

GOOSE

That a wooden shoe, simple minded goose girl should plunge monarchs and monarchies into a most mysterious confusion of affairs is a novelty. Yet the lovely Gretchen, the heroine of this fascinating old world novel, did just that, for no one can deny that Ehrenstein is a land of romance. There Carmichael, the dashing young American consul, learned of the dangers of falling in love with a princess; there Herbeck, the wily chancellor, tried a master stroke, evilly designed, to change the history of a throne; there royalty in disguise wandered and plotted and learned to know fellow human beings; there the treacherous Magyar gypsies lurked in the shadows to abduct a princess. And through all the little goose girl trod her lowly way toward a fate that the magic wand of chance had destined she must fill—a fate as amazing as it is fascinating to read about.

CHAPTER I SOME IN RAGS.

An old man clothed in picturesque patches and tatters paused and leaned on his stout oak staff. He had walked many miles that day. His peasant garb rather enhanced his fine head. His eyes were blue and clear and farseeing, the eyes of a hunter or a woodsman.

The afternoon glow of the September sun burned along the dusty white highway. From where he stood the road trailed off miles behind and wound up 500 feet or more above him to the ancient city of Dreierberg.

Across a lofty jumble of barren rock and glacial cleft, now purpling and darkening as the sun mellowed in its decline, lay the kingdom of Jugendheit. By and by his gaze wavered, and one particular patch in the valley, brown from the beating of many ironshod horses, caught and chained his interest for a space. It was the military field, and it glittered and scintillated with squadron after squadron of cavalry.

The philosophy of war is to prepare for it," mused the old man, with a jerk of his shoulders. "France! So the matter runs. There is a Napoleon in France, but no Bonaparte." He laughed ironically and cautiously glanced at his watch, an article which must have cost him many and many a potato patch. He stepped forward. He had followed yonder goose girl ever since the machine began. Off the little wooden shoes had lagged, but here they were, still a hundred yards or more ahead of him.

The little goose girl was indeed tired and the little wooden shoes grew heavier and heavier, and the little bare feet ached dully, but her heart was light and her mind sweet with happiness. Day after day she had tended the geese in the valley and trudged back at evening alone, all told a matter of twelve miles, and now she was bringing them into the city to sell in the market on the morrow. After that she would have little to do save an hour or two at night in a tavern called the Black Eagle, where she waited on patrons.

Presently there was a clatter of horses, a jingle of bit and spur and saber. Half a dozen mounted officers trotted past. The peasant on the parapet instantly recognized one of the men. He saluted with a lameness which lacked sincerity. It was the grand duke himself. There was General Duenwitz, too, and some of his staff, and a smooth faced, handsome young man in civilian riding clothes, who, though he rode like a cavalryman, was obviously of foreign birth, an Englishman or an American.

When the cavalcade reached the goose girl the peace of the scene vanished forthwith. Confusion took up of remaining on the left of the road in safety, straightway determined that their haven of refuge was on the opposite side. Gawk, gawk! Quack, quack! They scrambled, they blundered, they drew. Some tried to go over the horses, some endeavored to go under.

The civilian looked casually at the girl.

"By George!" he exclaimed in English.

"What is it?" asked the duke, gathering up the reins.

"The girl's face. It is beautiful." The duke, after a glance, readily agreed. "You Americans are always observant."

"Pretty figure, too," said one of the aids, a colonel. But his eye held none of the abstract admiration which characterized the American's.

The GIRL



By

HAROLD MacGRATH

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dressed as a vintner. He was tall, plainly built, blond as a viking, possessing a singular beauty of the masculine order. He was forced to flatten himself against the wall of a house, his arms extended on either side in a kind of temporary crucifixion. Even then the stirrup of the American touched him slightly. But it was not the touch of the stirrup that startled him. It was the dark, clean cut face of the rider. "Once they were by the youth darted into a doorway.

"He? What can he be doing here? No, it is utterly impossible. It is merely a likeness."

He ventured forth presently, none of the perturbation, however, gone from his face. He ran his hand across his chin. Yes, he would let his beard grow.

