



VOLUME XVII

ERNST VON WILDENBRUCH

HERMANN SUDERMANN

GUSTAV FRENSEN

WILHELM VON POLENZ

LUDWIG FULDA

HUGO VON HOFMANNSTHAL



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THE GERMAN CLASSICS

Masterpieces of German Literature

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH



VITA SOMNIUM BREVE

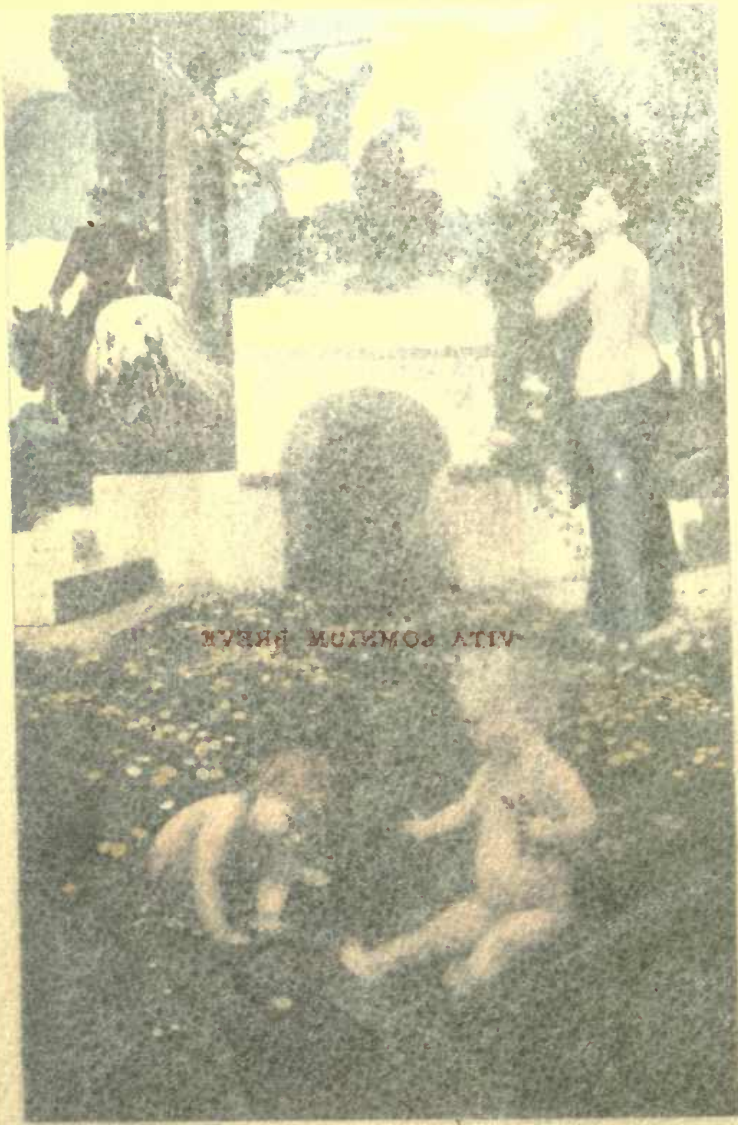
Patrons' Edition

IN TWENTY VOLUMES

ILLUSTRATED

THE GERMAN PUBLICATION SOCIETY
NEW YORK

From the Painting by Arnold Böcklin.



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VOLUME XVII

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EDITOR'S NOTE

WITH this volume begin the selections from contemporary German literature. An attempt has been made to select as great a variety of characteristic types as possible. Consequently, none of the remaining four volumes will be dominated by a particular school or group of authors, although Wildenbruch and Sudermann predominate in volume XVII, Gerhart Hauptmann in volume XVIII. Volume XIX brings dramatists subsequent to Hauptmann, volume XX various representatives of the contemporary Short Story.

In the illustrations, also, these last four volumes attempt to give an impression of the great variety of tendencies, often conflicting with each other, in contemporary German painting, so as to show once more the parallelism in the development of literature and art brought out in this whole collection.

KUNO FRANCKE.

THE LIFE OF ERNST VON WILDENBRUCH

By ROBERT M. WERNAER, PH. D.

Author of *Romanticism and the Romantic School in Germany*



Y an accident of fate, this ardent patriot, who has been called the faithful Eckhardt of the German people, was born far away from his fatherland, February 3, 1845, at Beyrout, in Syria, the son of the German Consul General. About six years of his early childhood were spent in foreign countries. At the age of two, he was taken from Beyrout to Berlin; but soon, in his fifth year, his father having been appointed ambassador to Greece and, later on, to Turkey, he moved with his parents to Athens and, not long thereafter, to Constantinople. From Constantinople he did not return to Germany till 1857.

True to traditions, as a son of a German "von" family, he prepared himself for the military career. He studied at the cadet school, at Potsdam, and, in due course of time, at the age of eighteen, became a lieutenant in the German army. Soon, however, he took his leave, prepared himself for the university, and studied law in Berlin. Twice his studies were interrupted by a call to arms. He joined the colors in 1866, in the war with Austria; and in 1870, in the Franco-Prussian war. Continuing his studies, he became an *assessor*, and served a short time as municipal judge in Eberswalde and Berlin. In 1877, he entered the diplomatic service, and, after occupying several minor positions in the German Foreign Office, advanced to the rank of a councillor of the legation in 1888 and a privy councillor in 1897. In 1900 he retired.

There is an interesting question-mark after the name of Ernst von Wildenbruch—poet, fiction writer, and dramatist. Here is a man who wrote a great deal with the fervor

of poetic enthusiasm, with an appeal to the patriotism of his people, with democratic sympathy for all classes, who was rewarded with phenomenal theatrical success, and acknowledged a champion of the true in art and life; yet who left behind him no deep imprints. Why did the rivulets of his several literary works not gather into some sort of running stream? Why, surrounded by fomenting literary movements, did he belong organically to none of them? Why, exalted by friends, admirers, apologists, had he no followers? Why did he, why does he, stand a figure apart, so little related to the dramatists of our own day?

There can be little doubt that highest motives quickened his work. He was in solemn earnest about it. He wanted to do something large; to raise the literature of his country; to leave behind something of permanent value. "My aim is," he wrote in 1882, "to win back for the German people a genuinely great dramatic art." Thus, while to the eye of the world he was a municipal judge and, later on, in the German Foreign Service, climbing the diplomatic ladder, he was, as a matter of fact, writing dramas, known only to a few understanding friends, with the high aim of raising the tone of the literature of his own day. Certainly a more arduous, more self-sacrificing task. "My soul," he wrote in a letter to his friend Berthold Litzmann, dated December 31, 1881, "was like a deep well, dark but for one stray glimmer of light shimmering at the bottom; to this one ray I have clung amidst bitterest pain,—it was faith * * * faith in a wise, ordering Providence." And no one knows quite as much the bitterness of that pain as the playwright himself, working in secret, unrecognized by the world, for the elevation of the dramatic literature of his country.

But, after all, he was more fortunate than he might have been. After ten years of patient labor, his first play, *The Carolingians*, was accepted, and played, first in Meiningen, later in Berlin, with a success so phenomenal that his friends have not ceased speaking of it even to this very day. Other plays, already in manuscript, *The Mennonite*, *Harold*,

and *Fathers and Sons*, soon followed. Elated by this success his mission shaped itself more clearly. "I aspire to be no more than the man who, pressing onward in the midst of darkness, calls upon the German people: 'Follow me, — darkness is succeeded by light.'" "

The greater number of his dramas are historical, dealing with a variety of subjects. *The Carolingians* (1881) gives us a picture of the strife between the three sons of Louis the Pious, over the partition of the empire, due to the claims of Charles, son of Louis' second wife. The two dramas, *The Mennonite* and *Fathers and Sons*, deal with dramatic conflicts which arose during the war of liberation of 1813. In *Harold* (1882) the scene is laid in England, at the time of the Norman Conquest. *The Quitzows* (1888), *The Commander-in-Chief* (1889), and *The New Ruler* (1891), and *A Stormy Night* (1898), deal with episodes in the history of Brandenburg and Prussia. These have been called the *Hohenzollern* dramas. *The Boy of Hennersdorf* (1895) and the one-act play, *Miss Evergreen* (1896) may also be included in this particular class. *The Duke of Verona* (1887) has for its background the bloody conflict which, at the end of the thirteenth century, raged between the factions of the Guelfs and Ghibellines. *King Laurin* (1902) goes back to the gray days of Amalasintha, daughter of Theodoric the Great, king of the Eastern Goths. *Erasmus' Daughter* (1900) shows us pictures of the great conflict during the first decade of the German Reformation. *Willehalm* (1897) is an allegory celebrating the rebirth of Germany following the victory of 1870. *The New Law* (1896) and *Henry IV. of Germany* (1896), this latter probably Wildenbruch's most important play, deal with that momentous conflict in the history of Germany in which Henry IV. and Pope Gregory VII. were the chief figures. *The German King* (1909) leads us back to Henry I., spoken of in history as the founder of Germany.

Now, we ask ourselves, in view of this wealth of dramatic material, produced with the solemn purpose of lib-

erating an imprisoned literature, containing genuinely poetic passages, powerful dramatic episodes, and fresh, invigorating breezes of a temperament seeking emancipation from the commonplaces of life — why did Wildenbruch not become a forerunner of a literature thus liberated? Personalities and literary and social movements are complex, and many threads enter into the fabric of Wildenbruch and his time. Some threads we can unravel, however. We know that when Wildenbruch began his literary career, new, revolutionary forces were changing the whole mental complexion of the age. Whether it was Darwin and his theory of evolution that gave the impulse, or the age that made Darwin, matters little; we know that thinkers, artists, poets, dramatists turned from an age that seemed to them older and grayer the longer they looked at it to a newer and fresher age, developing before their eyes, in which they themselves could be the moving forces. They were in revolt against the traditions of the past, eager for the throbbing life of their own day. But where was Wildenbruch? Not static: also revolutionary. For we must remember that he did not go into the past to recover facts of history — we know how shockingly he mangled them; but to revivify his own age, petty, sleeping with unaccountable indifference on the glories of 1870; to revivify it with the ideals of a former, worthier, nobler past. For these ideals he fought as militantly as ever any of the younger generations for *their* principles. It was not so much past and present that separated them as ideals and every-day mediocrity.

Few things pained him so much as the accusation of being a *Hofdichter*, court poet; for it tended to undermine the serious aim he had set himself as a dramatist. It can easily be disproved by a perusal of his works, apart from any words he may have said in his own defense. There are kings and princes and high aristocrats in his dramas, and honored sons of the Hohenzollern ancestry; on the other hand, the plain people are also on the stage, plain people of all classes, treated with the same understanding sympathy.



ERNST VON WILDENBRUCH

Numerous instances could be cited. What more alluringly charming portrait of a man of the common people could be drawn than that of the poor smithy in *The Quitzows!* Bearing in mind that von Wildenbruch himself was related to Frederic William II. of Prussia, he is deserving no little praise for the manner in which he was able to emancipate himself from the shackles of aristocratic environment. He was a democrat in the best sense of the word. Two of his plays, *The Boy of Hennersdorf* and *Miss Evergreen*, which he called *Folk Plays*, are refreshingly close to the hearts of the plain people. In *The Quitzows* one brother fights another in defense of the rights of the people. In *The New Law* we see an aristocrat on his knees before a burgher, because he had found in this plain man of the people that true nobility, higher than birth, the nobility of manhood and character. In *The New Ruler* the progress of the action turns largely upon the vindication of the people's rights as against those of the nobles. Also as a man among men, Wildenbruch was a democrat, the best evidence of which is perhaps the dedication of his drama *Master Balzer* to his friend Adolf Balzer, a plain watchmaker of Frankfurt. This is the last stanza:

“Deep-veiled lover of the Muses,— unknown,
In humble lowliness disguised,— you are
My friend! This may I tell today, may own
With joy to all the world! My friend you are!”

We must also read *Leaves from the Tree of Life*, a collection of essays and articles posthumously published by his widow, Maria von Wildenbruch, and Berthold Litzmann, to do Wildenbruch full justice as a democrat.

We wish Wildenbruch had continued to fight for his ideals, though they lay in the past; continued to make efforts to instill them into his own age; continued to write “vitalized” idealistic plays, with a more perfect technique, more masterful grasp of abiding human traits. For then he might possibly have become a leader—not indeed for

his own generation: Ibsen for the world, Hauptmann for Germany, became the leaders,—but for our own generation, or that to come. For Hauptmann's services are coming to an end, the best fruits of the art of naturalistic contemporary life have been gathered. What next? Who is going to be the coming leader? It might have been a Wildenbruch. But the Call of the Modern came upon him, of the Modern with the tottering threads of ephemeralism that hang about it. The new leader will be the one able to solve the riddle of infusing lasting human ideals into the minds of the masses weighed down with the commonplaces of contemporary life. It was a sorry day when Wildenbruch made up his mind to yield to the Call of the Modern. For on that day, he, the man that stood between the past and the present, lost his message. He had nothing more to give. Wholly, indeed, he did not embrace the new—we are glad—yet the old had ceased speaking to him with the former solemn voice of command.

The number of works founded on contemporary life is considerable. *Sacrifice for Sacrifice* (1883); *The Crested Lark* (1891); and *Master Balzer* (1893), two really good plays, which deal with social questions, and link themselves closer to the tendencies of the present day than any of his other dramas; *The Immortal Felix* (1904), a farce-comedy. Also a number of stories. Among these *The Saint*, *The Miracle*, most of his humorous stories published under the title, *The Land of Laughter*; the novels *The Astronomer*, *Hasty Love*, *The Wandering Light*, *The Other Mama*, and others. His most popular stories are *Noble Blood* and the two stories published under the title, *The Sorrows of Childhood*, by which Wildenbruch will long be remembered.

While, therefore, we may say that Wildenbruch's isolation is due to the fact that he was unable to adjust himself to the new forces of a new age, there is another chief reason why he failed to become a leader. It has to do with his dramatic technique. It makes little difference which of his dramas we may select, in almost every one we shall find

an interesting, effective exposition. For this reason he has been called the dramatist of the first act. He has a magic power of presenting a line of action in which difficulties arise which we like to see solved. A suspense is created. This may go through a second and part of a third act. Then something new sets in, new material is introduced, which interferes seriously with the straight line of the action. The drama begins to bulge out in the middle. The individual threads of the composition become looser. We pass through a series of episodes, generally executed with dramatic power, and nearly always effective on the stage, but not closely woven into unity. At the end, we find ourselves the recipients of two, sometimes three, actions instead of one. Two chief defects stand out—one of structure, the other of characterization. The structural defects, he might have learned from Heinrich von Kleist, who was one of his favorite authors; or from the historical dramas of Shakespeare, which are likewise structurally faulty. The analytic faculty of building the dramatic structure as an architect builds his masses is, indeed, one of the rarest gifts found among the world's dramatists. The second defect, that of characterization, is one not uncommon to writers, who, not able to create a powerful action by depth, that is by means of the characters themselves, make up for the deficiency by the invention of new episodes spread over a wide surface. External incidents rather than inner forces govern the action. Wildenbruch never succeeded entirely in freeing himself from it. On this account some writers have denied him dramatic talent altogether. Therein they err. An ideal drama calls for a variety of gifts—the invention of story, the logical structure, characterization, creation of incidents, dialogue. Characterization alone, however important, is not the only mark of dramatic genius. For must not the story-teller possess this gift also? Wildenbruch had the special genius of creating dramatic incidents. To this he owed his success. To this gift, which, unaccompanied by other qualities, would have made him

merely a writer of melodramas, associated itself seriousness of purpose, patriotic fervor, an attachment to the ideal, and a love for man. Through these qualities he was able to outdistance the melodramatist, and to win for himself an enviable position among the German dramatists of the nineteenth century. But a new school could never have been founded on this technique.

