

MY BIRTHDAY.

For bygone years I do not grieve, Nor do I wish them back again. The past, its joys and tears, I leave And live anew for God and man.

A RHINE LEGEND.

It was years ago and in Germany, where, especially at that day, a mighty line was drawn between the rich and poor, that in a certain village beside the Rhine lived two who made the old, old story new for themselves and almost believed, as lovers will, that they were the first who had ever loved each other—Gretchen and Carl, both peasants' children, and both as poor, in everything but youth and health and beauty, as any twin could be.

But for all this they would willingly have united their fortunes, or their lack of fortunes, but for the wise old folk, who know so much more about the world than young ones can and quite forget how much better a lenten feast, with love at the board, is to youth than all the dainty viands that can be spread on silver and set forth on damask if the little god is away. The old folk set themselves to oppose the match stoutly, on the ground that Carl would never earn his salt and that Gretchen, being very pretty, might make a better match. Indeed the baron, whose castle stood not far off, and who was not so old as he might have been and was rolling in gold, would, as all knew, have been only too happy to stoop as low as the peasant's cottage and have Gretchen for his bride.

But the girl found no charm in his title or his wealth, or his position to lead her to forget Carl, and when he left her to seek his fortune, that he might share it, when found, with her, she gave him a lock of her golden hair and promised that she never would forget him.

Gretchen sang and danced no more. She changed sadly in face and heart, but the Baron Claussen only thought her more lovely and more like a lady with her pale cheeks and downcast eyes and haunted the cottage as much as ever.

Carl, ever so far away, footsore and sad, but making sure of a fortune ahead of him, and happy just as even his stout legs began to fail him in meeting with a good natured boatman, who took him on board and bade him be at ease until he reached the end of his journey. So Carl lounged upon the deck of the little craft with its load of cheeses, and looking over into the water thought of Gretchen, never guessing that his sighs had brought to the surface a beautiful mermaid, who no sooner set eyes upon Carl than she fell madly in love with him and began forthwith to sing and play upon her lyre and comb her hair and use all her mermaid arts to lure the peasant to her. She floated with him to the mouth of the Elague, where, finding no avenue to fortune in any other direction, poor Carl shipped on board a vessel bound for a two years' voyage and hired a man who was about to travel down into Hesse Darmstadt to take the news to his sweetheart.

"And tell her," said Carl, "that I shall think of her by day and by night and shall return to claim her for my own when this voyage is over."

The man promised and the mermaid rejoiced, for Carl was to be within her reach for two long years. But this was not enough for her, for she was a very wily mermaid. One moonlight night she saw the messenger walking on the shore and called to him.

He was an ugly looking fellow, with a red nose, with whom mermaids were not apt to fall in love, so he had never seen one. And when he saw her with her pearly skin and sapphirine eyes and floating hair, her hands lying upon the golden strings of her lyre, all ringed with pearls, and pearls dripping from the lobes of her pure ears and wound about her neck, and saw her smile and felt her breath, and heard her voice, he grew bewildered. First she made love to him; then she bade him do something to prove that he cared for her. It was such a little thing—only to go on board the vessel and take Carl unawares and push him over. After that he would find her waiting for him by the mouth of the Rhine.

She had not the slightest intention of keeping her vow, but the man believed her and went on board the vessel and gave a form leaning over the bulwarks a push that sent it down into the water, but in his excitement he made a mistake and only drowned a young sailor from Hanover, instead of tossing Carl into the mermaid's arms. Then, terrified by the cry the man gave, he fled, not waiting to keep his appointment with the mermaid, but making the best of his way to Hesse Darmstadt.

They, being a good Catholic, he thought him—for he had no idea of his mistake—that the drowned Carl would have no mass said for him unless his kindred knew of his demise, and so went down to the cottage, where Gretchen sat spinning. There he inquired if any there knew one Carl Steyer. Then there was a little cry and the wheel stopped.

"I bring news of him," said the man, "had news. I knew him in Holland. He had shipped for a two years' voyage, but before the vessel started he was drowned. I saw him fall overboard. God rest his soul!" Then he went away, inwardly cursing himself and the mermaid, who, in very excellent spirits, was following over the sea the vessel on which Carl sailed, thinking of nothing but home and Gretchen.

The news nearly killed the poor girl, since she never doubted it for a moment, but though she knew Carl to be living and waited for him through long rolling years and loved him though all his beauty had left him and though he had returned poorer than when he parted from her the veil of death separated him from her so completely and there was such a blank wherever she turned her yearning eyes that in the end she did not feel so angry with the Baron Claussen for looking at her tenderly and holding her hand fondly, and at last she married the baron and went, with a crown of white flowers on her head and white gloves on her brown hands, up to his castle, his bride, and not unhappy.