The duke and his escort turned into the broad and restful sweep of the Konigsstrasse. At the end was the Ehrenstein Platz, the great square round which ran the palaces and the royal and public gardens. The halt was made in the courtyard and all dismounted.

The American thanked the duke gratefully for the use of the horse. "You are welcome to a mount at all times, Mr. Carmichael," replied the duke pleasantly. "A man who rides as well as yourself may be trusted anywhere with any kind of a horse."

The group looked admiringly at the object of this marked attention. Here was one who had seen two years of constant and terrible warfare, who had ridden horses under fire and who bore on his body many honorable scars, for the great civil strife in America had come to its close but two years before and Europe was still captive to her amazement at the military prowess of the erstwhile inconsiderable American.

As Carmichael saluted and turned to leave the courtyard he threw a swift, searching glance at one of the palace windows. Did the curtain stir? He could not say. He continued on, crossing the Platz, toward the Grand hotel. He was a bachelor, so he might easily have had his quarters at the consulate, but as usual with American consulates—even to the present time—it was situated in an undesirable part of the town, over a bihache frequented by farmers and the middle class.

Where had he seen that young vintner before?

Meanwhile the goose girl, now joined by the old man, marshaled her geese and proceeded.

"What was that song you were singing before the horses came up?" he asked her.

"That? It was from the poet Heine—simply."

He stared at her.

"Heine? Can you read?"

"Yes, herr."

A goose girl who read Heine?

"And the music?" he inquired presently.

"That is mine"—with the first sign of diffidence. "Melodies are always running through my head. Sometimes they make me forget things I ought to remember."

"Your own music? An impresario will be discovering you some fine day, and your fortune will be made."

The light irony did not escape her. "I am only a goose girl."

He felt disarmed. "What is your name?"

"Gretchen."

"What else?"

"Nothing else," wistfully. "I never knew any father or mother."

"So? But who taught you to read?"

"A priest. Once I lived in the mountains at an inn. He used to come in evenings when the snow was not too deep. He taught me to read and write. I know that Italy has all the works of art, that

France has the most interesting history, that Germany has all the philosophers and America all the money," adding a smile. "I should like to see America."

"Do you live alone?"

"No. I live with my foster mother, who is very old. I call her grandmother. She took me in when I was a foundling. And what might your name be?"

"Ludwig. I am a mountaineer from Jugendheit."

"We are not friendly with your country."

"More's the pity. It is a grave blunder on the part of the grand duke."

"Wasn't it all about the grand duke's daughter?"

"Yes. But she has been found. Yet the duke is as bitter as of old. What is this new found princess like?"

"She is beautiful and kind."

The geese were behaving, and only occasionally was she obliged to use her stick.

He observed her critically, for he was interested. She was not tall, but her lithe slenderness gave her the appearance of tallness. Her hands, rough nailed and sunburnt, were small and shapely. Her hair, in a thick braid, was the tone of the heart of a chestnut bar, and her eyes were of that mystifying hazel, sometimes brown, sometimes gray.

"How old are you, Gretchen?"

"I do not know," she answered, "perhaps eighteen, perhaps twenty."

Arriving at length in the city, they passed through the crooked streets.

"Gretchen, where shall I find the Adiergasse?"

"I will show you. You are also a stranger in Dreierberg?"

"Yes."

They took the next turn, and the weather beaten sign Zum Schwarzen Adler, hanging in front of a frame house of many gables, caused the mountaineer to breathe gratefully.

"Here my journey ends, Gretchen, at the Black Eagle," he said.

They were passing a clock mender's shop. The man from Jugendheit peered in the window, but there was no clock in sight to give him warning of the time, and he dared not now look at his watch. He had a glimpse of the ancient clock mender himself, however, huddled over a table upon which sputtered a candle. The eyes of the two men met, but only for a moment. The mountaineer started to cross the street to the tavern.

"Good night, Gretchen. Good luck to you and your geese tomorrow."

"Thanks, Herr Ludwig. And will you be long in the city?"

"That depends; perhaps," adding a grim smile in answer to a grim thought.