Nearly all of Wildenbruch's historical dramas are written in verse, chiefly in pentameter meter. A very free meter, lyrical in character, occurs in *The Songs of Euripides* (1909). His plays which deal with contemporary life are in prose; also his Hohenzollern dramas, with the exception of *The Commander-in-Chief* and *The New Ruler*, in which he uses a four-stressed meter with unfortunate results. *Henry IV. of Germany* is in prose.

Wildenbruch deserves to be mentioned among the poets. Not only because of his lyrics and ballads, *Songs and Lyrics* (1877), *Songs and Ballads* (1887), *Last Poems* (1909); but because of the poetry in many of his dramas. Often one regrets not to be able to take these poetic passages out of their fixed places in the dramatic composition, and to replace them by prose, for the peculiar style, the onward, hasty rush of action, the display of passion immediately translated into deeds, is not suited to lyrical passages. Often his poetry sounds hollow.

It was a wise choice which induced Wildenbruch to cast the highly dramatic subject matter of *Heinrich und Heinrich's Geschlecht*, which rather unfortunate title I have translated *Henry IV. of Germany*, in prose form. He himself divided the drama into two parts, *King Henry*, which has a prologue, and *Emperor Henry*. It may also be called a trilogy, entitled respectively *Child Henry* (the Prologue of the play), *King Henry*, and *Emperor Henry*. The first two parts of this trilogy make a dramatic work of high order. It has greater unity and cohesion than any of his other historical dramas. The story itself has momentous historical significance. The action at times brilliant, pro-

ceeds organically to an inevitable end. Whether he has been altogether faithful to history, we care not. The chief characters live and move, in the main, as independent, self-acting beings. There are lapses of motivation, as there are in all of Wildenbruch's dramas, but they obtrude less in this. The situations create suspense throughout. The dialogue is forceful, natural, direct. It is a work that has qualities of permanency; and makes one deplore the peculiar conditions, psychological and social, which stood hinderingly in the way of the author's stable, maturing growth. Placing this work by the side of the choicest of his other works, dramatic, lyric, epic, we feel justified in saying that although Wildenbruch was not great, he, nevertheless, possessed ingredients of that precious amalgam that goes into the making of great men. The third part of the trilogy of *Henry IV. of Germany*, though it contains excellent dramatic material, is, in the main, inferior to the two parts given here in translation. Ernst von Wildenbruch died January 15, 1909. In 1912 a national committee was formed, and an appeal made to the German people for a monument to be erected in his memory at Weimar.

ERNST VON WILDENBRUCH

KING HENRY*

A DRAMA IN FOUR ACTS WITH A PROLOGUE

(First Part of Henry IV of Germany.)

TRANSLATED BY ROBERT M. WERNAER, PH.D.

Author of *Romanticism and the Romantic School in Germany*

PERSONS OF THE PROLOGUE

AGNES, *wife of Emperor Henry III of Germany*

HENRY, *her son (ten years old)*

COUNTESS ADELHEID VON PIEMONT

BERTHA, *her young daughter*

PRAXEDIS, *still a child*

COUNT OTTO VON NORDHEIM

ORDULF

HERMANN

ECKBERT VON MEISSEN

UDO VON DER NORDMARK

ANNO, *Archbishop of Cologne*

HILDEBRAND, *Archdeacon of Rome*

HUGO, *Abbot of Clugny*

RAPOTO, *crossbow bearer of Emperor Henry III*

} of the Billung family } Saxon Nobles

Place of the Prologue — Goslar

* Permission G. Grote, Berlin.

PROLOGUE

CHILD HENRY

In the Palace at Goslar. A garden, not over-rich in appointments, rather simple; fir trees and fir underbrush. At the back, a series of steps lead to the entrance of the imperial palace, the walls of which occupy the whole background.

RAPOTO, an old man with long, wavy, gray hair and beard, is seated on a grassy mound in the centre of the foreground. Crossbows lie about him, which he is engaged in stringing. He works in this way for a time in silence.

A VOICE (*from the left, behind the scene*). Rapoto!

RAPOTO (*to himself, continuing his work*). Don't shout like this!

A VOICE (*as before*). Rapoto!

RAPOTO. Fool! [*Continues working.*]

A VOICE (*as before*). Rapoto!

RAPOTO (*jumping up, turning to the left*). Idiot! Why do you keep calling? Don't you see I have my hands full?

A VOICE (*as before*). The Emperor is going on the hunt. They are waiting for you to get things ready.

RAPOTO. The Emperor? On the hunt? Was it not said this morning that he was not going?

A VOICE (*as before*). Plans have been changed; he's going. They are waiting for you. Hurry up!

RAPOTO. Hurry up?—Don't you see that I'm busy with these crossbows? I've to string them, all of them, because the huntsmen took horn crossbows from the armory. In September! Don't they know that steel crossbows are needed in autumn? [*He seats himself and continues his labor.*] Did I come into this world, I, a free-born Frank, to tell these Saxon dullards what to do?—Emperor, you're a mighty lord, you've

seated four popes, you're as wise as King Solomon, and as strong as Saint Michael with the fiery sword; —but there is one thing I can't understand, why do you keep on coming to Goslar, to these rough Harz Mountains? Do you not own land on the banks of the Rhine and the Main? Isn't it pleasanter to live among free-born Franks than here among false-hearted Saxons? Your throne is too high—you can't see the eagles about you—nor the moles at your feet. [*Stamps on the ground.*] Who am I, that I should thus speak to you? I'm your faithful crossbow bearer. I know these wild hogs, these agitators and fighters [*shaking his fist*], I know these Saxons, these—

VOICE OF A BOY (*from the right, behind the scene*). Rapoto, ho! Rapoto, ho!

RAPOTO (*jumps excitedly from the ground, turns to the right, and stretches out both of his arms*). My dear King!

Enter KING HENRY, a boy of ten. He comes running from the right, dressed in white, ornamented with red and gold embroidery; his long, brown hair is confined by a gold band; he carries a small spear.

HENRY. Let me show you how I can shoot, Rapoto! [*He hastens to the left.*] Do you see that birch tree behind the two firs? Straight through the firs I'll hit it! [*Hurling the spear.*] There!

RAPOTO (*whose eyes have followed the throw*). The birch, split right through the centre! [*Falls ecstatically on his knees before the boy.*] My dear King, my sun, my moon, my star,—what do you wish Rapoto shall do for you? Do you wish to take a ride on my back? Shall I be your horse?

HENRY. You always want to play with me—I want to go on the hunt, and you must take me with you.

RAPOTO. If I had my wish, my dear King, I'd take you hunting from morning till night. But I can't take you.

HENRY (*stamping on the ground*). I will go with you! I

will! You *must* take me! [*He seizes RAPOTO by the hair and pulls him.*]

RAPOTO. Christ and his saints — how you pain an old man like me!

HENRY (*withdrawing his hands quickly from the old man's head*). Did I — did I pain you?

RAPOTO. What do you think — pulling my hair like this?

HENRY. I'll give you something, Rapoto. [*He puts his hand in the embroidered purse which hangs from his belt.*] Oh, it's empty!

RAPOTO (*exploring with HENRY the empty purse*). Where is it gone to?

HENRY (*thinking*). Wait a moment — yes — a little while ago, in front of the palace, there were some blind men —

RAPOTO. And you gave it to them? [*Kisses the boy's hands.*] My dear King, had you torn off all my hair, and my beard too, I would not be angry with you!

HENRY (*embracing the old man*). I love you, Rapoto — do you love me too?

RAPOTO. Yes, my dear King, I love you.

HENRY (*lost in thought*). Rapoto — does my father love me?

RAPOTO. Why this question? Of course, he loves you.

HENRY. Yes, I know my father loves me. [*There is a pause.*] Rapoto — does my mother love me?

RAPOTO. Why shouldn't she love you?

HENRY. Not as much as my father — does she?

RAPOTO. Why not?

HENRY. When my father sees me, he laughs, and kisses me; but my mother does only this — [*He makes, in solemn fashion, the sign of the cross on RAPOTO's forehead.*]

RAPOTO. She blesses you with the sign of the holy cross. Isn't this a good thing to do?

HENRY. She is always so stern. Isn't it true, Rapoto, that it is my mother that forbade you to take me with you on the hunt?

RAPOTO. Since you ask me — yes.

HENRY (*tears himself away from the old man, stamps on the ground, and threatens with clenched fists toward the left*). Do you see that! See that! See that!

RAPOTO (*rising*). For God's sake, my dear King, whom are you threatening with your clenched fists? Not your mother, surely?

HENRY (*throws himself into the arms of the old man*). Rapoto, I'll never do it again — you'll tell no one, Rapoto, no one!

RAPOTO. No one shall hear it.

HENRY. You care for me again, Rapoto?

RAPOTO. I was never angry with you.

[*Both seat themselves; the boy clings affectionately to the old man.*]

HENRY. Say, Rapoto, do again what you did a little while ago; it looked so comical.

RAPOTO. A little while ago? What was it I did?

HENRY. That's what you did [*making a threatening motion with his fist*], I know these Saxons —

RAPOTO. Quite right, that's what I said.

HENRY (*clings to the old man — laughing*). Is it true that the Saxons are hogs?

RAPOTO. Hogs — why that?

HENRY. Because you said, "I know these wild hogs, I know these Saxons."

RAPOTO (*laughing*). Christ and his saints — what ears you have!

HENRY. But Uncle Otto is no hog?

RAPOTO. Uncle — Otto? Do you mean — Nordheim?

HENRY. Yes, isn't Uncle Otto a Saxon?

RAPOTO. The only good man among them, for the others — the — [*makes a threatening motion with his fists.*]

HENRY (*choking with laughter*). Do you see, see — now you do again what you did before.

RAPOTO. So I do. May God grant, my dear King, that these Saxons never cause you tears when the time comes for you to be emperor!

HENRY. Say, Rapoto, does my father know that they are so bad?

RAPOTO. He knows it, and holds them under his iron rule, his iron fist—

HENRY. Are there people with iron hands?

RAPOTO. Yes, your father has iron hands. That's why the Saxons fear him, and hate him.

HENRY (*startled*). If they hate my father, I'll cut their heads off once I am emperor!

RAPOTO. Would serve them right!

HENRY. Shall I be emperor some day, Rapoto?

RAPOTO. You will be emperor, my dear King, sooner perhaps than you may think. I'll tell you something which nobody knows:—your father is not as well as people think.

HENRY (*startled*). No——

RAPOTO (*quieting him*). Be quiet,—don't tell anybody about it,—I know what I know. It occurred yesterday—when tidings were brought to him of the heathen Wends, that a battle had been fought between them and Count William von der Nordmark. The Wends, these godless Heathens, have conquered, defeated Count William in battle, and cut his body to pieces, that no one was able to recognize him. When your father heard these tidings—I stood by his side when it happened—he became deathly pale, as I had never seen him before, and broke down like a tree cut by the ax. If we had not caught him, he would have fallen to the ground. And this morning the rumor was, that he was going on the hunt, and, then, suddenly it was said, that he would not go on the hunt, and then again, that he would, after all, go—never has it happened as long as I can remember, that your father changed his will—three times in one hour. [*He takes both hands of the boy. There is a pause. The boy nestles tremblingly against the old man, who strokes him.*] How he trembles— [RAPOTO rises suddenly, turning

to the left.] My dear King, come away! These men that are coming—it is better that they do not see you! [*He takes up the crossbows, and draws the boy to the rear; the latter follows a few steps, then stops.*]

HENRY. I don't wish to run away.

RAPOTO (*standing behind the boy, speaking over his shoulder*). They are the Saxon Dukes, the worst of them all! The two Billingers, Ordulf and Hermann, his brother—if you knew these people——

HENRY (*with pale, trembling lips, and glowing eyes, his arms crossed—staring to the right*). What sort of people are they?

RAPOTO. Those blind men, in front of the palace, to whom you gave your money—do you know where they came from? From the country of Bremen, to tell the Emperor of their misery, because Ordulf, that bloody dog, put their eyes out.

HENRY (*seizes with both hands the arm of the old man*). Put out—their eyes!

RAPOTO. Therefore I say, come away! [*He pulls the boy a few steps to the rear.*]

HENRY (*frees himself again*). But—I don't wish to run away.

[HENRY, RAPOTO *standing behind him, stops in the rear; HENRY sits down, and occupies himself with the crossbows.*]

Enter ORDULF and ECKBERT VON MEISSEN, from the right.

ORDULF. Believe what I tell you, and keep it to yourself,—the imperial bull is crippled.

ECKBERT. But he is going on the hunt.

ORDULF. Of course, he does not wish any one to find it out. The Wends have given him a hot mush to eat on the banks of the Elbe; it will make him choke.

ECKBERT. Hosanna to the Heathens, if that's true!

ORDULF. Don't talk so loud! He is still living! If he learns what I've told you, he would make me feel his horns.

Enter HERMANN, the Billung, on the right.

ECKBERT (*meeting him*). Have you seen the man from Cologne? Was he with the Emperor?

HERMANN. Yes.

ORDULF. And? Is he going on the hunt?

HERMANN. He is going, although he sits in his room pale as a sheet.

ORDULF. Who is with him?

HERMANN. Hugo, the Abbot, and Hildebrand, I think.

ECKBERT (*glancing to the right*). Hildebrand has left him already.

HERMANN. So, Hildebrand is not any more with him. But Otto von Nordheim is still with him, so it seems.

ORDULF (*stretching out both of his arms*). My friends, my brothers—if I think what might—

HERMANN (*taking hold of his hand*). Ordulf! [*Glancing toward the rear.*] The boy!

ORDULF (*dropping his arms*). By thunder—I didn't see him!

HERMANN. I just got a glimpse of him. [*They are disconcerted, and put their heads together.*]

ECKBERT. Do you think he heard us?

ORDULF (*with a side glance toward HENRY*). Bah! He's too far off, and is playing with the crossbows.

HERMANN (*with a like glance*). But he has sharp ears.

ORDULF. What do I care about that boy! I must tell you something I can't put off. [*He steps closer to the two others.*] You've just heard that possibly we may get rid of the Emperor. That will be a good thing for us, but not all we want. He has a son. We must look out that this son does not get the upper hand. The father has troubled us long enough.

ECKBERT. That's true.

ORDULF. The simplest thing would be if we— [*He makes with his hand the sign of cutting one's head off.*]

HERMANN. That would cause too much of a stir.

ORDULF (*laughing*). Quite right. But a bull should not again be permitted to lord over the empire, trampling us under foot.

ECKBERT. And?—

ORDULF. And?— What do you think can be done with a bull calf that is not to be a bull?

HERMANN. Geld it.

ORDULF. There you have it.

ECKBERT. Yes—but—

ORDULF. Yes, but—yes, but—to be sure he is king: we have sworn him allegiance at Aachen, however unwillingly, forced upon us by the black Henry. If, then, he is to be emperor, we will train the boy into a man such as we want him to be, one who will dance to our piping.

HERMANN. Who will undertake to do this?

ORDULF. Anno, the Archbishop; he will do it.

ECKBERT. Have you talked with him?

ORDULF. Of course, I have; Anno is our man. As soon as the old man has closed his eyes, we'll deliver the boy into Anno's hands; he shall take him to Cologne. [*There is a pause.*] Are you agreed to that?

