

Washington Independent.



VOL. III.

HILLSBORO, WASHINGTON COUNTY, OREGON, THURSDAY, MAY, 27, 1875.

NO. 9.

THE INDEPENDENT.

PUBLISHED AT

Hillsboro Oregon

B. B. LUCH.

Editor and Proprietor.

TERMS OF SUBSCRIPTION:

One year, \$2 50
Six months, 1 50
Three months, 1 00
Single copies, 10

RATES OF ADVERTISING:

TIME	1 sq.	2 sq.	1/2 col	1 col	1 col
1 WEEK	1 50	2 00	3 50	6 00	10 00
2 WEEKS	2 00	2 50	4 50	8 50	15 00
1 MONTH	2 50	3 00	5 00	12 00	20 00
3 MOS.	4 50	6 00	9 00	20 00	30 00
6 MOS.	6 00	10 00	15 00	30 00	50 00
1 YEAR	10 00	15 00	30 00	50 00	90 00

Local Notices, 25 cents per line for the first insertion, and 20 cents a line for each subsequent insertion. No notice less than \$1 00.

Obituary notices, 10 cents per line.
Summons, Sheriff's Sales, and all other legal notices, \$2 00 per square, 1st insertion; each additional insertion, \$1 00.
Transient advertisements, \$2 00 1st insertion; each additional insertion, \$1 00.

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GRETCHEN'S TROUBLE.

I was certain she was not happy. A shadow rested in the blue eyes always, and around the mouth dwelt an expression of repressed suffering. She moved through the house quietly, ready at all times to do pleasant little things for our comfort, but the smile that came with the offerings faded from her face, as you have seen the sunlight fade suddenly into the gloom of a darkened sky.

I questioned the landlord of her history. "She is very pretty, the little Gretchen," he said, "and I'm not surprised you ask about her. Most people do, that come here. Two years ago she sang all the day long, like the birds out yonder, but the chipper is all gone from her now, and no wonder. Her mother was as good a woman as ever lived, well educated too for these parts, and Gretchen's like her, died suddenly, and after that her father, being discouraged I reckon, went to the bad as fast as he could. From almost worshipping the girl, he took to abusing her, but nothing could make her leave him. Her mother gone, he was all she had, you know. Well, a year ago come Christmas—how time runs—the old man was up to Smalley's and drank a good deal, then went to gambling with Judge McLean's son, who was a pretty hard case. Nobody knew how it came about, but they got mad, and Gretchen's father put a ball right through McLean's head and killed him. It was a bad thing all around. The old Judge and his other son swore that the murderer, as they called him, should swing for it, but he broke jail one night, and has never been heard from. Between you and me, I think he had some help, for everybody around here believed his story, that he did it in self-defense. Gretchen came to us the next day, and has been with us ever since, for you see we have no child of our own. A better girl I never want around, but she's always as you've seen her. All her bright, taking ways have left her, and she looks, I tell my wife, just as the flowers do when they are trying to raise their heads after a heavy shower has broken them down. She's a good little thing, is Gretchen."

After this I watched her closer than ever. The little inn where she lived, and in which I had been spending the summer, and was lingering now, while autumn was kissing the woods and flushing them with beauty, nestled among the rocks and trees at the foot of the mountain in the little village of M—. With nothing to do save laying up the store of physical strength of which I stood greatly in need, this little German girl, with her fair face and sad story, awakened the deepest interest in my heart, and I longed to do something that would bring back the sunshine into her life.

Time passed away. Every day I took long rambles, and the mountain path became as familiar to me as the streets of my native city. There was one place high up, up almost to the blue heavens it seemed, which I dearly loved. The way was rough, and to one less sure-footed, perilous, but when this mountain eyrie was reached, the view was sublime, beyond expression. Great piles of granite, with the silence of the ages upon them, scattered around, the rolling sea away in the distance, and far down the little village, with its busy hands and restless hearts, the same in kind as in the crowded metropolis, all formed parts of the wonderful picture, whose thrall held me many, many hours. Some long-ago convulsion of nature had piled the rocks up, so as to form a room, sheltered by the wind and commanding a view of the steep and rugged paths. It was rare any one ventured so high, so I held it to be my own individual retreat, mine by right of occupation.

