

V.

THE OPHELIA OF THE BATTERY.

Her Name Is Annie Meyer and She Sails for the Fatherland To-Day.

For Fourteen Days She Has Walked by the Sea-Wall Looking Vainly for Her Lover.

Everybody Has Seen Her and the Sad Story of the Demented Girl Is the Gossip of All the Battery.

Poor Annie Meyer, demented and desolate, sails for the fatherland this morning. Did you ever see Yadder's picture of "The Lost Mind"? That pathetic face, when once you have looked into it and into the depths of those sad, vacant eyes, you never can forget. You might have seen what could have been the prototype any one of the past fourteen days looking wistfully from the walls of the Battery out to sea. For two weeks a foreign woman, speaking an alien tongue, has wandered there. A woman reporter watched her for an hour in the cold yesterday.

Annie Meyer, the poor girl, landed in this country from the steamship Ems on Nov. 14, has haunted the city's sea-wall for the fortnight since. They say she is looking for her lover, who deserted her. Every day, so she claims, she meets him there, but no eyes save her own sad, vacant eyes, have ever seen him.

This poor, unfortunate, stranded woman is not the young, beautiful girl that the romantic pathos of her story might suggest. That kind you meet with in novels. This woman will soon be thirty years of age. She is worn before her time. Morrow and its of hard, relentless labor has shattered her. Her fingers have been roughened like

a sailor's by her work. She was only a peasant, a household drudge in the old country, which she left for the new. A white slave. That is all. But isn't her story all the more pathetic?

She came from Bremen. She had lived there with one family a year and a half before she came away. So she must have been good and faithful. When she stepped out on the Battery two weeks ago she was in a strange country, with no friends, no family to meet her. She had left everything at home—place, kindred, fatherland—and sailed away to a land which was but a name to her to find the man who was her whole little world to her.

Her story is very difficult to get at accurately. One version has it that she deserted her old sweetheart for another, and that he, after a sailor's half-holiday, had gone away to sea again, leaving no trace of his real name or of his whereabouts behind him. She had been the sport of his holiday between two voyages.

TO FOLLOW A LOVER TO THE ENDS OF THE EARTH.

She knew he had sailed away for some foreign port. But to what quarter of the universe she did not know.

So she haunted the wharves of her own

native town, and watched the men as they went down to the sea in ships. One day she saw a vessel steaming in the harbor, and she stepped on board. That is how she came to this country.

Poor Annie Meyer. She was only a servant girl, to be sure. Her fingers are worn callous to the bone where she had scrubbed. Her skin has been hardened by work in the field as a girl. She was a peasant's child. And yet does not her lot make her tale all the more heartrending? She would have had so little in her life, anyway. And that little she lost.

Well, the steamer brought her into this country and here she has been ever since. To-day they are to send her back again to her fatherland.

Every day for the fourteen she has been in this city she has walked up and down the flanks of the Battery till she must have blistered her feet and worn thin the sole of her thick hide shoes. She went directly to the German Immigrant House at No. 20 State street, and there she slept and ate till she went away. They wanted to get work for her, but every day she answered "No, not to-day, wait till to-morrow."

IN VAIN ANNIE MEYER GAZED FROM THE

For she was perfectly sane in everything, but this idea of her thwarted love. On that point she was mad. Whatever may have been the history of her life, which led up to her piteous walking up and down the Battery flagging every morning and every afternoon and evening, she seemed to be bound down by one idea—that somewhere in New York's fair harbor she was to meet her sweetheart. That is why she haunted the quay.

"Why do you walk up and down by the river front so persistently?" Manager Oeffmann, of the Immigrant Home, asked her.

"Ach, Gott," she replied in her native tongue. "He is there, I see him every day."

"Met Who?"

"My lover. He sails by in a great ship with great sails every day. He stops when he sees me. We talk together. Ach, Gott, it is beautiful."

"But why don't you bring him here so that we may see him?" questioned Manager Oeffmann.

"Oh, he wouldn't come, he wouldn't come. But I see him. I talk to him. He comes to meet me every day."

"Does he call between here and Bremen?"

"No, he calls in New York, in New York." And further she would say nothing.

A FITTING CLOUSE.

It was pitiful to watch her in her strolls. Everybody who has walked on the Battery for the past two weeks must have seen her. Except when she was eating or sleeping she was there at her vigil.

is at times a wild gleam in her eyes. Cover her hair with a faded yellow straw hat, adorned with still more faded ribbons that have once been white. Think of her peary feet encased in thick hide shoes that a longshoreman might perhaps wear, and you have the shivering, wasted little figure that has trodden the stones of the Battery incessantly for a fortnight.



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CONJURE UP THE FIGURE OF A GERMAN PEASANT girl, with a face which bears the furrowed lines of a plough, clad in a long, black, threadbare cloak, and you will see her. The winds and the sun have tanned and reddened her cheeks. She has bitten her lips till they are bleeding. Her poor, big hands are likewise red and swollen. The sails are uncut and stubby. She has brown hair, gathered in a little knot at the back of her head, and there

she walked up and down the pier. She was out in the snow-fallof Thanksgiving Day. She was out in the sun of the day before. She was out there in the cold of yesterday.

AN OPHELIA OF THE TOWN.

As the young man from THE WORLD watched her she was crooning so herself as Ophelia does in the play. She had never heard of that ill-fated love, of course. She stopped in her stroll once and plucked some of the stark yellow grass of the sward behind the chair-railing. She was not a chamberlain's daughter in the palace of Elsinore. She was only, as we have said, a poor household drudge. Else you might have thought her whispering to herself: "There's room; there's room—oh, yes, love, remember. And there is pain and sorrow for the wife."

Not that of course. But what was she singing to herself there? The wind drove its gusts across the open and she caught at her straw hat with both her hands. And always she had her eyes glued on the waters where the vessels were driven hither and thither by the breeze.

Sometimes she shivered. Then she would walk faster. Besides her cloak only a thin checked calico protected her from the cold.

The police on beat say they have seen her in her walks bend down and kiss the benches. As she did so she would mutter over and over again a German word. They did not understand it. She would say nothing when approached. She continued on her monotonous tramp again.

THOUGHT SHE HAD TALKED WITH HER LOVER.

The day before yesterday she came into the German Home at evening. "I have had a long talk with him," she remarked.

"With whom?" they said to her.

"With him, my man."

"Won't he come in now?"

"No, he will never come here;" and again she added, "He is sailing, sailing."

PASTOR BERKEMEIER, of the Home, and Manager Oeffmann believe that she had worked too hard at home and that her mind gave out under the strain of close confinement. Yet she was sane on every question but this ghost of a man she met with every day upon the Battery.

She got up every morning when the bell rang at 6.30. Then she breakfasted. She ate all her three meals with rest and she slept soundly. Breakfast over and she

With this rhythmic swaying movement

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