ECKBERT. Is Otto von Nordheim on our side?

ORDULF. I don't know,—why?

ECKBERT. If Otto von Nordheim is not on our side, I'll not be a party to this.

ORDULF. By thunder, why not?

ECKBERT. Without him, the matter wouldn't have the necessary authority in the empire.

ORDULF. Nonsense, I say!

HERMANN (*taking ORDULF by the hand*). Don't talk so loud! Let's talk with Nordheim.

HENRY (*calling suddenly aloud toward the right*). Uncle Otto! Uncle Otto!

HERMANN (*wheeling about*). The devil, what's that!

Enter from the right OTTO VON NORDHEIM. RAPOTO takes up the cross-bows, and leaves in the rear.

HENRY (*runs up to him, and throws himself into his arms*).

Are you also going on the hunt with father, Uncle Otto?

OTTO VON NORDHEIM (*greets the boy affectionately, and strokes his head*). My young King, I don't know yet whether your father is going.

ECKBERT. Just see the affection between these two.

ORDULF. Yes, all they need to do now is to kiss.

HENRY (*looking with admiration at the sword of OTTO VON NORDHEIM*). What sword is this that hangs from your belt, Uncle Otto?

OTTO VON NORDHEIM. A sword like this you have never seen, my young King, have you?

HENRY. Never.

OTTO VON NORDHEIM (*taking the sword from the belt*).

Look at it: once upon a time, a great hero wielded this sword. It belonged to King Etzel, King of the Huns, who conquered nearly the whole world. I received it as a present from King Solomon of Hungary.

HENRY (*holding the sword in his hands*). May I draw it out, Uncle Otto?

OTTO VON NORDHEIM. Do as you please.

HENRY (*drawing the sword from the scabbard*). Oh, look at it!

ECKBERT (*to his two friends*). He gives him his own sword — these two seem to be great friends.

HERMANN. Don't let that trouble you: I know Nordheim; he is somewhat of a bear. The Emperor taught him how to dance, but, as a matter of fact, he has a wild nature.

[*In the meantime the boy is occupying himself in making thrusts into the air with the bare sword.*]

OTTO VON NORDHEIM (*to HENRY*). If you like it so well, my young King, I'll tell you what I'll do. The time is not far distant when they will gird you with a sword; on that day I'll give you this sword as a present.

HENRY (*throws himself vehemently into the arms of OTTO VON NORDHEIM*). I love you, Uncle Otto!

ORDULF. That's more than I can bear.

HERMANN (*to ORDULF*). Be quiet.

ORDULF (*turning to NORDHEIM; his great anger, which he can suppress only with difficulty, is plainly visible*). Otto von Nordheim—tell me—doesn't what you've just been offering to the young prince at all trouble you?

[HENRY stares at ORDULF with wide open eyes.]

OTTO VON NORDHEIM. What should trouble me?

ORDULF. The sword of a godless Heathen—

OTTO VON NORDHEIM. King Solomon, who wore it, is as good a Christian as you or I.

ORDULF. But a Hungarian is no German.

OTTO VON NORDHEIM. What do you mean?

ORDULF. Mean? Is he not to be the German King some day,—this young prince?

HENRY (*seizing convulsively OTTO VON NORDHEIM'S hand*). Why does this man say, that I am to be king, Uncle Otto? Am I not king already?

OTTO VON NORDHEIM. You are that, my young King, and that man there knows it perfectly well.

ORDULF (*he looks the boy in the face with a sardonic, brutal grin*). You're not going to plunge that mighty sword of yours into me, are you? I'm almost afraid of you.

HENRY. I—I too have a sword.

ORDULF. And a mighty one.

OTTO VON NORDHEIM (*warningly*). Ordulf—

ORDULF. Now you have heard it, young King,—my name is Ordulf.

HENRY (*he withdraws instinctively a step, clinging to NORDHEIM*). Uncle Otto, is—is that—Ordulf?

ORDULF. Of course, Ordulf—what have you against Ordulf?

HENRY (*with wide staring eyes, pointing his finger at ORDULF*). He who puts men's eyes out?

ORDULF (*roused to great anger*). To hell with——

OTTO VON NORDHEIM. Ordulf—

HENRY (*in a loud voice*). Uncle Otto—out there, in front of the palace, are many blind men. He, Ordulf, had their eyes put out!

ORDULF. You wretch! You—you— [*He makes a motion as though to attack the boy.*]

HENRY (*taking hold of the hilt of the sword with both hands, he aims the point at ORDULF*). I pierce you, if you strike me!

ORDULF. Take the sword from the boy, Nordheim!

[HERMANN and ECKBERT approach.]

HERMANN. How can you permit this, Nordheim?

ECKBERT. The boy threatening us with the bare sword!

OTTO VON NORDHEIM (*tries to calm HENRY*). Be quiet, my young King—

HENRY (*to ORDULF, the sword still aimed at him*). I am not afraid of you, you—you—wicked man!

Enter Empress AGNES, followed by Countess ADELHEID VON PIEMONT, who is leading her daughter BERTHA by the hand. Behind these, led by a lady of the court, PRAXEDIS, a girl of the age of HENRY. They come from the right.

AGNES (*at the sight of her son, stops in great surprise on the right—calling aloud*). Henry!

[*Startled, HENRY turns his head to the right; seeing his mother, he drops the sword slowly.*]

AGNES. How did you come by this sword, Henry?

HENRY. Uncle Otto gave it to me.

AGNES. And you use it to threaten people with? Hand the sword back. [*HENRY looks down in a defiant attitude. AGNES comes a few steps toward him.*] Wilful boy, did you not hear me?

[*HENRY remains in his defiant attitude without moving.*]

Enter from the right Archbishop ANNO and HILDEBRAND, the Archdeacon. They remain at the entrance. Servants bring seats for the Empress and her party.

AGNES. Take your sword back, Count von Nordheim, I ask of you.

OTTO VON NORDHEIM (*steps to the boy, and, stroking his hair with a smile, takes the sword from him*). Don't be discouraged, my boy; when you are older, you will wield your own sword.

AGNES. Tell me what happened here?

ORDULF (*with a coarse laugh*). I thought you had seen it, your Highness. Your son attempted to try King Etzel's sword on me.

AGNES (*looks at the boy, shaking her head*). Oh, my child — you give me much sorrow! [*She seats herself a little toward the front.*] Forgive him his wrong, Duke Ordulf, I beg of you. [*To HENRY.*] And you, Henry, go to the Duke, give him your hand, and ask him to pardon you.

[*With a toss of his head, HENRY takes half a step toward ORDULF, without looking at him; he offers him his hand reluctantly, drops it again, steps back, and shakes his head.*]

AGNES. Well — are you not going to do it?

HENRY. I cannot, I —

AGNES. You cannot?

HENRY. I — I will not.

AGNES. Henry —

HENRY (*stamping on the ground*). No! No! No!

AGNES. Wicked boy!

HENRY (*pressing both his hands to his temples*). Don't tell me, mother, that I am wicked!

AGNES (*turning to ANNO and HILDEBRAND*). You holy men of God, come to me, I beg of you, tell this irreverent boy what punishment is awaiting those in the hereafter who seek to take the life of others, and disobey their parents with defiance.

HENRY. I am not irreverent! [*He rushes in despair, with open arms, toward his mother, and embraces her convulsively.*] Mother, be good to me! Mother, be good to me!

AGNES (*frees herself from the embrace of the boy*). Leave me, you — wicked child.

HENRY (*throws himself in despair into the arms of OTTO VON NORDHEIM*). Uncle Otto — you — you help me!

OTTO VON NORDHEIM. Duke Ordulf, I think it would be better if you go now.

ORDULF. Do you think so, Count von Nordheim?

OTTO VON NORDHEIM. You see how excited the boy is.

ORDULF. It wasn't I who gave him the sword to play with.

HERMANN. Of course it wasn't, but let the matter rest here. [*In a low tone to ORDULF.*] Come away now; what more do you want?

ORDULF (*remains a moment longer lost in angry thought, then throws his head back*). Very well, let us go.

[*ORDULF, HERMANN, ECKBERT, give a courtly bow to the Empress, and leave on the left.*]

AGNES. Count Otto, don't take my son's part against his mother. [*OTTO VON NORDHEIM turns the boy away from him. AGNES, in a sudden fury of passion, advances toward HENRY.*] Oh, you are the torment of my life!—

HENRY (*lifting up both of his hands*). I have done no wrong! Mother, do not strike me!

[*Mother and child face each other a moment in silence, then HENRY drops his hands, and breaks out into tears. There is a pause.*]

BERTHA (*advances toward HENRY from the rear, placing her arm about his neck*). Poor Henry — don't weep.

HENRY (*turning toward her*). Who are you?

ADELHEID (*advancing*). Don't you know her? Your cousin Bertha? She who is to be your wife some day?

BERTHA (*has taken her kerchief from her pocket, and is drying his eyes*). Come, let me dry your eyes.

HENRY (*pushing her hand away*). I don't need her kerchief—I've stopped crying.

AGNES (*taking BERTHA by the hand*). Let him alone, my dear child; he cannot weep, he can only make others weep. [*Conducting BERTHA back to ADELHEID.*] Cousin Adelheid, God has dealt unjustly between us: He has given you a good child.

ADELHEID. My imperial cousin, one must often humble one's self before children—do you do this?

AGNES. Day and night I humble myself before God in prayer for him. [*ANNO and HILDEBRAND in the meantime have approached.*] Henry—greet these holy men.

HENRY (*goes to ANNO*). I greet you, Bishop Anno of Cologne.

AGNES. Archbishop Anno, give him, please, your hand, that he may kiss it. Henry, kiss the archbishop's hand.
[HENRY *bends over ANNO's hand.*]

ANNO (*making the sign of the cross over HENRY*). Peace be with your soul, my young King; methinks you are in need of peace.

AGNES. Go to the envoy of the holy Pope, Henry; greet him, and kiss his hand.

HENRY (*goes to HILDEBRAND*). I greet you,—stranger.

HILDEBRAND (*gives him his hand*). Don't kiss my hand, for then I cannot see your face. [HENRY *stares at him.*]
Why do you look at me so strangely?

HENRY. You—you don't look like other men.

HILDEBRAND. Look at me, and don't forget me; for we shall meet each other again in life. [*There is a pause.*]
You wear a regal band about your hair—you are a king?

HENRY. Yes, I am a king.

HILDEBRAND. Do you know what a king's duties are on this earth?

HENRY. Yes, I know them.

HILDEBRAND. What are they?



WILHELM VON DIEZ

THE SUTLER WOMAN

HENRY. To protect helpless people, that evil men may not put out their eyes.

HILDEBRAND. Ah, that was a regal thought. Now tell me, who is it that gives kings strength to perform the duties of their office, do you know that also?

HENRY (*after a little reflection*). Kings are strong—because they are kings!

HILDEBRAND. Must kings not fear their God?

HENRY. Kings need fear no one.

HILDEBRAND. No man,—but—do you not fear God?

HENRY. No. [*Great commotion among all present.*]

AGNES (*startled, in a loud voice*). Henry!

HENRY (*looking with fear at his mother, he turns to HILDEBRAND*). Did I commit a sin?

AGNES. You ask whether you sinned? Have you not been taught to fear God?

HENRY (*to HILDEBRAND*). I love Him—why then be afraid of Him?

HILDEBRAND (*places his hand on the boy's head*). My young King, life is long; you have yet much to learn, so I believe.

[HENRY moves to the rear, where ADELHEID receives him and speaks to him.]

ANNO (*in a loud, stern voice*). Severe discipline! Stern, severe discipline!

AGNES (*sinks into a chair, folding her hands in her lap*). Do not blame me for this! Tell me, archdeacon, you come from Rome, the source of eternal truth, are there souls foreordained to eternal punishment?

HILDEBRAND (*by her side*). Your question is blasphemy against God, who permitted His Son to die that we all might live.

AGNES. You don't know what a comfort your anger is to me.

HILDEBRAND. I am not here to comfort you, but to quicken you. You are troubled about your boy, and perhaps with much reason; but he is your child, and is no worse than you are yourself.

AGNES. We are all sinners, I know that well.

HILDEBRAND. All might be well with the boy, were he not an emperor's son. From his royal ancestors he has inherited the overbearing mind quick to do the daring deed. You would like to change him by precepts; but precepts are mere words, and words cannot change the blood. Change yourself first!

AGNES (*her bosom heaving*). Are all that are crowned doomed to perdition?

HILDEBRAND (*with a smile*). You would like to hear that your husband is excepted?

AGNES (*seizes, terror-stricken, with both hands, the hand of HILDEBRAND*). Assure me that what you said of the others does not apply to him!

HILDEBRAND. And yet it does apply to him.

AGNES. No!

HILDEBRAND. Yes!—your husband and lord, Emperor Henry, is setting defiantly at naught the will of God, and, therefore, God's hand is upon him.

AGNES. Is upon him?

HILDEBRAND. For God has seen him march, four times, at the head of noisy armies, across the Alps, down to Rome; has seen him seize, with worldly power, the abode of the eternal spirit; has seen him, four times, unseat and seat popes, acts which were not in his power to do, as they are not in the power of any one who rules only over bodies, not over souls. This shall not happen again, no, never! Because the time has come, when physical power must yield to the head, when the spirit must triumph over the flesh!

RAPOTO *enters from the right.*

HILDEBRAND (*to AGNES*). There are tidings from your husband.

AGNES (*turning to RAPOTO*). Do you come from the Emperor?

RAPOTO. The Emperor sent me to ask whether Count Otto von Nordheim wishes to join him on the hunt.

OTTO VON NORDHEIM. I am coming! [*He is about to leave on the right; HENRY runs after him, and clings to him.*]

HENRY. Uncle Otto, take me with you.

OTTO VON NORDHEIM. My young King—I don't know—
[*He looks smilingly over toward the empress.*]

HENRY (*rushes from NORDHEIM to his mother, kneels down, and embraces her knees*). Mother, let me go with him on the hunt! Mother, please, please, please!

AGNES. No.

HENRY. Mother, only this once! I'll never ask you again!

AGNES (*turning impatiently from him*). I have told you, no. Count von Nordheim, the Emperor is awaiting you.

OTTO VON NORDHEIM. Another time, my young King. [*He leaves on the right, RAPOTO follows him.*]

HENRY (*he presses both of his fists to his eyes*). Oh! Oh! Oh!

AGNES. Cousin Adelheid, bring your daughter to me, please. [*ADELHEID comes with BERTHA to the front.*]

And you, Henry, come here, speak to Bertha, and play with her.

HENRY. I—I cannot talk with girls! I don't wish to play with girls!

ADELHEID (*goes to HENRY, and bends smilingly over him*).

Ah, my young Prince! A king you are? Kings are courteous to women.

HENRY. Is—is that so?

ADELHEID (*bursts out laughing*). Of course it is.

HENRY (*after severe inner struggle*). Then I will be courteous also. [*He goes reluctantly to BERTHA, and offers her his hand.*] There!

ADELHEID (*to BERTHA, who doesn't know what to do*). Well, my little daughter—Henry is offering you his hand, will you not give him yours?

BERTHA (*clinging to ADELHEID*). Henry doesn't care for me.

AGNES. Do you hear that, Henry?

HENRY (*goes to BERTHA, and seizes her hand*). Well, then, come here.

[*Both children stand side by side way in front.*]

HENRY. Is it true that you are to be my wife?

AGNES. She is betrothed to you before God. It is your duty to love her.

HENRY (*turns about slowly, his eyes fall on PRAXEDIS, who is standing in the rear*). But—that other one I like better.