The autumn storms, fearful in this climate, were beginning, and threatened to put a quick end to my rambles, for it was a perilous venture to go where the shimmering, golden sunshine would, in a short half hour, be lost in the blackness of a tempest that seemed tearing the eternal hills asunder.

And now there came a change in Gretchen. I noticed it first one evening, when some travelers, who had chanced here so late in the season, were talking of venturing up the mountain the next day. A sort of eager, scared expression looked out of her eyes as she listened, an expression (if it could be possible, for what had she to fear?) that deepened into absolute terror. That night I could not sleep until long after the house was still, and when I did, her face was present in my dreams. Past midnight I awoke with a start, and, springing from my bed went to the window and drew aside the curtain. There was no moon, but the stars were brightly shining in their far-off homes, and by their light I saw some one stealing along under the trees and taking the path toward the mountain. It was Gretchen. No one else could step so lightly, so gracefully, and yet so swiftly along. With the speed of thought I threw on my clothes and followed her. She was out of sight, but I soon caught a glimpse of her ahead of me, climbing with all her might up the steep hill-side.

She carried something in one hand which she would change, now and then, to the other. Up, up she went, steadily and swiftly, looking neither to the right nor left. I kept close behind her, but with a noiseless step, that she need not know of my presence, and yet I might be able to guard her from the dangers to which this rash and terrible midnight journey exposed her. All curiosity as to her purpose was merged in overwhelming anxiety, for, to my surprise, she took the way to my lofty eyrie. By day and in pleasant weather, it was sufficiently difficult for the upward; but at night, when the streams were swollen by recent rains; when a fog, dense as the deepest darkness, might settle down any moment, it was simply throwing away life. Something seemed to watch over this little Gretchen though, for the night remained clear and she went on as sure-footed as the most skillful mountaineer. She reached the pile of rocks at last, where I had spent so many hours, and disappeared from view. I would not venture further, for then, and not till then, came the thought of what her errand might be. This little golden-haired German girl must not know that I had followed her, and yet I could not go back until she, too, returned. So I stepped behind an overhanging rock and awaited her coming. I shall not soon forget that night-watch. Way up in the mountain wild, whose desolation was sometimes appalling, even when the sun was flooded with glory the jutting crags and rugged cliffs, but now, with the solemn midnight brooding over it all, I was almost overwhelmed with its grandeur.

I had not long to wait. Very soon Gretchen reappeared, but not alone. A man walked beside her, with bent head and a shuffling gait, a man that a sudden intuition told me was her father, a fugitive from justice. As they drew near me, I caught fragments of the conversation. "You must be careful, father, of what I bring you," Gretchen was saying. "You know I might be prevented from coming sometimes, and then what would you do? For you must not venture down to the village whatever happens." "No, no, my girl, I understand that without your telling me," the man answered, "but you must manage to get here somehow. O my God! how lonesome it is, with nothing but the rocks to speak to," and there was a quiver in his voice as he spoke. "Don't fail me, Gretchen, and,"—a moment's pause—"and be careful, girl, that no one sees you come and

go. You would not betray me, would you, to get me out of the way?" he asked suddenly, in a changed voice.

"Betray you!" she said, "Why do you say such cruel things? You are all I have in this world, and, bad as you are, I love you, father, oh, father! I love you!" and she burst into tears.

They turned a bend in the path, and I heard no more. Poor little Gretchen! It was not strange your eyes were heavy and terror-stricken! With such a burden upon your heart, and the horror of discovery before you, the only wonder was that you did lose your senses.

Quickly and stealthily I slipped away and took another route down the mountain—one that finally joined that which Gretchen had taken, and hurried on, that I might be near her the latter part of her perilous way. Strange that I took such an interest in a poor little German girl, you will say. Ah! had you seen her as I did, your amazement would be lost in sympathy.