He offered his hand, which she accepted trustfully. He was a strange old man, but she liked him. When she withdrew her hand something cold and hard remained in her palm. Wonders of all the world, it was a piece of gold! Her eyes went up quickly, but the giver smiled reassuringly and put a finger against his lips.

"But, herr," she remonstrated.

"Keep it. I give it to you. Do not question Providence, and I am her handmaiden just now. Go along with you."

So Gretchen in a mild state of stupefaction turned away. Clat-clat! sang the little wooden shoes. A plaintive gook rose as she prodded a laggard from the dank gutter. A piece of gold! Clat-clat! Clat-clat! Surely this had been a day of marvels.

She was regarded with kindly eyes till the dark jaws of the Krumerweg swallowed up both her and her geese.

"Poor little goose girl!" he thought.

"If she but knew she could make a bonfire of a thousand hearts. A fine day!" He eyed again the battered sign. It was then that he discerned another heading from the ledge of the first story of the house adjoining the tavern. It was the tarnished shield of the United States.

Two weeks tramping about the country in this unholy garb, following false trails half the time, living on crusts and cold meats! Ah, you have led me a merry dance, nephew, but I shall not forget!"

He entered the tavern and applied for a room, baggling over the price.

The nights were chilly. Carmichael in order to finish his cigar on the little balcony fronting his window found it necessary to put on his light overcoat, though he perfectly knew that he was in no manner forced to smoke on the balcony. But the truth was he wanted a clear vision of the palace and the lighted windows thereof and of one in particular. He had no more sense than Tom Fool, the abettor of follies. She was as far removed from him as the most alien of the planets, but the magnet shall ever draw the needle, and a woman shall ever draw a man. He knew that it was impossible, that it grew more impossible day by day, and he railed at himself bitterly and satirically.

He sighed and teetered his legs. Carmichael sighed for the Princess Hildegarde, understanding. It was sigh of curse, and the latter mode of expression wastes more vitality.

Arthur Carmichael was Irish. He was born in America, educated there and elsewhere—a little while in Paris, a little while at Bonn—and, like all Irishmen, he was banished with the wandering foot, for the man who is home-

less by choice has a subtle poison in his blood. He was at Bonn when the civil war came. He went back to America and threw himself into the fight with all the ardor that had made his forehead famous in the secret of the worthless Sauris. It wasn't a question of life or the mere love of fighting, of to slug the penny. He knew with which side he wished to fight. He hated the cavalry of the north and hammered and fought his way to a captaincy. He was wounded five times and captured twice. At the end of the conflict he returned to Washington.

Whether any influence whatever save his pleasing address and his wide education he borrowed the state department out of a consulate. They sent him to Ehrenstein at a salary not worth mentioning, with the diplomatic title of dignity as a fall to the kite. Two years in any one place was not in reckoning as regarded Carmichael, yet here he was, caring neither for promotion nor exchange. So, then, all logical deductions slumbered down to one—either he or femme.

The dreamer is invariably tripping over his illusions, and Carmichael was rather boyish in his dreams. What absurd romances he was always weaving round her! What exploits on her behalf! But never anything happened, and never was the grand duke called upon to offer his benediction.

It was all very foolish and romantic and impossible, and no one recognized this more readily than he. No American ever married a princess of a reigning house, and no American ever will. This law is as immovable as the law of gravitation. Still, man is master of his dreams, and he may do as he pleases in the confines of this small circle.

"How the deuce will it end?" musing half aloud. "I'll forget myself some day and trip so hard that they'll be asking Washington for my recall. I'll go over to the gardens and listen to the band."

He was standing in front of the hotel when he noticed a closed carriage hard by the fountain in the Platz.

"Ha, a fare!"

A woman in black, thoroughly veiled and cloaked, came round from the opposite side of the fountain. She spoke to the driver. The lady stepped into the carriage, the driver woke up his ancient Bucephalus and went clatter-clatter down the Konigsstrasse toward the town. To Carmichael it was less than an accident. He twisted his cane and walked toward the public gardens. The band struck up again, and he drifted with the crowd toward the pavilion.