AGNES (*turning her head about*). That other one? Of whom is he speaking?

ANNO (*leading PRAXEDIS to the front*). Of this one, I suppose.

AGNES. This one—

[PRAXEDIS *has gone to her, and is kneeling before her.*]

ANNO. The daughter of Mistevois, the Obotrite.

AGNES (*drawing back with horror*). A Heathen!

PRAXEDIS (*looks boldly into her face*). Praxedis is no Heathen! Praxedis is a Christian!

AGNES. A Wend.

ANNO. Count William von der Nordmark, who, some time ago, killed her father in battle, made her a prisoner, and converted her to Christianity.

HENRY (*steps behind PRAXEDIS, and strokes her hair*). I like her.

PRAXEDIS (*turns her head toward him, looks at him smilingly, then jumps up*). I like you, too. [*She offers him both of her hands.*]

AGNES. Let go the hand of the Wendish girl! [HENRY *obeys reluctantly.*] Come here, Bertha, that I may bless you.

[BERTHA *goes to AGNES, who makes the sign of the cross over her. While AGNES is so occupied with BERTHA, HENRY has stepped with PRAXEDIS to the front.*]

HENRY (*in a low tone of voice*). Say, can you ride and shoot?

PRAXEDIS (*the same*). Yes, I can ride and shoot.

HENRY. Would you like to go hunting with me?

PRAXEDIS. Yes, I should like much to go hunting with you.

[*There is a pause. The other ladies have approached AGNES and BERTHA.*]

HENRY (*as before*). Say, are you also betrothed?

PRAXEDIS. I don't know, but I rather think so.

HENRY. Say—do you know—I'll be emperor one of these days; would you like to be empress?

PRAXEDIS. Yes, I would like much to be an empress.

HENRY. Well, then, let me tell you—when I am emperor, you shall be my wife.

PRAXEDIS. But you have a wife already, haven't you?

HENRY. Yes—but she weeps all the time—that's awfully tiresome—do you weep?

PRAXEDIS. Weep? No.

Enter from the right ABBOT HUGO OF CLUGNY.

HUGO. Empress—your Highness! [*All present turn their heads toward HUGO.*] I—I do not wish to frighten you—but—I—I must tell you—

AGNES. What tidings do you bring?

HUGO. Count Otto von Nordheim, who went on the hunt with the Emperor, is just returning to the palace at full gallop.

AGNES (*rises startled from her seat*). Without the Emperor?

HUGO. Without the Emperor.

AGNES. What does that mean?

[*Behind the scene, on the right, arises a low murmur of voices, coming from the distance and increasing in loudness. There is a noise of many steps hurrying hither and thither.*]

Enter, from the left, ORDULF, HERMANN, ECKBERT VON MEISSEN, UDO VON DER NORDMARK, and other Saxon nobles. They remain at the entrance, and begin to talk excitedly with one another in a low tone of voice.

AGNES (*looking about perplexed and terrified*). These men—these voices—what means this hollow sound of hastening steps? Where is the Count von Nordheim?

HUGO (*looking out on the right*). He is just getting off his horse.

OTTO VON NORDHEIM *enters from the right, bareheaded, showing great emotion; he is followed by a crowd of palace servants, men and women, and noblemen and churchmen, so that the stage is occupied far into the rear.*

OTTO VON NORDHEIM (*goes to the empress, falls on his knees before her, seizes her hand, and bends over it*).
My Empress — Almighty God!

AGNES. Where did you leave my husband, your master?

OTTO VON NORDHEIM (*lifting up his face toward her, speaking softly*). In the hands of Him from Whose hands he came.

ORDULF (*in a loud and hard voice*). The Emperor is dead.

AGNES. Oh, help me! [*She staggers, takes hold of a chair; ADELHEID hastens to her side and supports her.*]

HENRY (*standing in the centre of the stage, clutches his hair with both hands*). My father! [*Makes a move to run off toward the right.*]

OTTO VON NORDHEIM (*holding him back*). My young King —

HENRY. Let me go to my father!

OTTO VON NORDHEIM. He is not here; he lies out in the forest, where he fell from his horse as he rode by my side, suddenly, as though God had stricken him with His thunder.

AGNES (*covering her face with her hands, falls into a chair*).
God's judgment was upon him! God's judgment has stricken him!

HENRY. Let me go to my father, I must go!

ANNO (*taking him by the hand*). Here is your mother, your place is by her side!

HENRY (*pulling his mother by the dress*). Come then, mother! mother, come!

AGNES (*paying no attention to HENRY, she turns and seizes HILDEBRAND with both hands*). Don't leave me! Don't leave me! I'll die if you leave me!

HILDEBRAND (*holding her hands in his hands*). I will not leave you, nor will you die.

HENRY (*pulling AGNES by the dress*). Mother, now come! Mother, mother, come!

ANNO (*separating the boy from his mother*). Don't behave so unseemly toward your mother.

HENRY. She forbade me to go to my father when he was still living; now he is dead: she shall lead me to my dead father!

ORDULF (*comes suddenly from the left toward the front and seizes the boy by the shoulder*). You are not going to give orders here any longer! The time has come now for you to obey. [*Tossing his head about.*] I speak here in the name of all free Saxons! You have seen this boy draw his sword against free-born men! Do you consent that this stubborn boy, for his own welfare and that of all Christians, be trained in churchly discipline?

ECKBERT. I consent! I, Eckbert von Meissen!

ALL THE SAXONS. We consent! We consent!

ORDULF. Archbishop Anno! Will you take charge of him, and take him with you to Cologne?

ANNO. Give the boy to me.

[*ORDULF pushes the boy into ANNO's hands.*]

HENRY (*with an outcry*). Mother!

AGNES (*she has started from the chair, has cast a terrified look upon her son, and is now turning to HILDEBRAND*).

Tell me what to do. I—I don't know.

HILDEBRAND. Yield, be silent, and endure.

HENRY. Mother!

AGNES (*is startled, makes a move toward her child, then turns back*). My God, give me strength, give me strength—I am too weak!

ORDULF. Away with him, away to Cologne!

HENRY (*frees himself from ANNO, rushes to OTTO VON NORDHEIM, embracing his knees*). Uncle Otto! Help me! Save me, save me, save me!

[*NORDHEIM stands hesitating what to do. There is a pause.*]

ORDULF (*who, in the meantime, has had a whispering conversation with his friend*). Otto von Nordheim, surrender the boy!

ECKBERT. Surrender him, Count von Nordheim.

OTTO VON NORDHEIM. Does that mean — that you threaten me?

ANNO (*steps between NORDHEIM and the Saxons*). Who speaks here about threat? Do you think it wrong, Count von Nordheim, an evil thing, to educate Christian kings in Christian ways?

OTTO VON NORDHEIM (*makes a move as though to put the boy from him*). My young King — I —

HENRY (*clings to him with increasing despair*). Uncle Otto! Don't hand me over to these men! Don't forsake me, Uncle Otto, don't forsake me!

[RAPOTO *breaks suddenly through the crowd of men and women who fill the background, and throws himself on his knees before OTTO VON NORDHEIM.*]

RAPOTO. In the name of God the Almighty, Count von Nordheim, be a father to this unhappy child!

ORDULF (*advancing a step toward RAPOTO*). What business have you here! Get yourself away!

RAPOTO. This child is speaking to you, Count von Nordheim, in the words of a child; but the fear that speaks in these words is as just as the words of eternal truth! All that remains of our Emperor Henry, Count von Nordheim, here it is! His hope, his very own spirit, here it is! In your hands it is! Remember your dead Emperor, Count von Nordheim! Save your Emperor's hope, save his very own spirit!

ORDULF. Otto von Nordheim, how can you listen to the twaddle of this miserable Frank? This is the fellow that sneaked into the festive gatherings of our servants, caught every word that fell from their unthinking lips, and carried it in haste to the Emperor, as a dog trained to return his master's glove. It's the fellow that caused the Emperor's heart to turn in hatred against all that bear the Saxon name. Do you know that, Otto von Nordheim, do you know that?

ECKBERT. Will you take a stand against your own comrades? Against your own country?

HERMANN. Surely, Otto von Nordheim, you will not do this!

ANNO (*steps between NORDHEIM and the Saxons*). Why urge this noble man? Can't you see that your threatening words offend him? Give the boy to me, Count Otto von Nordheim.

OTTO VON NORDHEIM (*after a final struggle with himself*). My young King, Christian discipline can hurt no one. No harm will be done you. [*He withdraws his arm from the boy.*]

ORDULF and ECKBERT (*seizing the boy*). Come here!

HENRY (*stares at OTTO VON NORDHEIM with wide open eyes*). Uncle Otto—you? Uncle—Otto— [*He falls, in a swoon, into the hands of ORDULF and ECKBERT.*]

[*As ECKBERT is lifting up the unconscious boy, the curtain falls.*]

KING HENRY

IN FOUR ACTS

PERSONS OF KING HENRY

AGNES, *widow of Emperor Henry III of Germany*

HENRY IV, *her son, German King*

BERTHA, *his wife*

KONRAD, *his son [five years old]*

POPE GREGORY

HUGO, *Abbot of Clugny*

LIEMAR, *Bishop of Bremen*

EPP0, *Bishop of Zeitz*

BENNO, *Bishop of Osnabrück*

WEZEL, *Bishop of Magdeburg*

BURKHARDT, *Bishop of Halberstadt*

COUNT OTTO VON NORDHEIM

HERMANN BILLUNG

ECKBERT VON MEISSEN

HENRY (UDO'S SON) VON DER NORDMARK

RUDOLF of *Suabia*

WELF of *Bavaria*

BERTHOLD of *Carinthia*

ULRICH VON GODESHEIM

HERMANN VON GLEISBERG

LAMBERT, *Mayor*

GOZZO, *Master of the Mint*

GOZZELIN, *Toll Collector*

The Masters of the Guilds of the merchants, the butchers, the smiths, the sword-cutlers, the bakers, the millers, the saddlers, the coopers, the fishermen, the carpenters, of Worms.

EPHRAIM BEN JEHUDA

SUSZKIND VON ORB

A CONSTABLE OF WORMS

GOTTSCHALK

ADALBERT

PRAXEDIS, *wife of the Count Henry von der Nordmark*

THE PREFECT of *Rome*

COUNT CENCIUS of *Rome*

GERBALD, a *Flemish Knight*

DONADEUS OF *ROME*

A YOUNG PRIEST OF *ROME*

CAPTAIN OF THE CASTLE SANT' ANGELO IN *ROME*

Priests, Citizens, Soldiers

PLACE: *The action of the first act takes place in Worms; of the second act in Rome and Worms; of the third act in the Castle of Canossa; of the fourth act in the Castle of Sant' Angelo in Rome*

ACT I

A large room in the city hall at Worms. A series of steps lead up to the back wall which is pierced with windows. On the first platform stands a table with chairs. On the platform beneath this, a second table. Below, in front of the stage, a third table, on which we see a number of open parchments, and inkstands. The entrances to the room are on the right and left.

GOZZO, the master of the mint, and GOZZELIN, the toll-collector, are seated at the table in front. LAMBERT, the Mayor, and Knight ULRICH VON GODESHEIM, are standing on the steps. The ten masters of the guilds of the merchants, butchers, smiths, sword cutlers, bakers, millers, saddlers, coopers, fishermen, and carpenters, are standing in groups about the stage.

LAMBERT. Honorable masters of the guilds, Knight Ulrich von Godesheim, whom you know, has a message for us from our King Henry. Listen to what he has to say.

ULRICH VON GODESHEIM. Good citizens of Rome, Henry, the German King, your Duke and Count, is coming to see you.

ALL (*in a simple, subdued tone of voice*). He will be welcome.

ULRICH VON GODESHEIM. He comes from Thuringia, from the Unstrut, where he fought with the rebellious Saxons from noon till the fall of night, and defeated them in a bloody battle.

LAMBERT. We heard about it.

ULRICH VON GODESHEIM. All these great fighters have surrendered unconditionally: Otto Count von Nordheim, Frederick von Goseck, the Count Palatine, Hermann Billung, Eckbert von Meissen and Henry von der Nordmark, also the faithless bishops, Wezel von Magdeburg, and the worst of them all, Burkhardt von Halberstadt.

GOZZO (*striking the table*). Our own Adalbert is not much better.

ALL (*laughing*). No, no.

GOZZO. We showed him the way out of the walls of Worms, and the way back he has forgotten.

ALL (*laughing*). Has he?

ULRICH VON GODESHEIM. King Henry knows that. King Henry has a warm heart. Hearts such as his can hate bitterly, but also love truly; and he loves you, citizens of Worms.

GOZZO. All the cities along the Rhine know that King Henry is a friend of burghers.

GOZZELIN. Yes, a friend of burghers and of peasants.

ULRICH VON GODESHEIM. I'll tell you what I've seen with my own eyes; it will show you that what you said is indeed true.

LAMBERT. Tell us.

ULRICH VON GODESHEIM. It happened on the banks of the Unstrut. When the Saxon dukes saw that everything was lost, they threw their shields on their backs, and rode away across the fields, as fast as their horses would carry them.

GOZZO. I wish they had broken their necks!

ULRICH VON GODESHEIM. But behind the dukes stood the Saxon peasants, who could not run away—why? Because they had no horses.

LAMBERT. Quite so.

ULRICH VON GODESHEIM. Upon these, crowded together like a herd of sheep without a shepherd, the pursuers threw themselves. Duke Gottfried at their head with his Lothringian horsemen.

LAMBERT. I guess not many of them survived.

ULRICH VON GODESHEIM. Then the fight began: a butchering and killing as in a slaughter house. But there appeared one on a white horse, in golden armor from head to foot, who threw himself against the Lothringians, and shouted: "Stop, stop!"

LAMBERT. And they stopped?

ULRICH VON GODESHEIM. They stopped, for that one was the King—King Henry.

LAMBERT. Well done, King Henry!

GOZZO. God bless King Henry!

ULRICH VON GODESHEIM. That's what the Saxon peasants also said when they fell down on their knees before him, and cried aloud, and kissed his hands and feet. Thereupon, when the battle had come to an end, King Henry said: "Let us go to Worms; there I will spend a feast day with the people."

LAMBERT (*pointing to the upper table*). Turn around, Sir Godesheim; there stands the table which we have prepared for our King Henry.

GOZZO. Don't forget the wine, Gozzelin.

GOZZELIN. You need not fear.

GOZZO. Our *Liebfrauenmilch* from Anno Domini—

GOZZELIN. I know—

LAMBERT. You needn't tell Gozzelin that; he has a close acquaintance with the wines of the cellars of Worms.

ALL (*laughing*). Yes, yes.

ULRICH VON GODESHEIM. Good people, there is yet another thing,—King Henry needs money.

GOZZO (*strikes the table, laughing*). I knew you would say that, Sir Ulrich, I read it in your face.

ULRICH VON GODESHEIM. My face?

GOZZO. I am the Master of the Mint, and have a sharp eye for such things. Citizens of Worms, shall we love King Henry with words only, and when he needs money, send him away in shame, as one would a good-for-nothing?

ALL. No!

GOZZO. Shall we open our mouth, and shut our purse?

ALL. No!

Enter from the right a Constable.

CONSTABLE. Mayor, you are called to the gate! King Henry is approaching! He is already three quarters of the way from Hofheim.

LAMBERT. Sir Godesheim, will you come with me?

ULRICH VON GODESHEIM. I'll come with you.

LAMBERT (*as he leaves on the right*). Gozzo, Master of the Mint, write down on your parchment what each one of the Guilds is willing to give.