It was a grand wedding, and the bride was beautiful, and the baron was very kind to her, and instead of toiling in the fields Gretchen sat in her handsome house, to be waited on by her maidens, and wore silk in place of coarse stuff, and golden rings upon the fingers, whereas she had slipped poor Carl's gift, the little silver eirelet which was all that he could afford to give her.

And in a year a little baby lay within her arms and looked into her eyes and taught her to love its father, who had been so tender and so kind to her, and she was the Baroness Claussen, and a wife and mother, and not the peasant girl grieving for her lover any more.

Just at this time Carl, with his two years' pay in his wallet and some hard won possessions besides, stepped from the ship's deck upon dry land and hurried as best he might toward Hesse Darmstadt to find Gretchen. That she might be dead was a fear that crossed his mind, but that she might be married never occurred to him. He had sent her information of his intentions. He had toiled, drenched by rain, beaten by wind, pelted by hail, in danger of shipwreck and assailed by the fever laden breezes of southern lands, to win the little pittance which seemed so great a sum to him. He had done it for the sake of her love. He boated it and footed it homeward in an ecstasy of yearning, and the mermaid, who had followed the vessel over the ocean, waited for it at foreign ports and followed it back again, made her way along the Rhine.

The baron's castle hung over the Rhine, and the nursery wherein the baroness watched over her baby looked out upon the water. It was under this window that the mermaid stopped, her drossy hair all tangled, her eyelids heavy, her late unstrung. And Carl hurried down to the cottage, where Gretchen's grandmother dwelt, and rushed in and cried, for he was so brown and so long bearded that she did not know him.

"I am Carl Steyer, come back to marry Gretchen. Tell me where to find her." But the old granddame answered: "You can't be Carl, for he is drowned and has had masses said for him. But even if you were you have no business to call the Baroness von Claussen your Gretchen."

"The baroness!" faltered Carl. "How the baroness?"

"Aye!" said the old granddame. "She married the Baron von Claussen and has as fine a young baron as any one ever set eyes on."

"Where is she?" gasped Carl. "I'll believe no one but her."

"She is where she ought to be, at the castle," said the old woman. "But you'd be mad to go there."

Perhaps Carl was mad, for he went. He put aside porter and maid and page and made his way to the room where Gretchen sat singing to her babe, and she, seeing him, forgot everything else and rushed to meet him, and he took her in his arms, and they wept. But soon he put her off and asked her:

"I thought you dead," she said. "Then great horror came upon her. 'Why did you come?' she cried. 'I am a wife. I had learned to love my husband. Now there will be only you again.' And amid these words they heard a clatter of horse's hoofs and a voice below bidding the servant say if it were true that Carl Steyer really were closeted with their mistress—the baron's voice.

"See!" cried Gretchen. "See! He is jealous! He will hate me. I must not love you, for I am a wife. I cannot love him, for he keeps me from you. Oh, cruel to come back and seek me and bring me such shame and sorrow!"

"Cruel!" cried Carl. "Ah, she calls me cruel! But see, Gretchen, I am kinder than you have been to me. The baron shall not find me here. Tell him Carl Steyer's ghost came to you. You will speak the truth, for I shall be dead when you utter the words. Forget me, since that will make you happy. Farewell!"

And as he spoke he pushed the lattice open and jumped into the foaming waters of the Rhine.

The jealous baron rushed in the moment after, but found his wife alone beside her baby's cradle—alone, muttering and moaning of the sea and of Carl Steyer, as she muttered and moaned through all her weary life.

But as for Carl Steyer, he did not drown. The mermaid caught him in her arms as he sank beneath the waters and bore him away to her caves of coral and pearl, where, with her songs and her embraces, she taught him to forget inconstant Gretchen, the toils of the sea, the pleasures of the land, his own soul and everything but her.

So now, though the castle of the Baron von Claussen is a ruin, and all the barons of that name dead long ago, the peasants often see a fair, weeping phantom at its site and see in the stream below another fair as a maiden of the sea can be, who bears in her white arms the most beautiful of mankind, lulled into a mystic sleep by the magic of her song. And they say that it is the mermaid who followed Carl Steyer across the ocean and now comes to taunt and triumph over the phantom of Gretchen Baroness von Claussen.—Exchange.

A Wonderful Task. Jules Curzon, a Polish mechanic, who was presented with a gold medal for his inventions, performed a most extraordinary thing when he succeeded in manufacturing a complete watch in the space of eight hours and from materials on which any other watchmaker would have looked contemptuously. It appears that the czar of Russia, hearing of the marvelous inventive genius of Curzon, determined to put him to the test and forwarded him a box containing a few copper nails, some wood shavings, a piece of broken glass, an old cracked china cup, some wire and a few eribbage board pegs, with a request that he should transform them into a timepiece.

