

Little Shepherdess' Temptation

From the German.

VER the fields and meadows of the country the May sunshine, absorbing the morning vapors, scattered its beams of rosy light and turned the last gossamer cobwebs to diamond threads. As they glittered from bush to bush they seemed the forgotten necklaces and diadems of some nocturnal fairy who had fled before the dawn. Spilling down the hillside, beneath the trees and over the rocks, where the trout gleamed in its depths, the cool brook made a way to the plains below, singing as it went.

As was her wont, Catusou, the shepherdess, was out early.

First Battalion, Second Company of the Fifth.

It was now May 5. If Johann's letter spoke truth there were only twenty-seven days more to wait. As the young girl repeated the words softly to herself her heart throbbed more quickly and the rich color flooded her brown cheeks.

Suddenly a sharp whistle sounded through the morning air.

For Catusou to gather her sheep together and start them toward the fair behind her master's cart.

As she turned along the road her thoughts returned to her absent lover. She took her accustomed seat on the flat rock half way up the little hill.

In the distance the church bells rang out the hour of 7. Along the road laden with quacking hens went slowly by in the direction of the neighboring village, where the great summer fair was to be held. Presently, Catusou would follow in their wake, for the master had told her that he would sell her flock that day.

Pinkou, the shepherd dog, standing on the top of the hill, greeted each cart as it passed with a series of delighted barks until tired of the useless demonstrations which provoked no reply, he ran to take comfort with his mistress.

The young girl, moved by the beauty of the spring morning, threw herself back on the soft grass, pillowing her head on her finely-molded arm.

In imagination, she was once more reliving the distant days when Johann, the shepherd of the adjoining farm, had kept his sheep in the fields just across the road.

She was 13 then and he was 20, but they had grown to love each other during the long days in the meadows, and when he had gone away, almost three years ago now, she had given him her promise and their betrothal had been celebrated.

Johann's was a simple nature; she loved him for his very awkwardness and his big, good, brown eyes, tender and fearful as the eyes of his own sheep. It was he who had rolled the big flat stone there for Catusou to rest on and it was he who taught her the tricks that helped to while away the hours.

At present Johann was finishing his service in the Fifth Infantry. He had not been home once, for his meagre pay was not sufficient for the long journey, but every six months, with the help of the corporal of the guard, who knew how to write, he had sent an scrap of news to his sweetheart.

Catusou drew from beneath the cor-

age of her costume a frayed piece of paper covered with straggling characters. She knew more than Johann, but by dint of having it read to her she had learned the message by heart and knew the meaning of the twisted letters as well as if she could decipher them. The letter ran:

Dear Catusou: This is to tell you that we will soon be happy. My time will be up the 1st of June. I can then hold you in my arms and express to you the sincerity of my love. We will celebrate the summer festival together. For two months my captain has taken me for his orderly and that has enabled me to lay aside a little money for a present to offer you upon my return. I am well and hope that you are the same. Greet my friends for me and believe me, dear Catusou, your devoted Johann Muller.

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while his strident voice, sounding above the calls of the animals, cried the familiar appeal of the monthly fair.

"Ladies, ladies, here's your chance! See my hair! See my face! See my teeth! It was Morathe, who visited all the country villages and sold his bright silks and cottons for the heavy hair of the peasant women."

Already a crowd was gathering about the table, fingering the precious stuffs with pretended indifference and, shuffling their heads in refusal, moving away.

"It was for the shawl! It was for you!" cried the girl.

But Johann's eyes were full of a loving pity. Without a word he put the

hat back in the box and helped his sweetheart to restore the scattered straw.

"Don't cry so, little Catusou! The hair will all grow out again and the hat can stay where it is until we want it as a memento of our wedding. Come, give me a kiss and tell me that you love me, sweetheart. Another, and another."

Reassured, Catusou lifted her eyes on the pink shawl and wiped her face

for Johann's kiss. And for the first time her lover's lips sought hers.

The Canal Zone, that forty-mile-wide strip connecting the two oceans, has

recently become inoculated with the stamping fever, which developed this

fever, so profitable to the Panamanians. The Canal Zone has turned out

three distinct issues, or series, of postage stamps, and the stamps are

not at all alike. Not satisfied with this, the zone has produced an "error" so

desirable that philatelists are unable to estimate its value. An "error" to them is like a red flag to

bullfighters, and the stamps are

collected with the same avidity as the stamps of the various

countries of the world. The stamps of the Canal Zone are of

exquisite design, perfection of engraving and brilliant coloring, as

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limited, the stamps become scarce and money no consideration. Stamp

collecting is a great fad of European royalty, and the various

agents ever on the alert for "errors" and stamps of specially limited value; fabulous prices are paid for them.

The wild rush for this Canal Zone error is all because the letter "L" was

printed on the stamps. The stamps are now in use in the zone are

the Panama Republic overprinted "Canal Zone." The stamps come in

values of 10, and are overprinted at a Washington printing office. The words

"Canal Zone" on the stamps are so

that each impression turns out that number of surcharged stamps. In some

cases, the stamps are printed on each sheet—show this error. While the print-

ing was going on, the stamps were

the type and proceeded at once to set the recumbent "L" on its feet, he did

not regard the error as sufficiently serious to warrant the destruction of the

sheets, and they went to the postoffice. In due course, of mail, one of the

stamps attached to a letter was delivered to a clerk in one of the departments

at Washington and the envelope thrown into the wastebasket. Little did the

clerk realize that he was throwing away perhaps a year's salary. The department messenger, according to his custom, gathered all the foreign stamps

over the desk and in a few days sold them, with other accumulations, to a

dealer in Washington. In looking them over the dealer noticed the "L" on its

back, and, realizing it to be an "error," sold it for several dollars to a collector.

The "error" on the stamps has become quite common, he supposed other stamps

would be found. "Let" would be found, and the stamps would be

never dreaming this would turn out to be the only break of the kind in exist-

ence.

He wrote to a friend in Colorado, who investigated the matter and found that

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tion, her lover redoubled his tenderness. Seizing her bonnet suddenly he drew it off, only to look again at the

straw in the wide stiffly starched cap. Catusou hid her face in her hands and

it was as pitifully as a child detected in a fault. For a second Johann looked at her in wondering dismay. Then he

understood.

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