[LAMBERT and GODESHEIM *leave on the right.*]

GOZZO. Now the Master of the Mint is seated, and here is his parchment. Speak up, honorable Guilds! Who will head the list?

THE MERCHANT. We,—the merchants come first.

THE BUTCHER. All right, the merchants may be the first for this once, they'll give the most, I dare say; else the butchers would have the first say.

THE SWORD CUTLER. Don't forget the sword cutlers, if you please.

THE BUTCHER. The butchers have the first say.

GOZZO. Let's come to the merchants—how much shall I put down for them?

THE MERCHANT. Put down five hundred pound in fine silver.

GOZZO (*writing*). Five hundred pound—by the Cologne measurement?

THE MERCHANT. By the Cologne measurement, at sixteen ounces.

GOZZO (*writes*). By the—Cologne measurement. That makes one hundred and twenty thousand denarii in round numbers. Give me your hand! Merchants, we are satisfied.

THE BUTCHER. The Master of the Mint talks as though he were King Henry himself.

ALL (*laughing*). Yes, yes.

GOZZO. Let's go on—who's the next?

THE BUTCHER. We can't pay five hundred; put down three hundred for the butchers.

THE SWORD CUTLER (*speaking up instantly*). Put down four hundred for the sword cutlers.

THE BUTCHER. Well, four hundred for the butchers also!

GOZZO (*laughs himself*). Four hundred for the butchers—four hundred for the sword cutlers—that's eight hundred pound—makes, in round numbers, one hundred and twenty-two thousand denarii. Well done, butchers! Well done, sword cutlers! Who's the next?

THE BAKER. Put down two hundred pound for the bakers. GOZZO (*writes*). Two hundred pound.

THE BAKER. Let's see now what the millers will give.

THE MILLER. The millers? Well, two hundred also.

THE BAKER. There you have it.

THE MILLER. What d' you mean?

THE BAKER. Aren't you twice as rich as we are?

THE MILLER. Not that I know of.

THE BAKER. But we know. You get your living by us!

THE MILLER. What's he talking about—

GOZZO (*striking the table*). Goodness, the whole hall is thick with flower dust! The bakers and the millers are kicking up a row!

THE BUTCHER. As usual.

ALL (*laughing*). As usual.

THE MILLER. Write down two hundred and fifty pound for the millers.

THE BAKER. Sponged out of fifty pound!

ALL (*laughing*). Yes, yes.

GOZZO (*writes*). Two hundred and fifty for the millers—two hundred for the bakers—who's the next?

THE SMITH. Put down one hundred and fifty for the smiths.

THE CARPENTER. The same for the carpenters.

GOZZO (*writes*). The smiths, the carpenters—each hundred and fifty pound. Makes three hundred in all.

THE SADDLER. Put down a hundred pound for the saddlers.

THE COOPER. The same for the coopers.

GOZZO (*writes*). The same—for the coopers. There are still the fishermen.

THE FISHERMAN (*scratching his head*). The fishermen—well—write down—fifty pound for the fishermen.

THE BUTCHER. Fifty pound!—Did you hear?

ALL. Hear! Hear!

GOZZO. Fifty pound? What? Haven't you caught salmon enough this year?

THE FISHERMAN. Master of the Mint, we had a bad year.

GOZZO. Who'll believe it! I had many a salmon on my table!

THE MERCHANT. So had I.

THE BAKER. They fish when no one can see. We bakers are worst off: everybody can look into our shops.

THE MILLER. I've never yet heard of a baker that starved!

THE BAKER. I'll believe it: the constant clatter of the mill makes one deaf!

GOZZO (*strikes the table*). Quiet! Now fishermen, what is it? How much shall I put down for the fishermen?

THE FISHERMAN. Well—write down sixty pound.

GOZZO (*writes*). Sixty makes ten more than fifty.

ALL (*laughing*). Ten more.

GOZZO (*takes up the parchment*). That's done now. Is there any one else?

The Constable appears in the door on the right.

CONSTABLE. Master of the Mint, two of the King's chamberlains are outside.

GOZZO. The Jews?

CONSTABLE. Ephraim ben Jehuda and Süszkind von Orb.

GOZZO. Their elders. Let them come in.

Enter from the right EPHRAIM BEN JEHUDA and SÜSZKIND VON ORB. They cross their arms, make a bow, and remain at the entrance.

GOZZO. Jews, what do you want?

EPHRAIM. We have heard that the burghers of Worms have come together to offer a money present to our King Henry, Emperor Henry's son, our Duke and Count.

GOZZO. And you want to add your share?

EPHRAIM. Rabbi Isaak ben Hillél of the old Jewish community at Merseburg and Abraham ben Zadóch of the new Jewish community at Magdeburg have come to us, and told us, that King Henry is not one of those who step on the worm others have stepped on, or lift up the stone others have thrown; that King Henry is no enemy of the Jewish people, nor does he wish to exterminate them before his face. We, therefore, the Jewish people of Worms, have met, and have said to one another: God bless King Henry, the God of Abraham bless him, the God of Isaac and Jacob, forever, amen.

SÜSZKIND. Amen! Amen! Amen!

EPHRAIM. And because we cannot wear arms for him, nor fight for him against those that are armed, we want to help King Henry with what the Jewish people can give, with silver and with gold.

GOZZO. We know you have money.

ALL (*laughing*). We know it.

GOZZO. Now, then, Ephraim ben Jehuda, how much shall I put down for the Jews of Worms?

EPHRAIM (*to SÜSZKIND*). Tell him, Süszkind von Orb, you have it written down.

SÜSZKIND (*producing a piece of paper*). Master of the Mint, you shall write down, for the Jewish people of Worms, three thousand gold bezants.

GOZZO. Three—thousand!

ALL (*in a murmur of astonishment*). Three thousand!

GOZZO (*writes*). Three thousand gold bezants.

SÜSZKIND. Master of the Mint, you shall put down for the Jewish people of Speier—

GOZZO. Of Speier? Do you represent also the Jews of Speier?

EPHRAIM. As the dust is scattered before the wind, so are the children of Israel scattered over the face of the earth; but the speech of their mouth is the same, and the soul that dwells in their body is the same.

GOZZO. Now, then, how much for the Jews of Speier?

SÜSZKIND. You shall put down for the Jewish people of Speier one thousand gold bezants.

GOZZO (*writes*). One thousand gold bezants.

SÜSZKIND. Master of the Mint, you shall put down for the Jewish people of Mainz five thousand Merovingian ducats.

GOZZO (*strikes the table, and leaps from the seat*). Five—
five thousand! [*Sits himself again, and writes.*]

THE BUTCHER (*to the others*). Did you hear that?

THE BAKER. What money they got!

ALL. Five thousand ducats!

[*A general murmur of excited voices.*]

Enter in haste the Constable, through the door on the right.

CONSTABLE. King Henry is in the city!

Enter from the left burghers of Worms.

ALL. King Henry is in the city!

[*The people move to and fro in joyous excitement.*]

Enter from the right KING HENRY, a youth of twenty, in golden armor, wearing a helmet on his head. He is immediately followed by DUKE RUDOLPH of Suabia, WELF of Bavaria, BERTHOLD of Carinthia, ULRICH VON GODESHEIM, HERMANN VON GLEISBERG, the Bishops LIEMAR of Bremen, EPPO OF ZEITZ, BENNO OF OSNABRÜCK, and LAMBERT the Mayor. All present on the stage have formed a group on the left, so that the centre of the stage has become free.

HENRY (*advancing to the middle of the stage, he takes his helmet off*). My greetings to your love, my greetings to your fidelity, my greetings to you, city of Worms!
[*GODESHEIM takes the King's helmet.*]

ALL BURGHERS (*with a thundering acclaim*). We greet you, King Henry! King Henry, we greet you!

LAMBERT (*holding a golden cup, which GOZZELIN has given him, he steps before the KING*). King Henry, our Lord, take the choicest of gifts which Worms can offer you from the hands of the Mayor of Worms.

HENRY (*takes hold of the cup*). I know your wine; it has been a comfort to me in the days of my adversity, a friend it shall be to me this joyous day. [*He raises the cup, and turns about.*] Are all our guests present? I do not see all here that I wish to see. Ulrich von Godesheim and Hermann von Gleisberg, go and call the wearers of my chains of honor.

[GODESHEIM and GLEISBERG *leave on the left.*]

RUDOLPH. Chains of honor?

HENRY. Chains that a king lays on others, are they not chains of honor?

RUDOLPH. Is it of the Saxon dukes that you are speaking?

HENRY. Of the dukes and of the Saxon bishops.

RUDOLPH. Shall they be exposed before the whole people? Here?

HENRY. They shall sit at table with their king. Is that not honor enough?

LIEMAR (*with a pleasant smile*). I'm afraid they will not think it an honor.

HENRY. They will have to learn that. We all must learn, I had to learn. Ask Anno of Cologne.

Enter from the right, with heavy step, the Saxon Dukes, OTTO VON NORDHEIM, HERMANN BILLUNG, ECKBERT VON MEISSEN, HENRY (UDO'S son) VON DER NORDMARK, FREDERICK GOSECK, Bishop WEZEL of Magdeburg, Bishop BURKHARDT of Halberstadt. They are dressed in dark garb, without swords, bareheaded, their hands are chained. They are followed by ULRICH VON GODESHEIM and HERMANN VON GLEISBERG. At the entrance of the Saxon dukes, who remain standing with bent heads, a deep, gloomy silence falls on all.

HENRY. Bishop Liemar, I had to learn to forget my boyhood's faith. I put no longer trust in man; but test him as I come in contact with him. [*He turns to the group of the Saxons, at the head of which stands OTTO VON NORDHEIM; with a slow, measured voice.*] It was a hard experience, but I have found teachers. [*His eyes remain fixed on OTTO VON NORDHEIM.*] The hour has come to tell them [*he raises the cup, his voice gathers strength*], that I have become of age!

LIEMAR (*as before, in a low tone*). And love, my dear King, — have you found no love in the course of your hard experience?

HENRY (*with a bitter smile*). Because I was betrothed at the age of ten? Do you mean that on that account I should have experienced the feelings of love?

LIEMAR. Oh, my King, why so bitter? Did you not say that you were happy?

HENRY. I am happy, for I have revenge.

LIEMAR. Better things than that you have: you have friends.

HENRY (*shrugging his shoulders*). Friends?

LIEMAR. You yourself said so.

HENRY. At least that wherewith I may buy friends, that I have.

LIEMAR. Buy?

HENRY. I have power. [*Bishop LIEMAR steps back.*] And now, men of Worms, I drink to you first, with your own wine! [*He drinks to them.*]

LAMBERT. God bless this drink to you, King Henry!

ALL BURGHERS OF WORMS. God bless you, King Henry!

HENRY (*looking into the cup*). Pure liquid gold, I can see thy very heart! Thou dost conceal nothing, thou dost promise nothing thou canst not keep! [*His face darkens and he is lost in gloomy thought.*] Why are men so unlike thee? Out of the earth thou didst come, and from the earth men came,—why are men so unlike thee? Thy first drops give us hope, thy last, the joy of success; comfort art thou and sweetness, at the beginning as at the end. [*His glance falls again upon OTTO VON NORDHEIM.*] Why do men promise what they fail to keep? Why are men sweet, sweet as hope is to the heart of the boy who believes in them, and bitter as wormwood to the heart of man who knows them? [*He starts suddenly.*] Give a cup of this wine to Count Otto von Nordheim!



WILHELM VON DIEZ

THE ESCAPE

LAMBERT (*calling*). A cup!

[*A constable hands GOZZELIN a cup. The latter goes with it to OTTO VON NORDHEIM. OTTO VON NORDHEIM turns away angrily.*]

HENRY. Otto von Nordheim, why do you refuse this cup?

OTTO VON NORDHEIM. How can I raise this cup when my arm is heavy with chains?

HENRY. Bring the key! [HERMANN VON GLEISBERG hands him the key; he opens NORDHEIM's chains, which fall rattling to the ground.] You are freed from your chains; you can drink now. Drink!

OTTO VON NORDHEIM. Why shall I drink?

HENRY. Because you heard what I said about the wine. Because you may need it.

RUDOLPH. King Henry!

WELF. King Henry!

BERTHOLD. King Henry! [HENRY turns toward them.]

RUDOLPH. Though your prisoner, he is a duke and a man of honor.

WELF. It is not right that you disgrace him in public.

HENRY. Who thinks of disgrace? The King does him the honor to drink to him. Is that disgrace?

OTTO VON NORDHEIM (*who has taken the cup, puts it now in anger on the table, without touching it*). You lie, when you say that you do me the honor to drink to me!

HENRY (*furiously*). Ah!— Which of us two lied to the other? [They look into each other's eyes; NORDHEIM averts the glance.] I am looking at your side. Otto von Nordheim, why are you not girded? Where is King Etzel's sword, which you once wore?

OTTO VON NORDHEIM. You know this as well as I do!

HENRY. By this I know that I keep my promises better than you do! The sword you promised to the boy at Goslar and did not deliver, Henry, the man, took from you on the banks of the Unstrut!

HERMANN. Why boast of your victory? We know that you defeated us!

HENRY. Don't forget, Sir Hermann, that I slew your brother Orduff.

HERMANN. Be sure I will not forget that!

HENRY. That he may not return to put out men's eyes, and drive widows and orphans from their homes.

ECKBERT. We'll all remember this day, I promise that.

HENRY. You promise that? And I promise you that the day shall not return when you can steal defenseless children; that's my promise, Eckbert von Meissen, so long as King Henry rules over Germany.

ECKBERT. We'll see how long that will last.

HENRY (*stepping toward* ECKBERT). Dare you threaten me? Base robber of children!

RUDOLPH. King Henry!

WELF. King Henry!

HENRY. I'll drive this margrave from his dominions as I would a dog!

BERTHOLD. Outrageous!

[*Great commotion among the Saxons.*]

LIEMAR (*to* HENRY). I beseech you, King Henry, I implore you—

HENRY. Why implore me? First call back to life the ten thousand Saxon peasants who, by the sword of Gottfried, fell on the bank of the Unstrut, died, because these men incited them to break faith with their king! Return to me what no man *can* return,—a heart full of faith, a confiding soul, my own youth, which they stole from me!

LIEMAR. My Lord and King, be not overcome by anger. [*He takes the King's hand, and points to the burghers of Worms.*] Remember you have friends!

HENRY (*pressing* LIEMAR'S hand). You are right, you are right! [*Turning to the burghers of Worms, he notices Gozzo, who approaches him, parchment in hand.*] This parchment—is it for me?

Gozzo. King Henry, it's the record of the money which the city of Worms offers you as a gift. There are

better gifts than gold, I know well; but gold may be touched and handled, and, therefore, it's a sure thing.

HENRY (*taking the parchment*). Let me then touch and handle it. [*He looks into the parchment.*] Is it—is it true that you mean to do all this for me?

GOZZO. Indeed, and with a glad heart.

HENRY. Mayor, give me your hand! [*He seizes LAMBERT'S hand.*] But this is not enough— [*He throws his arm about LAMBERT'S shoulder.*] Here, come to me— so! [*He draws LAMBERT to him and kisses him.*] I thank thee, City of Worms!

ALL THE BURGHERS OF WORMS. God keep thee, King Henry! God keep thee and bless thee!

HENRY (*looks again into the parchment*). Whose names are these, down at the bottom? The Jews of Worms, of Speier, of Mainz? [*Glancing up.*] Are the Jews here? [*EPHRAIM and SÜSZKIND approach. To EPHRAIM.*] What is your name?