Well, every night for a week she made that terrible midnight journey, and I followed her. It would have been a serious thing, probably cost me my life, had I been discovered by that desperate man, but my knowledge of the mountain, gained in my long rambles, enabled me to avoid such danger. I found that he had returned to his old home simply because he could not keep away, much as a moth flutters around the flame that will eventually be its destruction.

At last one, two nights passed away, and she remained at home. I concluded that she had persuaded him to go once more where he might live without running such terrible ventures for his miserable existence.

The third night there was a fearful storm. It came on at the surprising and grew in fury with every hour that passed. Nervous and excited, utterly unable to sleep, I stood at my window, peeping out into the black darkness that seemed full of raging demons. Now and then a sheet of lightning would throw a ghastly glare around, and again the wild tempest swallowed everything in an inky horror. Once, when the light remained longer than usual, I saw some one speed swiftly by, and then she was lost to my astonished gaze. Good heavens! It was Gretchen going to her death on the mountain. In one brief moment I realized how she had stolen into my heart, and if her life was gone how worthless mine would be; the next I was flying after her. She was nowhere to be seen. I rushed on as rapidly as the wild fury that filled the air would let me. Still no Gretchen! Little rivulets, swollen to torrents, foamed by. Great rocks were torn from their beds and thundered down at my very side. Blind instinct only kept me in the path, for I could not see two paces ahead, except "when the lightning's red glare" lit up the sky!

It seemed ages before I reached the place where the wretched man had been in concealment. There was a momentary lull in the storm, and, to my joy, I heard Gretchen's voice near me calling, "Father, father, where are you?" Then came a great flash of lightning, which seemed like the sudden letting in of the noontide glory. For a second I saw Gretchen standing standing but a step or two away, drenched and despairing, while, several paces off, in the shadows of the everhanging rocks that formed his shelter, cowered her father with awe-struck, horrified face. The next moment it seemed as if the very foundations of the mountain were giving away. Thrown to the ground by the violence of the shock, it was some time before I had strength to try to find Gretchen. That deafening peal seemed to have been the last throes of the tempest in its death agony, for a comparative calm had succeeded. Gropping my way along, I found her stretched insensible upon the ground.

I could only take her in my arms and chafe her cold hands, calling her name in deaf ears, and longing for the darkness to pass away. At last, a clear sky stretched above us. The stars shone down as brightly and twinkled as merrily as if the wild riotings of the tempest had not been. Gretchen moved slightly. "Father," she whispered. For the first time I thought of the unhappy man, and looked where I had seen him last. Great God! a pile of rocks higher than my head had fallen upon the spot where he had stood, and, doubtless, buried him so deep that the hand of man could never reach him.

Gretchen had not revived; so, lifting her from the ground, I hastened down to the now dimly discernable pathway. How I managed to reach the inn I do not know, but I succeeded in rousing the landlord; in a few words told my story, and, relieved from my burden, swooned away. Toward noon the next day I was myself again. They told me that Gretchen had recovered her senses about daylight; that at her agonized entreaty, a trusty servant had been dispatched up the mountain to see if there was any trace of her father, but he had returned, telling them what I already knew, that only a pile of massive rocks was there, and no sign of a human being. There was little doubt but that he and his sins were buried together from the light of day.

Long afterward, when she could speak of it calmly, I learned from Gretchen that she thought her midnight journeys had been discovered, and she was watched, so she dared not go. That terrible night, almost frantic with the thought of her father's starving condition (for she had been able to take him each time but little food, lest it might be missed), and fearing that he would venture down to the village, she resolved to brave the horrors of the storm and go to him. What followed, I have told you.

Would you like to know what became of this little blue-eyed German girl, the brave-hearted, loyal Gretchen? I could tell you if I would, but I shall leave you to guess.—Locke's National Monthly.

OREGON.

An aged mother in Yorkville, Racine county, Wisconsin, asks information concerning her son, Josiah Rice, whom she has longed to see for about 25 years. When last heard from he was heading for Oregon from California.