Nothing daunted and perceiving a golden opportunity for winning favor at the court, Curzon set about his task with enthusiasm and in the almost incredibly short space of eight hours had dispatched a wonderfully constructed watch to the czar, who was so surprised and delighted at the work that he sent for the maker and conferred upon him several distinctions, as well as granting him a pension. The case of the watch was made of china, while the works were simply composed of the odds and ends accompanying the old cup. Not only did it keep good time, but only required winding once every three or four days. This remarkable watch is believed to be still in the possession of the Russian royal family.—Household Words.

Young Boy's Old Profession. A bright boy in the wholesale dry goods district of New York has a long list of customers whose pencils he keeps sharpened, and who also patronize him for new pencils. He has a patent sharpener and goes from store to store and office to office, and he makes between \$5 and \$7 a week, working four or five hours a day.

SLEEVES AND LINGERIE.

Elbow Sleeves and White Gloves of Kid, Chamolais and Lisle.

White gloves are extremely fashionable in Paris, and as many gowns are made with elbow length sleeves which the gloves are obliged to meet the fashion would be an expensive one if it allowed only kid or suede hand coverings. Fortunately gloves of fine thread are quite permissible, and these may be washed as often as necessary. White chamolais gloves are also useful, although repeated washings give them a cream tint.

Entirely different corsages are not as much worn as they were, a homogeneous effect being given to a combination costume by having skirt and sleeves of the same color, while the body of the bodice is unlike.

It is said that there will be a marked change in sleeves before long, but what it will be is not yet decided fully. There are



BROCHE SILK GOWN.

indications of a reduction in fullness, a drooping from the shoulders and a general drooping effect, approaching the 1830 mode.

Lingerie is a feature of fashion of increasing importance. Not only are linen and batiste again in fashionable favor for underclothing, but petticoats of these goods are rivaling the silk ones which have prevailed so long. They are trimmed with embroidery, tucks and lace as in ancient days, or are hemstitched and are worn under white or light gowns. Washable skirts and underwear are always in the most refined taste. Although garments made of china silk and surah are said to be washable, their appearance is always ruined by soap and water, for if they are tinted they fade, while if they are white they turn yellow. Collars and cuffs of various styles are also fashionable, and nothing is a neater or more appropriate finish to tailor gowns than bands of snowy linen, immaculately fresh.

The gown illustrated is of broche silk, the design being trails of roses and foliage on a straw ground. The skirt has deep godets all the way around and is untrimmed. The fitted bodice has a blouse of straw gauze beaded with pink and a square yoke of white lace over a pink lining. The balloon sleeves are of broche silk, the belt of pink silk. The lace collar has at the side a cluster of pink flowers. A hat of black rice straw trimmed with pink and black flowers and pink ribbon accompanies the gown. JUDIC CHOLLET.

THE PREVAILING MODE.

Still the Ample Godelet—Capes For Warm Weather.

Lace, net and black gauze are the materials of which summer capes are made, over black or colored linings. Black gauze over pale pink, with a thick ruche of black gauze, is the extreme of fashion. It cannot be said that skirts are any less ample in width as the season progresses. They are five or six yards around, according to the style desired or the breadth of the goods used for them. There are various shapes, but all of them have more or less the godet effect. In extreme cases this extends all the way around.

For silk and other very narrow goods and materials having marked stripes the style of skirt most favored has breadth straight in the middle and bias on each edge. There are 10 or 11 of these breadths. The skirt is extremely scant at the top and has no darts, as the seams approach so closely at the waist as to make darts un-



DRESS TOILET.

necessary, and there is barely allowance for a plait on each side of the opening at the back.

Large rustic hats trimmed with black velvet are liked for country wear by women who can bear the picturesque style of costume. There are many women who look their best only in the conventional mode of the hair, and whose pleasing appearance depends upon a strict following of the fashion. With these any deviation into the artistic realm as distinguished from the conventional is sure to produce an incongruous effect and to prove unbecoming. There are other women to whom fashionable garb is an extinguisher, and whose beauty shows to advantage only in odd or antique costume, and to whom the attire of other centuries seems far more appropriate than contemporary dress.

The sketch shows a gown with one of the new godet skirts. It is of red and blue changeable crepon, with red dashes and streaks. The blouse bodice is of white silk gauze over red silk and is very full and trimmed with guipure insertion. The balloon sleeves are of crepon, with epaulettes of white gauze edged with guipure. Bows of red satin trim the front of the bodice and the sleeves, and the draped belt is also of red satin. JUDIC CHOLLET.

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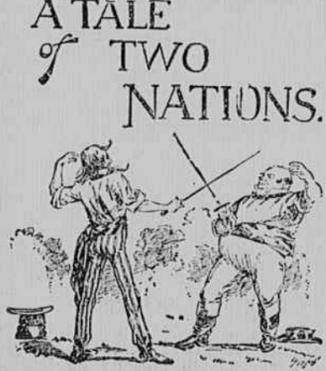
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