

Gretchen went into the vestibule. She picked up the prayer-book which Karl always liked to hold open in church—it was his father's prayer-book—and looked back into the beautiful church. Ah, surely, she thought, the people were not Christians in this country, though they had such a beautiful church; she sat for a few minutes on the bench, and then, fearful lest somebody should drive her away, she put on Karl's shoes and, taking her basket, went out upon the front steps.

The wind whirled past her. Karl cried, he wanted to go back into the lovely, warm church; he was cold.

'Be content mein liebchen,' she said. 'We shall hear Mass here; the people within do not want us.'

'But God wants us,' Karl said, his teeth chattering. 'I know he wants us. Let us not mind the people.'

Gretchen shook her head. She wrapped the boy in her shawl and knelt, saying her rosary, with the sharp wind cutting her like a knife, until she heard the 'Ite Missa est.' Then she could kneel no longer; she fell forward on the cold steps, fainting, and little Karl cried out for help with all his might. Mr. Gartland, being in the last pew, was the first to come to her.

'Poor creature,' he said as she opened her eyes. 'Why, she has a high fever.'

Gretchen seemed to be burning up and shivering both at once. Mr. Gartland lifted up her head and said to Karl.

'Don't cry, little boy, your mother will be well soon.'

Karl did not understand the words, but he felt the kindness of the look, so he ceased to sob. May and Laura passed by.

'Papa is so queer,' May said. 'We'll just go on ahead. I suppose that woman has been drinking. Somebody ought to keep such people away from respectable churches. It's just awful.'

'We have a chapel for such people as that,' said Laura, lifting the long-handled single eye-glass she used so constantly, and the possession of which May envied. 'They never come near our church at all. Do you know,' Laura continued, patronisingly, 'I think if you would not let such a miscellaneous lot come to your churches, we'd come oftener just to hear the music.'

May tried to feel grateful.

Mr. Gartland called a carriage and drove to a hospital. He could not understand Karl, and Gretchen could not tell where her boarding-house was.

The doctor at the hospital, who knew Mr. Gartland, said that Gretchen was very ill. 'She has been exposed to the cold for some hours, and may have a fever.' Then he dropped into German, speaking to Karl.

'The little boy says that a young lady drove him and his mother from the church, and that they had to kneel on the steps in the cold.'

'Is it possible?' asked Mr. Gartland. 'What is the matter with the woman?'

'Scarlet fever—possibly. It looks like—developed by exposure. But I can't tell yet.'

'The Sisters will take care of her, and the boy. You may count on me for expenses.'

When Mr. Gartland reached home—he had walked slowly through the blustering wind—he found May and Laura and Margaret and his wife in the parlor. Alice came in with a telephone message.

'The woman is worse, papa,' she said. 'Dr. West tells me to tell you so. He says that she probably would not have had the fever at all if she had not taken such a bad chill.'

'I am sorry,' he said. 'Her little boy will die of grief. He is a nice, frank-looking little fellow.'

'How could you be so awfully silly, you foolish papa,' said May, with her eyes on Laura, 'to take so much trouble about that untidy-looking woman? I had to ask her to leave our pew.'

'You' exclaimed Mr. Gartland. 'You did that?'

'And very properly,' said Laura. 'The church was not a place for her.'

Mr. Gartland did not notice this.

'May,' he said, 'I thought that your frivolity had touched only your head; I had no idea it had affected your heart. Go to the telephone, Alice, and tell Dr. West that I will call this afternoon, that it was my daughter who ordered that poor woman out into the cold and that, as I am responsible in a manner for her illness, he must spare no expense for her or the boy.'

'Your father is awful,' whispered Laura.

May blushed and began to cry, and Mr. Gartland told the story to his wife.

'It is my duty to make all the amends I can,' he said.

Mrs. Gartland, for the first time in her life, spoke very sharply to May. That young lady went up to her room, and refused to come down to dinner. Laura looked as if she had been insulted, and pitied 'poor, dear May,' in a whisper.

The dinner was not as cheerful as usual. Mrs. Gartland was uneasy; her husband was silent; Alice and Margaret were as polite as possible to Laura, but they were not very fond of her, and they felt less so now because of her heartless chatter.

It seemed to Mrs. Gartland a real misfortune that her daughter should have been so kind to a poor person. And to think of having driven that woman and child out of church! Mrs. Gartland resolved to have a serious conversation with May. In the evening, when Laura had gone home, Mr. Gartland spoke little; he went several times to the telephone and made anxious inquiries.

'No better,' he said—'worse, in fact. Oh, May, how could you have been so heartless?'