Within a dozen feet of him, her arms folded across her breast, her eyes half shut in the luxury of the senses, stood the goose girl. He smiled as he recalled the encounter of that afternoon. It was his habit to ride to the maneuvers every day, and several times he had noticed her and her beauty.

"Why couldn't I have fallen in love with some one like this?" he cogitated.

Colonel von Wallenstein of the general staff approached her from the other side. Wallenstein was a capital soldier and a jolly fellow round a board, but beyond that Carmichael had no real liking for him. There were too many scented notes stuck in his pockets.

The colonel dropped his cigarette, leaned over Gretchen's shoulder and spoke a few words. At first she gave no heed. The colonel persisted. Without a word in reply she resolutely sought the nearest policeman. Wallenstein, remaining where he was, laughed. Meantime the policeman frowned. His excellency could not possibly have intended any wrong. The law of redress in Ehrenstein had no niche for the goose girl.

"Good evening, colonel," said Carmichael pleasantly. "Why can't your bandmaster give us light opera once in awhile?"

The colonel pulled his mustache in chagrin.

"Light operas are rare at present," he replied, accepting his defeat amiably enough.

And then a pretty woman rose from a chair near by. She nodded brightly at the colonel, who bowed, excused himself to Carmichael and made off after her.

Carmichael looked round for Gretchen. She was still at the side of the policeman. She came back.

"Did you get your geese together without mishap?" he asked of her.

The instinct of the child always remains with the woman. Gretchen smiled. This young man would be different, she knew.

"They were only frightened."

"We don't have goose girls in America," he said.

The magic word America, where the gold came from, flamed her curiosity.

"You are from America?" she asked.

"Yes."

"Are you rich?"

"In fancy, in dreams," humorously.

"Oh, I thought they were all rich. Did you fight in the war?"

"Yes. Do you like music?"

"Were you ever wounded?"

"A scratch or two. But do you like music?"

"Very, very much. When they play Beethoven, Bach or Meyerbeer—ach, I seem to live in another country. I hear music in everything—in the leaves, the rain, the wind, the stream."

It seemed strange to him that he had not noticed it at first, the almost Hanoverian purity of her speech and the freedom with which she spoke. The average peasant is ignorant, diffident, with a vocabulary of few words.

"What is your name?"

"Gretchen."

"It is a good name. It is famous too."

"Goethe used it."

[To be Continued]

Summons

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE STATE OF OREGON, IN AND FOR THE COUNTY OF COOS,
A. M. Hitchcock, and Emma Hitchcock, Plaintiffs,
vs.
May Pearce, and any and all persons unknown having or claiming an interest or estate in the property made the subject of the above entitled action, Defendants.

To May Pearce and to any and all persons having or claiming an interest or estate in the property made the subject of this suit, the above named Defendants:

IN THE NAME OF THE STATE OF OREGON, you and each of you are hereby required to appear and answer the complaint filed against you in the above entitled suit within 10 days from the date of the service of this Summons upon you, if served within Coos County or within 20 days if served within any other County in the State of Oregon, out if served by publication then on or before the last day of the time specified in the order for the publication of

this Summons which time prescribed is six weeks, and which last day of publication will be upon Thursday the 29th day of September 1910, and if you so fail to appear and answer said Complaint by said time Plaintiffs will apply to the above entitled Court for an order decreeing a Partition of real property, said order being more specifically defined as the Partitioning and setting separate and apart from the remainder of the land herein described the one fourth interests of the Defendants which said real property is described as follows:

Beginning at a point 990' West of the North-east corner of Section 36, Twp. 28, South of Range 15, West of the Willamette Meridian in Coos County, Oregon, and from said point running thence South 264', thence West 330', thence North 264', thence East 330' to the place beginning, and containing two acres.

This Summons is published in the Bandon Recorder, a weekly newspaper published at Bandon, Coos County, Oregon for a period of six consecutive weeks, beginning with the 18th day of August 1910, and ending with the 29th day of September, 1910, pursuant to an order of publication made by an order of the Hon. John F. Hall, County Judge of Coos County Oregon and dated the 17th day of August, 1910.

C. R. Wade
32-71
Attorney for Plaintiff
The RECORDER for Job Work.



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