LAMBERT. The name of this one is Ephraim ben Jehuda; Süszkind von Orb is the name of the other. They are the elders of the Jews of Worms.

EPHRAIM. The people of our community have come together, the Jewish people of Worms, and have said to one another, God bless King Henry, the God of Abraham bless him, the God of Isaac and Jacob, forever. Amen.

SÜSZKIND. Amen! Amen! Amen!

HENRY. Why shall your God bless me?

EPHRAIM. Because King Henry is not one of those who step on the worm others have stepped on, or lift up the stone others have thrown; nor does he wish to exterminate the Jewish people before his face.

HENRY. You speak the truth. Ben Jehuda, give me your hand. [*EPHRAIM, with a low bow, places his hand in that of the King.*] I accept your gift, and also your blessing: for the God of Abraham is also my God.

LIEMAR. King Henry!

[*A low murmur among the dukes, astonishment and whispers among the burghers.*]

HENRY (*turning about*). Who thinks otherwise?

WEZEL. The whole of Christendom knows that the God of the Jews is not our God!

BURKHARDT. And that all who speak as you have spoken are heretics!

HENRY (*with an angry smile*). You forget that I was educated by a priest. I know the Bible better than you do. Is it not written, "Render unto Cæsar what is Cæsar's?" Wezel and Burkhardt, bishops though you be, what have you given your Cæsar, your king? [*There is a pause. He laughs.*] Ah, this has stopped the crowing of the roosters!

BURKHARDT. You call me a rooster? You think I crow? Well, then, I'll crow so that the people in Rome will hear me! Indeed, they have heard the crowing already! Pope Gregory knows who you are, what you are—your very thoughts!

HENRY. Does that mean that you have written him, without my knowledge?

BURKHARDT. If you want to know it, yes!

HENRY (*starts up in anger, controls himself, and bursts out laughing*). Did you hear that? Bishop Burkhardt von Halberstadt wishes us to know that he can read and write!

BURKHARDT (*flushed with anger*). That—that I can read and—and write?

HENRY. What other reason could you possibly have had for writing to the Pope? You did well. Pope Gregory will be delighted to hear that you can write. It is a rare accomplishment among German bishops.

Gozzo (*laughing*). True enough! Our own Adalbert did not know much about it!

ALL THE BURGHERS OF WOERMS (*guffawing*). It's the truth! It's the truth!

LIEMAR. King Henry, King Henry, is it right and proper to expose the bishops of our church to the guffaw of these people?

HENRY. When the roosters crow, the horses whinny; that has always been so. Why did the rooster of Halberstadt crow so loud!

BURKHARDT. Pope Gregory knows the life you lived in your castles in the Harz,—drinking and gambling, with harlots and boon companions!

HENRY (*in a loud voice*). Give him some wine, else he'll choke!

GOZZO (*laughing aloud*). Good!

ALL THE BURGHERS OF WORMS (*guffawing*). Good! Good!

BURKHARDT. That you appropriated the estates of the churches and cloisters, and sold bishoprics for gold, Pope Gregory knows also!

HENRY. I'm glad he knows it. He'll not be surprised to learn, therefore, what I mean to do now. Wezel and Burkhardt, I shall drive you out of your bishoprics, do you hear? I shall buy two other bishops in your stead; with the money of the Jews I shall buy them!

[*A solemn stillness falls upon all after these words.*]

LIEMAR. I pray that God may not have heard the words you have just spoken, King Henry.

HENRY. Let Him hear my words—let the whole world hear them! I care not whether it be duke or vassal: I am the King, and the will of the King is law in Germany! I care not whether it be Jew or Christian: I am the King, and allegiance to the King is religion to the German people! Why do we waste our time? I came here to have a day of feasting! A joyous message I am awaiting from the Pope! In your midst I will receive it. Pope Gregory will invite me to come to Rome. I have become King, I want to be Emperor! He will put a crown upon me, and this crown will be a bright ornament on my head! My heart will rejoice in my bosom, and my foes shall lament at my feet!

Let music resound, and bring to me women and wine!
Why are there no women at this feast?

LAMBERT. My King, we— we did not think—

GOZZO. Pardon us, King Henry, our women do not attend the feasts of our men.

HENRY. My good people, your women will have to learn it: flowers should be where they can be seen.

GOZZELIN. My King, there is a lady outside. [*HENRY becomes attentive.*] Do you wish to see her? She has been here for some time, asking permission to see you.

HENRY. For some time?

GOZZELIN. She has been in Worms a number of days. She is of noble birth. [*He glances toward the Saxon prisoners.*] I believe she belongs to the party of the dukes.

[*There is a murmur among the Saxons.*]

HENRY (*smiling*). A fair intercessor? By God, let her come in! [*GOZZELIN proceeds to the door on the right.*] If she be pretty, she will be an intercessor with mine own heart; I will give her a warm welcome.

Enter from the right PRAXEDIS, in a dark dress, a veil over head and face. She stops before HENRY.

HENRY. Remove your veil, I do not care to play hide and seek with pretty women.

PRAXEDIS (*removing the veil, she looks smilingly at him,— in a low voice*). Yes, every one knows King Henry does not like that.

HENRY (*pleasantly surprised*). Praxedis! [*Offers her both of his hands.*]

PRAXEDIS. You remember me?

HENRY (*holding both of her hands, he looks into her face*). It is a long time since we saw each other last.

HENRY VON DER NORDMARK (*advancing from the group of the Saxons*). This is my wife.

HENRY (*paying no attention to him*). Have you thought of me in all this time?

PRAXEDIS (*with a gay laugh*). Who can forget King Henry!

HENRY VON DER NORDMARK. She is my wife!

HENRY. I heard that she took you for a husband. [*To PRAXEDIS.*] Are you satisfied with him?

PRAXEDIS. You see I am, for I've come to intercede for him.

HENRY VON DER NORDMARK. Who asked you to do that? No one need intercede for me.

HENRY. Why so rude, my good Count? It hurts no man to receive favors from pretty women. [*To PRAXEDIS.*] What is it you ask for him?

PRAXEDIS. He did not fight against you.

HENRY. I know that; but Udo did, his father. I hold him as a hostage for his father.

PRAXEDIS. Is it customary to hold hostages in chains? Free him from his chains, King Henry,—will you? [*She looks imploringly at him, as she folds her hands.*]

HENRY (*looks at her with loving eyes*). By God, she has learned to fold her hands.

PRAXEDIS (*looks up into his eyes*). Please! Please!

HENRY (*straightening himself*). Off with the chains from Henry von der Nordmark!

[*ULRICH VON GODESHEIM and HERMANN VON GLEISBERG approach him.* HENRY VON DER NORDMARK *steps back.*]

HENRY VON DER NORDMARK. I don't wish to be freed.

HENRY. You—you don't wish to?

HENRY VON DER NORDMARK. Not in this way; indeed, not! Not, while my friends are in chains!

PRAXEDIS (*as before*). Remove the chains from all of them! King Henry—will you? Please! Please!

HENRY (*looks at her with a smile of surprise*). Ah, serpent! Gold-tongued serpent! Yet I am comforted, for Adam also was a man! [*Calling.*] Remove the chains from all of them!

[*Surprised, all present in the hall, utter a whispered "Ah!"*] ULRICH VON GODESHEIM and HERMANN VON GLEISBERG *approach to unlock the chains.* The

burghers put their heads together. LIEMAR stands alone with sorrowful face. The Dukes RUDOLPH, WELF, and BERTHOLD, together with the Bishops EPP0 and BENNO, form a group.]

WELF (*in a low tone to the others*). What do you say to this?

RUDOLPH. It's shameful! It's outrageous!

BERTHOLD. It's outrageous!

HENRY (*stands with PRAXEDIS in front of the stage, caring naught about the whispers behind his back*). What will you give me for all this I am doing for you?

PRAXEDIS (*looks at him sharply, smiling slyly*). I will give you good counsel.

HENRY. Good counsel?

PRAXEDIS. Don't forget that you have a wife.

HENRY (*with a hiss*). Ah—serpent! By God! I give her honey, and, in return, she gives me poison! [*He turns.*] Let's sit down—why stand all day?

LAMBERT (*pointing to the table on the upper platform*). The table is ready for you, King Henry.

HENRY (*to the Dukes RUDOLPH, BERTHOLD, and WELF*). Let us sit down, Dukes! [*To the Bishops LIEMAR, EPP0, and BENNO.*] You, Bishops, also! [*Taking PRAXEDIS by the hand.*] You, my Countess, sit by my side. [*He leads PRAXEDIS up the steps, the Dukes RUDOLPH, BERTHOLD, and WELF, with the Bishops LIEMAR, BENNO, and EPP0, follow him; they all seat themselves at the upper table.*] Where do the burghers of Worms sit?

LAMBERT (*stepping to the table on the middle platform*). With your permission, King Henry, at this table.

HENRY. This permission is gladly given. [*Gozzo, Gozzelin, and the masters of the guild go to the middle table.*] And give the Jews a place there also.

[*A movement among the burghers.*]

GOZZO (*looks at his friends inquiringly*). The Jews, at our table?

EPHRAIM (*who has stopped with SÜSZKIND VON ORB below on the stage*). We thank you, King Henry. Let this

favor that you have shown us suffice. Let us not sit by the side of these men, who have an aversion to sit with Jewish people.

HENRY (*standing behind the table*). What was your name? I've forgotten it.

LAMBERT. Ephraim ben Jehuda is his name.

HENRY. Well, then, Ephraim ben Jehuda, understand, that it is not proper to decline favors offered by the king. Take a seat there at the table, you and your friend.

[EPHRAIM and SÜSZKIND cross their arms, make a deep bow, walk to the table of the burghers, and seat themselves at one of the corners. The King with PRAXEDIS at his side, the Dukes and Bishops whom he has taken to his table, have seated themselves. The burghers of Worms are also seated. The Saxon nobles stand in a sinister group about the table below on the stage; they have crossed their arms, none of them is seated. The rest of the people fill the back of the stage. Servants enter from the left, carrying drinking-cups on trays. They carry them to the tables, on which they put the cups. In doing so, they approach the Saxons, to whom they offer the cups because they are not seated. The Saxons decline with a shake of their heads.]

HERMANN (*to the servants*). Drink the wine yourself.

HENRY. Will the Saxon Dukes not drink with us?

ALL THE SAXONS. No!

HENRY. Then let them look on! Raise the cups! [*Everybody raises his cup.*] Let us touch our glasses in honor of the day—

The constable enters hurriedly on the right.

THE CONSTABLE. King Henry! [HENRY turns to him.] Two nobles have just arrived,—Gottschalk and Adalbert.

HENRY (*rising quickly*). My messengers from Rome!

THE CONSTABLE. A lady is with them.

HENRY. Another woman? So much the better! Show them in! [*The constable opens a door behind him.*]

Empress AGNES enters slowly from the right, dressed in the rough garb of a penitent, a cord about her waist, her naked feet in sandals. GOTTSCHALK and ADALBERT, who enter directly behind the empress, remain at the door.

AGNES proceeds slowly toward the middle of the stage, her eyes rigidly fixed on KING HENRY and PRAXEDIS. She starts convulsively, and stops as she recognizes PRAXEDIS. A whisper passes through the hall at the moment the Empress enters: "Emperor Henry's widow!" All who were seated rise and remain standing. There is breathless silence. KING HENRY has become deathly pale; his whole bearing bespeaks the intense emotion that passes through him.

HENRY (*hoarsely*). My mother!—Does she come—

AGNES. Your mother comes from Rome. On my way I met a woman in misfortune.

[PRAXEDIS makes a move to leave KING HENRY'S side.]

HENRY (*turning suddenly to PRAXEDIS*). Where are you going?

PRAXEDIS. Away!

HENRY (*holding her hand*). Stay! [PRAXEDIS makes an attempt to resist.] I command it!

[HENRY VON DER NORDMARK leaves the group of the Saxons. OTTO VON NORDHEIM holds him back. A brief, excited murmur arises among the Saxons.]

AGNES. I found her at a place,—I've forgotten its name—it was a miserable place. She was leading a boy by the hand. By this I knew that she had a husband. I asked her, "Where is your husband?" She did not know. Then I asked, "Boy, where is your father?" The boy did not know. I have come to seek the man who left his wife, to seek the father who left his child. Today I have found him. [*Stretching her hand toward KING HENRY.*] Behold—it is the German King!

[*A gloom settles upon the people.*]

HENRY. Since my mother herself — says it, I — I hope she will not forget that she is speaking to the King.

AGNES. Here I find him — by the side of his mistress!

PRAXEDIS (*with an outcry*). I am not his mistress!

AGNES. Mistress!

HENRY VON DER NORDMARK (*resisting furiously the efforts of the Saxons who hold him back*). This is my wife!

PRAXEDIS (*freeing herself forcibly from KING HENRY*). By force he led me to this place!

HENRY VON DER NORDMARK. Come here to me, wife!

PRAXEDIS. By force he kept me by his side!

HENRY VON DER NORDMARK. Say no more! Your husband will speak for you! [*He has gone toward her, and has ascended a few steps.*]

PRAXEDIS (*meeting him from above, she throws herself into his arms*). I came to intercede for my husband —

HENRY VON DER NORDMARK (*drawing her roughly to him*). Say no more, I tell you!

RUDOLPH. Lead her out, Count Henry: the King will make no objection.

HENRY (*turning his head quickly toward RUDOLPH*). Who gives orders while I am here? [*To HENRY VON DER NORDMARK.*] You may take her out. [*HENRY VON DER NORDMARK and PRAXEDIS leave on the right. KING HENRY crosses his arms, and turns with an icy smile toward AGNES.*] This is settled now! What presents has my mother brought me from Rome?

AGNES. Henry!

HENRY (*with ironic disdain*). I'm speaking now as in past days. Did I ever receive aught but good things from my mother?

AGNES. Do you speak thus to your mother?

HENRY (*with a vehemence suppressed only with difficulty*). To my mother! Who for fifteen long years has not asked after me!

AGNES. Fifteen years I have thought only of you —

HENRY. In this garb of a penitent?

AGNES. As a penitent, and in prayer to God.

HENRY. I thank you for this, my mother: your prayer has been answered. Yonder are my foes, defeated by me.

AGNES. Not for that I've prayed.

HENRY. For what then?

AGNES. For the salvation of your soul.

HENRY (*shrugging his shoulders*). Of my soul? Ask Anno of Cologne, what has become of my soul. You gave it to him for safe keeping.

AGNES (*looks helplessly about*). Is there no one here who will speak for me to my son's heart?

HENRY. Let's come to business. What's your message from Pope Gregory?

AGNES. How do you know that I come from him?

HENRY. Is he not your father confessor?

AGNES. If you know I come from him, let us step aside, and talk in private.

HENRY. Whose sins did you confess to him?

AGNES. Let us step aside that I may give you his message in private.

HENRY. Whose sins did you confess to him?

AGNES. Your sins!

HENRY. And the sins against your son, did you confess these also?

AGNES (*her hands before her eyes, she falls down upon the steps*). Oh, how terrible!

LIEMAR. King Henry! This is against God, man, and nature.

HENRY. Yes: against nature, Bishop Liemar, you're right! Against nature is this very day, as all the days of my life have been! [*He strikes his breast.*] The sun shone in my heart, but its light was extinguished! The child's longing cry for its mother was in my heart: in its place, I was given the litany! For love I hungered: in its place, I was given a stone, and my languishing heart condemned to die of hunger!

RUDOLPH. This can't continue!

WELF. It must not be!

BERTHOLD. It's outrageous!