May pouted.

'There's one thing he will not do,' she said to herself. 'He will not take back his promise about the trip. I'm sure of that, at any rate.'

'The doctor told me this afternoon over the wire,' Mrs. Gartland said, 'that this poor woman was a Bavarian peasant driven over here by that failure of the crops May was reading about.'

'Indeed!' said Mr. Gartland, languidly. 'Do you know, Peggy, I am very tired to-night, and I have a sort of a headache.'

May looked up from her book.

'Shall I play something for you?' she asked.

'No—not to-night—thank you,' he said, coldly.

May pouted again. The idea of making people uncomfortable about a wretched woman! What would Laura Wells think of the whole thing? And Alice and Margaret evidently felt that she had done wrong; she might have gone into the Smith pew and let the poor woman say her prayers in peace, they said. The idea! Was not the pew her property, as well as Alice and Margaret's? Having come to the conclusion that she was deeply injured, May went upstairs again, hastily said her prayers—all the time wondering whether her father would choose to go by the Hamburg or Havre line of steamers—and closed her eyes for the night.

On Monday morning Mr. Gartland did not appear at breakfast. He was ill—a slight fever. He was anxious about Gretchen Wiener and Karl. He seemed relieved when he found that the boy had been taken care of and that the woman was no worse.

The girls enjoyed the pleasure of waiting on their father: it was 'so nice' to have him at home. Alice took in her pots of white hyacinths. Margaret made all sorts of dainties, and May hovered about. Her father was very gentle to her.

'You need sorrow dear,' he said, 'to soften your heart. If we are a little hard through too much prosperity, sorrow always comes—always.'

On Wednesday the doctor said that he was really ill; he had scarlet fever, and the girls, who never had the disease, were forbidden to enter the room.

May went about the house sobbing.

'He caught it from that wretched woman!' she cried. 'Oh, why did he trouble himself about her?'

'If you had left her to say her prayers in peace,' said Mrs. Gartland, sternly, 'she would not have fainted on the steps, and he would not now be ill. In future, daughter, learn to respect poverty.'

Days of anxiety succeeded.

Gretchen Wiener grew steadily better. One day little Karl was permitted to see her, and on that day the priest came out of Mr. Gartland's room and said to his wife:

'God help you! It is over—he passed away blessing you and the children—and he was well prepared. You know he received the Holy Eucharist yesterday, and I had just given him absolution after confession to-day when he—'

May's wild cries rent the air. She could not be comforted.

'God's will be done!' Mrs. Gartland said. 'God's will be done!'

After this, times changed for the Gartlands. They were obliged to move from their fine house, and Laura Wells ceased to know them. It required the greatest economy for Mrs. Gartland to live and educate the girls. She was in delicate health herself; and yet she could not bear to think of obliging one of them to neglect her education to help in the household work. May had offered to stay at home: she had changed wonderfully; she was now as meek as she had formerly been arrogant.

'Sorrow has come, as father said,' she often thought. 'But, oh! if I could only have him back!'

They lived outside the city in a little house surrounded by a garden.

'If I only had somebody to help me, how bright I could make it!' Mrs. Gartland said, one day in the spring, looking at the bursting buds. She was tempted to keep May at home, but that would mean that the girl should miss her chances of an education. 'Ah,' she said, 'if I had only somebody to assist me, I could raise plants and flowers for the city market—it would help so much!'

It seemed as if her thought was answered:

'Lady,' said a voice behind her, 'Ach, dear lady, I have found you! I am well now, and I have been told all. Will you let me and my little Karl work for you?'

'It was Gretchen who had learned some English; and there was curly-headed Karl, in his stiff shoes, looking up at Mrs. Gartland with his frank blue eyes.

Mrs. Gartland stooped to kiss him.

'So you are the little boy!'

Karl nodded as if he would never stop. He liked Mrs. Gartland's look. And so it was arranged that Gretchen and Karl should stay, and they made themselves very valuable.

You see that the failure of the crops in Bavaria did influence May Gartland's trip.—Dr. M. F. EGAN in the *Catholic Times*.

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A celebrated American writer explains that one cause of McKinley's late triumph in the grain growing Western States was 'that the Southern clergy, German and Scandinavian, went amongst their people from house to house and represented to them that Providence had blessed them during the McKinley rule with abundant harvests, and the Republican party had found them markets. A critic dealing with this observed that those markets were effected by two factors—first, the succession of bad crops in Russia and India; second, the gradual use of a better and better type of harvesting machine such as the McCormick.—*.*

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