State Superintendent of Common Schools, L. L. Rowland has arrived at La Grande, and on Monday has organized the first teachers' institute for that judicial district, at Union. There was a general attendance of the teacher of the county, though the other counties of the district were unrepresented. The institute was organized by the election of Rev. H. K. Hines as president; J. T. Outhouse, vice president; and L. J. Rouse, secretary, and continued in session till Wednesday noon.

Mr. Jos. Hoyt, superintendent of the Salem woolen mill, says in the Record that when he first came to Oregon, about 30 years ago, the wool of the country was clean and in nice order, much more so than at the present time. The presence of the scab in sheep deteriorates the value and is a great damage to the wool. He expresses the opinion that sheep should be sheared as early as possible in the spring, and before the first of May. During the winter the wool stops growing, and when the spring weather commences it commences to grow again, and where the old growth stopped and the new commenced the wool is always weak and rotten, and it is a damage to it to have any of the new growth clipped. It is his opinion that leaving sheep to carry their old fleeces too long has a tendency to cause skin diseases, and that scab is either caused or made worse in that way.

From an Iowa School Marm.

The following letter was received the other day, says the Statesman, by the P. M. of Salem from Iowa school "marm." Would it not be a good thing if some of our Washington county bachelors would entice this lady to come out here? We want plenty of just such girls in this country:

POSTMASTER, SALEM, OREGON.—Dear Sir: A few days ago I wrote to the Portland Postmaster to please forward me an Oregon newspaper, but I'm so afraid that he will not get the note, or that he will forget me, that I venture to ask you to send me Salem papers, as I don't know the names of either the editors or their publications. You know, or ought to know that I'm nearly dying to go to Oregon. Who am "I?" Why, nobody but a prairie school marm, tired to death of wading through the big billows of snow to school houses. And then the horrible wind! it tears my aprons, tangles my hair—and temper too. All I know of Oregon is what the geography tells me, but somehow my spirit turns me toward that country as the very pleasantest on earth. It is the 17th of April, but to all appearance spring is just as far away as it was in January. The farmers look as sour as crab-apples and no wonder. Do send on a paper with a breeze of spring and hope in it. There is a big family of us, and I have talked about going West till my throat is sore—that is, I have teased them to go. May be if they see an Oregon paper it will inspire them to fly around and wake up.

CARRIE J. PEABODY.

Hazard, Cherokee Co., Iowa.

Dot Mool.

A bad little boy in Portland lit a pack of snooting-crackers and threw them into the street to see them "go off." One of Ike Bateman's mules came along and swallowed them before they "went off." The mule walked about fifteen feet and stopped. Things wasn't acting right inside. He began to taste the smoke of fire-crackers. He laid his left ear around against his ribs and heard something. It was them crackers having fun. The mule picked out about three and a half miles of straight road and started. A negro met him about a mile the other side of the almshouse, going south, white with perspiration, with streams of smoke shooting out of his nostrils, mouth and ears. Ike found his mule yesterday morning, sticking half way through a farm house near Paddy's Run, still snooking. The man had got his family out and put 'em up into a lot of trees. Ike hauled his mule home, when he got cool enough, on a dray. The man is going to move his house further back off the road and his wife and oldest daughter will be baptized when the water gets warm.—Louisville Courier-Journal.

From S. S. Mahaffey, of Auburn, the Sentinel learns that John Graham picked up a nice little specimen in the shape of a nugget, valued at \$177, on the 29th ult., near French Gulch. There has been a large amount of money taken out of the ground in and around Auburn during the past ten or twelve years.

A number of the prominent citizens of Marion county met last Wednesday evening, at Grangers' Hall at Salem, in the interest of the mountain road across the Cascades from the Santiam to the Black Butte. Hons. John Minto and Geo. Downing, who were two of the viewers last summer, gave a graphic description of the country through which the proposed road is to be built. On motion of W. J. Herren the following committee was appointed to file articles of incorporation for the Minto Pass road, and open books for the same: J. Minto, Dan Durbin, B. M. Wade, Geo. W. Hunt, John Hunt, L. S. Scott, and Wm. C. Gisswald. On motion the capital stock was fixed at \$100,000, in shares of \$100 each. On motion adjourned to meet again on Friday, the 21st inst.