[*A low threatening murmur, becoming louder and louder, passes through the hall: "Outrageous! Outrageous! Outrageous!"*]

HENRY (*stretching out his clenched fist*). What are you grumbling about; what is it you want, what is outrageous? Outrageous are the sins committed against me! I had to suffer them, and, therefore, I remember them! Tested in the fire of pain, I've become hard as iron, and know no longer the feelings of tenderness. Having outgrown the conscience of the common man, I stand far above you. Woe to him who touches the cutting edge of the iron! [*There is a silence.*] I sent a message to Rome, inquiring of Pope Gregory when he would crown me. What is Pope Gregory's answer?

AGNES (*motioning to GOTTSCHALK and ADALBERT*). I can say no more. You talk to him.

[*GOTTSCHALK and ADALBERT come forward.*]

GOTTSCHALK. Pope Gregory sends his greetings to Henry, the German King, and addresses him in these words: "I have held your hand in my hand when you were a boy, I have walked with your soul until this day, I was your friend, I am still your friend, and I hope to remain your friend."

HENRY (*in nervous unrest*). I hope so too. When will Pope Gregory crown me Emperor?

GOTTSCHALK. "Now that all who fought against you are at your feet, now that you have become the first among men, the most honored and most mighty,—I request of you, King Henry, as a father requests his son, as a friend requests his friend, be also the *best* among men."

HENRY. When will Pope Gregory crown me Emperor?

[*There was a pause. HENRY plays nervously with the hilt of his sword.*] When will Pope Gregory —

GOTTSCHALK (*advances anxiously one step toward him*).

I beg of you, King Henry, hear me —

HENRY. I've been listening to you long enough.

GOTTSCHALK. The Pope's love is sincere; his heart knows no falsehood. Have no doubt about this, King Henry. You know me to be your most faithful servant. Have no doubt about this, even if —

HENRY. Even if — ?

GOTTSCHALK (*showing great agitation and anxiety*). Even if Pope Gregory — cannot grant today what you ask of him.

HENRY. Ah — !

GOTTSCHALK. It's a question of time, King Henry! For the present only! For the moment only!

HENRY. And why not in this moment?

GOTTSCHALK (*raising his hand*). Dearest King —

HENRY. Why not?

GOTTSCHALK. Let us be alone, King Henry. To deliver the message to you in person, was the Pope's order.

HENRY. Why not here? Why alone? Why these subterfuges?

GOTTSCHALK. Not subterfuges —

HENRY. Then, why not here before all the people?

GOTTSCHALK. Because Pope Gregory wishes to speak to you as a father speaks to his son —

HENRY. I am Emperor Henry's son, not son of the Pope in Rome.

GOTTSCHALK. Bishop Liemar, help. You talk to him!

LIEMAR. For the good of the empire, King Henry —

HENRY. I, as your King, command you, Gottschalk! Speak!

GOTTSCHALK. Because you — [*Once more he lifts up imploringly his hands.*] King Henry —

HENRY (*bending over the table*). Because I —

GOTTSCHALK (*drops despairingly hands and head*). Because you — you are not prepared for it yet.

HENRY. Ah — !

ALL THE SAXONS (*talking excitedly to one another*). Hear what the Pope said! What the holy Pope said!

GOTTSCHALK. Because the head on which the German imperial crown is to rest must be as pure as the mountain covered with freshly fallen snow, free from sin, above the common, beyond suspicion. And because the holy Pope has heard that it is not so with you, King Henry.

ALL THE SAXONS (*as before*). Hear what the Pope said!

GOTTSCHALK. Therefore, before he will anoint your head with the ointment, thrice holy; before he will place upon your forehead the consecrated ring which encircles the dominions of the whole baptized world,— you, King Henry, shall confess—

HENRY (*bursting into a wild laughter*). Confess?

GOTTSCHALK. Not in public, King Henry, not in public; for Pope Gregory will not ask anything of you which would disgrace you—

HENRY. Confess? What?

GOTTSCHALK. Whether it be true that you sold bishoprics for gold? Whether you put away your lawful wife—

HENRY. Because that priest in Rome orders me to do it?

GOTTSCHALK (*sinks on his knees, raising his hands*). Understand that he cannot do otherwise! Understand that he speaks to you as a father, gently and justly!

HENRY. That he's a monk, that I understand! A renegade monk!

GOTTSCHALK (*leaping to his feet*). King Henry!

[*An outcry throughout the hall: "KING HENRY!"*]

HENRY (*comes from behind the table moving toward the front*). Three popes Emperor Henry unseated! Listen what Emperor Henry's son will say to the Roman priest! [*He has reached the table in front, on which the parchments are lying. He strikes the table.*] Here are the things to write with! Bishop Liemar, come here! Sit down at this table and write!

LIEMAR (*approaching reluctantly*). What—what shall I write?

HENRY. Sit down!

LIEMAR. To—to whom shall I write?

HENRY. You will hear in a moment—sit down! [LIEMAR *seats himself*. HENRY *stands in the middle of the stage, dictating in a loud voice.*] “Henry, by the grace of God King, to Hildebrand, the spurious monk, the usurping Pope, who from this day is Pope no longer—

LIEMAR (*throwing away his pen*). I will not write this!

HENRY. Liemar!

LIEMAR (*jumping from his chair*). I will never write this!

HENRY. Are you also one of my enemies?

LIEMAR. He who writes this letter for you would be your worst enemy.

HENRY. Benno of Osnabrück, come here!

BENNO. No, King Henry!

HENRY. Eppo of Zeitz!

EPPO. No, King Henry!

HENRY (*stamping on the ground*). No, King Henry! No, King Henry! Obstinate rebels!

LIEMAR. Never have we been more faithful to you than in this moment. [*He falls on his knees before HENRY, seizing his hands.*] King Henry, I’ve obeyed you, I’ve served you, I’ve loved you! Come to your senses, King Henry, don’t write these words! Anger dictated them to you; a curse will be the answer! A fire these words will kindle, a great consuming fire! Who knows what it will destroy, where it will end!

HENRY (*looking, over the kneeling LIEMAR, toward WEZEL and BURKHARDT*). There they stand, Wezel and Burkhardt, both of them! [*With a sudden resolve.*] I know now who is to write this letter. Burkhardt of Halberstadt, you are a master in the art of writing, are you not? Come to the table!

BURKHARDT. I—I shall—?

HENRY. Write for me the letter to Hildebrand, the spurious monk,—that’s what you shall do!

BURKHARDT. I will not do it!

HENRY. You will not do it? [*Calling to the right.*] Call my soldiers!

BURKHARDT. This is compulsion!

ALL THE SAXONS, DUKES, AND BISHOPS. This is compulsion!

HENRY. The King's will is law in Germany!

[*A crowd of armed soldiers force their way through the open door on the right, remaining there.*]

HENRY. Burkhardt of Halberstadt, will you write this letter?

BURKHARDT. I will not write it!

HENRY (*to his soldiers*). Draw your swords! [*The soldiers draw their swords.*] Burkhardt of Halberstadt, will you write this letter?

BURKHARDT. No!

HENRY (*to his soldiers, pointing to BURKHARDT*). Have your eyes on this man! If I count up to three, and he doesn't sit down at this table and write, cut off his head and throw it on the table!

BURKHARDT. My God in Heaven, do You hear that? Do You see what's being done? Will You suffer it?

LIEMAR. King Henry! King Henry!

BENNO AND EPP0 (*rushing forward*). What are you doing, King Henry! What are you doing!

HENRY. I am counting— one!

BURKHARDT. Otto von Nordheim! You help!

OTTO VON NORDHEIM. Rudolph, Berthold, and Welf, Dukes of the empire, do you see this monstrous iniquity that is being done?

RUDOLPH. We shall not permit it to be done!

BERTHOLD AND WELF. We will not permit it!

HENRY. But you will have to permit it! Burkhardt of Halberstadt, I am counting— two!

BURKHARDT (*with clenched fists toward HENRY*). Satan! Satan! Satan! [*He falls down on the chair at the table.*] But by the side of my own writing—listen to what I tell you—I'll draw a lance, for a sign, that I wrote under compulsion!

HENRY. Draw as many lances as you please, but write what I dictate. [*He dictates as before.*] “Because you have usurped authority, and made yourself a judge over God-chosen kings, yourself guilty of simony—”

BURKHARDT (*throwing away his pen*). That’s not true!

LIEMAR. No, it’s not true!

EPPO AND BENNO. Pope Gregory is not guilty of simony!

HENRY (*advancing half a step toward BURKHARDT*). “Yourself guilty of simony!” [*BURKHARDT takes up his pen, and continues to write.*] “Because you have ascended the Papal throne on which you are seated, and have seized it through bribery, cunning and force—”

BURKHARDT (*resisting in despair*). Oh! Oh! Oh!—

[*A low murmur throughout the hall increases in loudness, so that the King, to drown it, is obliged to keep on raising his voice.*]

HENRY. “Because you have assumed the authority of a judge over the deeds and lives of others, you who yourself are living in illicit relations with another man’s wife—”

AGNES (*startled*). Man, of whom are you speaking?

HENRY. Of Mathilde, the Countess of Canossa, wife of Duke Gottfried!

AGNES (*rising from the ground, stretching out her arms*). I call the omniscient God as a witness! What this man says is a lie!

ALL THE SAXONS. A lie! A lie!

AGNES. Blasphemy and a lie!

HENRY. “While you yourself are living in illicit relations with another man’s wife,—therefore, be it known to you, another shall be Pope in your place, a better one than you are! Therefore, I command you, descend from your throne, which does not belong to you! Come down! Come down!”

LIEMAR. It's an outrage against God!

[There is an outcry throughout the hall: "Outrage against God!"]

LIEMAR. Let us not stay with this man, that we may not be partakers of his ruin!

RUDOLPH. Let us be gone, away from this place!

ALL THE DUKES, BISHOPS, AND BURGHERS (*horrified, talking confusedly to one another*). Let us be gone! Away from this place! Away from this place!

[A wild tumult arises; the crowd throngs to the doors on the right and left, seeking to find an exit.]

HENRY. What does this mean?

[The flight of the people ceases. The crowd gathers on the right and left in dense groups. The stage in front is empty.]

AGNES (*stands stately erect*). That means a tempestuous storm, which will blow the leaves from the trees, as a sign that thunder and lightning are approaching!

HENRY. Only withered leaves the storm blows from the trees, and withered leaves are as chaff! For every coward that deserts me now, my soul will gain the strength of three men. *[He steps to the table, signs the letter, then gathers up the parchment.]* Ulrich von Godesheim! *[GODESHEIM approaches. HENRY hands him the parchment.]* Tomorrow my messenger shall ride to Rome!

ACT II

SCENE I

The nave of the Basilica Sancta Maria Majore at Rome. At the back of the stage, the high altar, before this, toward the front, on a platform, stands the throne of the Pope. It is dark. Wax tapers are burning at the high altar, which give light to the stage. Choir boys, holding burning tapers, are standing directly behind the Papal seat. Pope GREGORY is seated on the throne. Abbot HUGO of Clugny, Bishop OTTO of Ostia, are standing at the right and left of the throne of the Pope. The Prefect of Rome, in full armor, stands on the right in front. CENCIUS, in armor, his arms bound on his back, Knight GERBALD, in penitent garb, and a number of guards of the Basilica, are standing behind the Prefect. The space behind the throne and the high altar is filled with priests; the front part of the stage on the right and left, with men and women of the Roman people.

When the curtain rises, we hear the last strains of the chant of the priests.

He will break the power of the mighty —
 He will exterminate the unjust —
 But the just will live forever and ever.

[There is a pause.]

GREGORY. If there are any waiting, Prefect, lead them before me.

PREFECT. Holy Pope, there are yet others who are asking a hearing, more important than these.

GREGORY. Who?

PREFECT. Messengers from Henry, the German King.

[There is a pause.]

GREGORY. Yonder are men in chains, men in penitential garb. To loosen chains, to comfort souls waiting for salvation, is more important than to hear royal messages. Henry's messengers shall wait.

PREFECT (*seizes CENCIUS by the shoulder, and thrusts him forward, so that he falls on his knees*). You know this one. It is Cencius, the Count, Stephan's son. A most wicked criminal.

GREGORY. Of what does Cencius stand accused?

PREFECT. You know his crime: against your own person he committed it. You know that he broke with armed

force into this holy church, dragged you from the high altar, carried you to his castle, and kept you a prisoner, till we, your faithful people of Rome, stormed his castle, and liberated you out of his hands!

GREGORY. Cencius, do you confess your guilt?

CENCIUS (*in a low tone of voice*). I am guilty! I am guilty!

GREGORY. What you have done openly, all have seen.

What you have done to me when I was a prisoner in your castle, that confess now before these people!

CENCIUS. I confess that I drew my sword against you, and brandished it above your head; because I sought to force from you the possession of lands my heart coveted.

GREGORY (*with a turn of his head*). Men of the Church, what punishment does Cencius deserve?

THE PRIESTS. As a robber, death!

GREGORY. Men of the Roman people, what punishment does Cencius deserve?

THE PEOPLE (*answering from the right and from the left*). As a robber, death!

[*There is a pause.*]

GREGORY. Priests and laymen, you are mistaken. This man has sinned; not, however, against the Church, but only against me, against Gregory, the man. He who sins against men may be forgiven. It is better that he live and do penance than that he die. Cencius, will you do penance?

CENCIUS. I will do penance.

GREGORY. Will you go to Jerusalem, confess, pray, and do penance at the tomb of our Saviour?

CENCIUS. I will confess, and pray, and do penance at the tomb of our Saviour.

GREGORY (*to the Prefect*). Remove his chains. [*The Prefect unlocks CENCIUS' chains, these fall to the ground. To CENCIUS.*] Stand up! [*CENCIUS rises.*] Cencius, you were a robber! Cencius, you are my brother!

[*Offering him his hand.*] Go on your mission, return from Jerusalem, and sin no more.

CENCIUS (*seizes GREGORY'S hand, and covers it with kisses*).

You—you are holy! You are holy—

HUGO. It's true, what this man says—

ALL (*ecstatically*). Holy! Holy! Holy!

GREGORY (*stretching out his hand commandingly. Immediate silence*). Holy is the Church. Gregory is a man, poor and weak, like other men! [*There is a pause. GREGORY'S eyes fall on GERBALD.*] Who is this man yonder in penitential garb?

PREFECT (*motions to GERBALD to step forward*). His name is Gerbald. He is a Walloon; a Flemish Knight.

[*GERBALD falls on his knees.*]

GREGORY. What do you want of me?

GERBALD (*stretching both of his hands toward him*). These hands! Free me from these hands.

GREGORY. What's the matter with your hands?

GERBALD. Murder is upon them! Blood and treason!

GREGORY. Confess more in detail! Whom did you kill?

GERBALD. Arnulf, the Flemish Count. I was his vassal!

GREGORY. You slew your own master, wretched man?

GERBALD (*with deep emotion*). I slew my own master! As he was riding by my side at the battle of Bavinkhoven! I killed him because Robert, the Frisian, bribed me with money! Thrice be it cursed! Like two murderers, these hands track me through life! I offer them to you! Save me from them! I've traveled through the world, I've been on my knees before every holy image, I've dipped these hands into every consecrated well,—no one could help me, no one could save me. You save me, mighty Pope of Rome! Open your mouth, and let your word proceed from it; it will calm my soul; it will banish the shadow of the slain one from my eyes! For you have power over the souls of men as over their bodies, you are holy, holy, and just!

GREGORY. Will you do penance? Will you offer me your hands, your blood-stained hands?

