitted. Among those of the neighboring parish, there was one who spun a wonderful number of pounds a day, and whose thread was very uniform and clean. Hans did not fail to notice this and to make inquiries. He was informed that the spinner was a poor young widow, burthened with two children,

who, as she was paid by the pound and had no other means of subsistence, plied her wheel night and day. The young farmer's heart was moved and he resolved to befriend her. Loading a great quantity of the finest wool, he set out for the neighboring parish. Why did his heart throb faster as he neared his destination? Why, as the small house appeared to view, did he strain his eyes to catch sight of some welcome object, and urge his horse so rapidly?

Gretchen sat in her lowly cabin spinning the white wool. She sang no *lied* as of old, but a bright tear fell upon her threads and a sweet smile quivered on her lip. What was she thinking of then? Ah! it was heart responding to heart through space, however metaphysicians may wrangle over the question. On the wall before her hung a crucifix, and under it was pasted a print of the *Mater Dolorosa*. Her babe slept in a low crib beside her. A little daughter, three years old, who was looking out at a window on the road exclaimed:

"Oh! mother, a man is going to stop here with a load of wool."

A thrill ran through the frame of Gretchen, but she raised not her eyes and made no answer.

A low tap was heard at the door: the child lifted the latch and opened it. When he saw her, Hans stepped backward, and his strong frame shook with emotion. The girl was the portrait of her mother.

"Come in, Sir," said she with a clear voice. Hans entered.

Gretchen did not look up, but knowing it was he, buried her face in her lap and broke out into tears and sobs.

Hans stood before her, overwhelmed with anguish. He wrung his hands—he groaned, his brow was dripping with perspiration.

"Oh, Gretchen!" he said with an accent of unutterable pity and love.

She screamed and sank on the floor.

"Gretchen, is it thou?" He stepped up, fell on one knee, and with gentle hand tried to raise her head. "Dost thou not know me?"

"Do not touch me, do not speak to me, do not look at me," she sobbed. "I am unworthy of thee. I have used thee too ill. Thou canst never forgive me."

"Forgive thee, Gretchen! Oh, speak not so. I am ever the same. Thy Hans is always thy friend."

"Oh, Hans, Hans! since my return, it is thou that hast given me work and bread for these poor children. Leave me, for I can never sufficiently thank thee."

After the first storm of sorrow was over, Hans sat beside her and they talked together for a long, long time. Through the grief and the shadows of past years, the brightness of their childish loves arose and illumined the future. They became calmer, then gayer, and happiness radiated on their faces. They understood each other again.

As he rose to depart, Hans caressed the children and said, "I will be their father."

Gretchen threw her arms around his neck, leaned her head upon his breast, weeping, and there inaudible last words were spoken, the promise was given, and Hans and Gretchen were happy once more.

The pleasant hum of the wheel resounded now in Hans' home. Sitting there, Gretchen often mused of the past and the present, serenely gazing on her husband as he went in and out, and watching the plays of her children. Hans loved her—oh, how well! and cared for her first offspring as much as for his own.

Reader, should you tarry ever among the lowly homesteads of Vaterland, you will hear the daughters of the Rhine sing in time with the beat of their treadles, the pathetic ballad of Gretchen—the story of repentant love and of the rough man's faithfulness.

SCIENTIFIC.

AN Englishman who insulated his bedstead by placing underneath each post a broken off bottom of a glass bottle, says that the effect was magical, that he had not been free from rheumatic gout for fifteen years, and that he began to improve immediately after the application of the insulators.

A computation of the time required for the formation of a seam of coal has been made by Mr. E. A. Wunsch of the Geological Society, based upon his own observations in the Isle of Arran. He thinks that as many as twenty generations of trees are compressed into three to four inches of coal there, and that sixteen centuries are requisite for the formation of one foot of coal.

DR. GRIFFITH of Wyoming, Kent county, Delaware, has discovered that gulf-weed (a substitute for obesity). No cure need be exercised as to the amount of the tea or coffee drinks. He tried it on himself, taking no other drinks, and in a few weeks his own corpulence had greatly diminished. He tried it on three stout neighbors, who within two to three months lost from twelve to thirty pounds. Dr. Griffith says that great care should be used in collecting the weed.

AN improved process of making mirrors has been discovered by which a deposit of pure silver (left on the glass plate, precipitated from a crystal-like mordant, so prepared that the coating does not become black from oxidation on contact with the air, and it is more over as brilliant as the old process of coating with quicksilver or tin, and furthermore its use is not attended with the injurious effects upon the health of the manufacturer that was invariable with the old methods.

ARTISTIC.

AN exhibition of pictures and statues illustrating the history of art from the earliest known date to the end of the eighteenth century will be opened in Cologne on the first day of July.

A Roman tomb was recently opened at York, England, and enclosed in a stone coffin was found the body of a young girl, admirably preserved by the use of gypsum, and furnished with what has been considered a modern device—a chignon. This rested upon a pyramid of pads, plaits, and coils, and although many hundred years old, a good specimen of the present fashion.