GERBALD. I will do penance. I will offer you my blood-stained hands.

GREGORY. Stretch out your hands, that I may sever them from your arms.

GERBALD (*stretches out both of his hands*). Here they are!

GREGORY. Draw your sword, Prefect! [*The Prefect draws his sword; the people on the right and the left, and the priests from the rear, step forward to see the spectacle.*] Seize his right hand! When I tell you, strike!
[*The Prefect advances toward GERBALD.*]

GERBALD (*turns up his sleeve, and holds the naked right arm toward him*). Not my hand only, but my whole arm! Sever it from my body!

[*The Prefect, his eyes on GREGORY, waiting for a sign from him, seizes GERBALD's hand.*]

GREGORY (*to GERBALD*). And what will you do when you have no arm?

GERBALD. Beg on the way, die under the foot-steps of passers-by, and bless you when I die, for you laid upon me just penance!

GREGORY. Put your sword into your scabbard, Prefect! [*The Prefect steps back, and replaces his sword.*] Priests and laymen, behold a sinner unlike other sinners! A truly penitent man! Gerbald, the Walloon, listen to what I have to say to you. Your sins shall not be forgiven you today, they shall not be forgiven you tomorrow, nor in a week, nor in a month—but some day they shall be forgiven you.

GERBALD. My sins shall be forgiven me?

GREGORY. You shall go to Hugo, the Abbot. He will put you in the Cloister of Clugny, to do penance, to receive punishment, and undergo pain. But you shall take your hands with you. And when the day comes that I march with an army of Christians to Jerusalem, to wrest the tomb of our Saviour from the hands of the Heathens, then you may go forth from the Cloister

of Clugny. Then you shall fasten the holy cross upon your bosom, and you shall use these your hands, your blood-stained hands, for Christ and the holy Church.

GERBALD (*leaping from the ground*). That I'll do!

GREGORY. And on the day on which you, as leader, will scale the walls of the heathen stronghold,—your sins shall be forgiven you.

GERBALD. On that day I shall be forgiven?

GREGORY. On that day you shall be forgiven.

GERBALD (*rushes a step toward GREGORY, falls on his knees, and folds his hands on his back*). To kiss your foot, your holy foot! Not with my hands I'll touch it: I've folded them on my back! Be glorified! [*He presses his lips on GREGORY'S foot.*] I'll fight for Christ and His holy Church! [*He kisses once more his foot.*] Be glorified! [*He kisses his foot a third time.*] For Christ and His holy Church! For you are holy, holy, and just!

THE PEOPLE AND ALL THE PRIESTS (*with ecstatic fervor*).
Holy! Holy! Holy!

GREGORY (*as above*). The Church is holy; Gregory is like other men, dependent and weak. [*There is a pause. To the Prefect.*] There is yet another one waiting to be heard. Who is that third one yonder, Prefect?

PREFECT. It is Donadeus, holy Pope, a lay brother employed in the holy church of Saint Peter. [*He pushes DONADEUS to the front.*] This man, who is a layman, read the Mass, disguised as a consecrated priest, to foreign pilgrims who did not know him, and took their money which they had placed upon the altar of Saint Peter. Of this I accuse him.

GREGORY. Is it true what they say against you?

DONADEUS. No, holy Pope!

PREFECT. Yes, holy Pope, what I say is true!

DONADEUS. I'll produce witnesses to show that I am innocent!

GREGORY. Be gone with your witnesses, you fool! Come here! Look into my face!

DONADEUS (*approaches GREGORY with uncertain step, and tries to look into his face*). I—I— [*Holds his hands before his face as though to shield himself.*]

GREGORY. Take your hands from your eyes! Look into my face!

DONADEUS (*his face covered with his hands*). The light of judgment is in your eyes! [*He staggers and falls on his knees.*] [*There is a pause.*]

GREGORY. Men of the Church, what shall this man's punishment be?

THE PRIESTS. Fine and banishment.

GREGORY. Men of the people, what shall this man's punishment be?

THE PEOPLE. Fine and banishment.

GREGORY. Priests and laymen, you are mistaken. This man, ordained to be a servant at the shrine of God, lied to the people that came to seek salvation of their souls, and cheated them out of their spiritual goods. [*He rises from his seat.*] This man shall die!

DONADEUS. Have mercy!

GREGORY. Out of my sight!

DONADEUS. What I have done, others have done before me. They were sent into banishment by former popes; none of them had to die for this sin!

GREGORY. Then, you shall be the first to die for it!

DONADEUS. Have mercy—

GREGORY. Seize him, Prefect! Lead him out to the square in front of Saint Peter's Church, scourge him before all the people, and when you have done this, bind his hands and his feet, and throw him into the Tiber.

[*The Prefect motions to his bailiffs who stand in the right corner back of him. The bailiffs throw themselves upon DONADEUS.*]

DONADEUS (*shrinking under the hands of the bailiffs*). Have mercy!— [*He is carried away.*]

PREFECT. Away! Justice is done you!

GREGORY (*stately erect*). Behold this world and the dark night of sin that envelops it! Like howling wolves in the dark forest, men's acts of violence are prowling through the world! As the hideous toad grovels along the way, so greed grovels through the hearts of men! A sweet sacrifice, fragrant with incense, the world lay before God on the day on which He created it; it has become a foul stench because of the sins of man. I lift up my hand unto God as a pledge, that I will build Him a sweet abode where He may dwell on this godless earth!

HUGO. Glory be unto God who found the right vicar, and gave him to us!

GREGORY. I will build a House for His Church: as a diamond, strong and pure; its walls arching from the East to the West; a refuge to the pursued; a safe abode to all who seek salvation; a dwelling-place of justice!

HUGO. Amen! So may it be!

PRIESTS AND LAYMEN. So may it be! So may it be!

GREGORY. Therefore, priests of the Church, hear what I have to say. He who is called to the holy Office of priesthood, and discharges its duties otherwise than with pure hands, shall be cursed! Vessels of God you shall be, your souls filled with thoughts eternal. Turn your back on silver and gold! Be poor! He who is poor in gold is rich in spirit! Turn your back on woman and the love for woman! Be chaste! He who is free from lust is free from the limitations of this earth! And now, laymen, hear what I have to say to you. As man, lifting up his eyes unto the heavens, the sun, and the stars of the night, which he sees but cannot comprehend, trembles at the sight of the universe, and seeks refuge in the belief in Him who comprehends the incomprehensible and measures what cannot be measured,—so you shall also tremble at the sight of the Church, and take refuge in her, and believe in her! For the Church is eternal, and holy and great, you, however, are mortal and sinful and as naught!

HUGO (*kneeling*). Let us bend our knees before this man!
 [*Priests and laymen fall down on their knees.*]

HUGO. Holy Pope, beside whom I have stood as a friend, and in whose power I have sought shelter as the swallow that builds her nest under the eaves of the tower, strengthen us who are weak by the strength of your soul! Bless us!

THE PRIESTS AND THE PEOPLE. Bless us!

[GREGORY rises solemnly his right hand as in blessing, and makes in the air the sign of the holy cross; then he motions to them to rise from their knees; they all stand up.]

GREGORY (*seating himself*). Bring before me the messengers of King Henry.

[*The Prefect steps toward the right; a light of torches enters from this direction, we hear the murmur of many voices.*]

Enter from the right GOTTSCHALK, a roll of parchment in his hands, HERMANN BILLUNG, ECKBERT VON MEISSEN, HENRY VON DER NORDMARK. *The clothing of HERMANN, ECKBERT and HENRY is disordered, their hair and beards dishevelled.*

GOTTSCHALK (*steps hurriedly before GREGORY*). Before I begin to speak, permit me to tell you, holy Pope, that these [*pointing to the Saxons who follow directly after him*] have entered unbidden—

HERMANN (*with a loud passionate laughter*). Unbidden, but for good reasons, because it was necessary.

ECKBERT (*likewise excited*). We won't go till you've heard us!

GOTTSCHALK. These are not the messengers King Henry sent.

HERMANN. We come on our own account.

GREGORY (*who has looked with astonishment upon the group*). Who are you? Why do you force your way into my presence? Whose messengers are you?

HERMANN. We are the messengers of our need.

ECKBERT. We came because we have heard you can drive out devils. To be saved from the devil we came!

HENRY VON DER NORDMARK. Dethrone him! Give us another king!

HERMANN. Another king give us!

GREGORY. Who—who are you?

HERMANN. German princes we are. This is the way German princes look since this evil man came to rule over us!

ECKBERT (*stretching out his arm*). See here on my arm the scars made by his chains. This is the way he treats the princes of his land.

HENRY VON DER NORDMARK. We fled from imprisonment at the risk of our lives!

HERMANN. Save us from him! Save us from him!

HUGO (*advancing a step*). Two of you I recognize! You are Hermann the Billunge, Ordulf's brother.

HERMANN. That's my name.

HUGO. And you are Eckbert von Meissen.

ECKBERT. None other.

HUGO. Recall the fact, Pope Gregory, that these are the men who took Henry from his mother, when he was a boy—stole him.

ECKBERT. Stole?

HUGO. Stole and robbed!

HERMANN. Has the devil friends even in Rome?

GREGORY. Hold your tongue! You are mad!

HERMANN. No, don't ask us to hold our tongue! To speak our tongue we came here! That you may hear us we came! As your allies we came!

GREGORY. Who asks alliance with you?

HERMANN. Despair does not wait till asked; it speaks of its own accord! We are men in despair!

ECKBERT. We are in despair as is the whole German nation!

HENRY VON DER NORDMARK. If you do not wish to listen to us, listen to King Henry! Listen to the message he sends you!

HERMANN. Listen to the message he sends you!

GREGORY. How can I listen to his message so long as you keep his messenger from speaking! [*To GOTTSCHALK.*] It is you, Gottschalk, whom I intrusted with a message to King Henry; did you deliver it?

GOTTSCHALK. I delivered your message.

GREGORY. You bring me his answer?

GOTTSCHALK (*with bent head*). I—I bring you his answer.

GREGORY. Make it known.

HERMANN (*with a coarse laugh*). Make it known, Gottschalk.

ECKBERT. Come out with it, Gottschalk!

GREGORY. Must I again ask you to hold your tongue? [*To GOTTSCHALK who stands parchment in hand, hesitating what to do.*] Why do you hesitate?

HERMANN (*aloud*). Because he is afraid.

GOTTSCHALK. Hold your tongue, hold your tongue!

HERMANN. Because he's afraid to read the message the scoundrel sent you! [*Snatches the paper from GOTTSCHALK'S hand.*] Let me read!

GREGORY. It's his place to read it. Hand back the message!

HERMANN (*returning the parchment to GOTTSCHALK*). We'll see that you don't omit anything.

GOTTSCHALK (*to GREGORY*). Pope Gregory, you will separate me, the messenger, from the message?

GREGORY. Read your message.

GOTTSCHALK. Give me your hand, assure me that you will do this.

GREGORY (*gives him his hand*). Read your message.

GOTTSCHALK (*bends over GREGORY'S hand, kisses it, rises, unfolds the parchment, and reads*). "Henry, by the grace of God King, sends these words to Hildebrand, the spurious monk, the usurping Pope, who from this day shall be Pope no longer."

PREFECT. Ah! Hear!

HERMANN (*in a loud voice*). Yes—did you hear it?

[*A low suppressed murmur throughout the whole church.*]

GREGORY (*raising his right hand, commanding silence*).
Go on!

GOTTSCHALK (*reads*). “Because you have usurped authority and made yourself a judge over God-chosen kings, yourself guilty of simony,—”

[*The murmur becomes louder; GREGORY as before lifts up his hands.*]

GOTTSCHALK (*reads*). “Because you have ascended the Papal throne on which you are seated through bribery, cunning, and force—”

PREFECT. He shall read no farther!

HERMANN (*with haughty contempt*). Let him go on!

ALL. No farther!

HERMANN. Let him read to the end, that you may know the man who calls himself the German King.

GREGORY (*in a commanding voice*). Be silent, all of you!
Go on reading!

GOTTSCHALK (*reads*). “Because you have assumed the authority of a judge over the deeds and lives of others, you who yourself—” [*He stops.*]

GREGORY. You who yourself—?

GOTTSCHALK. “You who— who yourself—”

HERMANN. He’s afraid. Let me read! [*Makes a move to seize the parchment.*]

GREGORY. Gottschalk, go on reading. “You who yourself?”

GOTTSCHALK (*stammers as he reads*). “Live in illicit relations with another man’s wife—”

PREFECT. Blasphemy!

ALL. Blasphemy! Blasphemy!

GREGORY (*rises from his chair*). At the pain of punishment— [*All are silent. To GOTTSCHALK.*] Go on reading!

GOTTSCHALK (*reads*). “Therefore, be it known to you, Another shall be Pope in your place, a better one than



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SUFFER THE CHILDREN TO COME UNTO ME

you are! Therefore, I command you, Descend from your throne, which does not belong to you! Come down! Come down!"

PREFECT (*throws himself upon GOTTSCHALK, and wrests the parchment from his hand*). And this you dare to read here in the presence of the holy Pope!

ALL. Kill him!

[*They crowd tumultuously upon GOTTSCHALK.*]

GOTTSCHALK. Save me! [*He throws himself upon his knees before GREGORY.*]

GREGORY (*rising*). Your hands off this man!

[*They all fall back.*]

HERMANN (*presses forward toward GREGORY*). Do you know him now? What sort of man he is? Is it still wrong that we call upon you to assist us against him? Is it wrong? Is it wrong?

GREGORY. Out of my sight! An evil spirit is speaking these words in you! Henry! Sweet as a flower-bud you opened in the forests of your country! To see you in full blossom has been my great longing! Henry, I pity you! [*He falls on the chair, and covers his eyes. A deep silence. GREGORY rises, takes from one of the choir boys who stand near him the burning taper that he holds in his hand, and lifts it high up.*] Behold this light: it is a symbol of the life of man; for life's flame emits sparks pure and impure. Good and evil dwelled in Henry. The flame of life burned; the wax melted; the dross remained. What he said against Gregory, Gregory, the man, forgives Henry, the man; what he said against the head of the holy Church, for that let Henry be cursed! [*There is a pause.*] I forbid the Christians of the world to serve him as their King; and release them from the oath they have sworn. Darkness revolting against light, return to night! [*He blows the light out.*] Wave revolting against the mighty ocean, return to naught! [*He throws the taper to the ground.*] No bell shall ring in the city

where Henry dwells, no church be opened, no sacrament administered; for where he dwells, death shall dwell! Let my envoys go forth, and proclaim my message to all the world!

HERMANN. Here stand your envoys: *we* are your messengers. [*Taking the taper from the ground.*] And this taper we shall carry before us as a symbol of authority!

HUGO. Return the taper, the consecrated taper: you should not hold it in your hand!

HERMANN. No man shall take it from me! Ten thousand spiked bludgeons shall avail naught against it! I thank you, great Pope!

ECKBERT *and* HENRY VON DER NORDMARK. God bless you! We thank you!

GREGORY. I've dispensed justice! Your hatred was not in my heart!

HERMANN. We know that; yet it alters nothing! Turn us away ten times, we will return twenty times! We pursued him with our hatred; we will pursue you with our fervent petition, until we see you where you ought to be! The hour has arrived! Come to Germany!

ECKBERT. Come to Germany!

HENRY VON DER NORDMARK. Come to Germany!

HERMANN. Complete the work you've begun today! He who would kill a dragon must not only crush his head but cut off his tail also! Come to Germany! There is your true home! Another king we'll choose; you shall confirm this choice; you shall put a crown upon his head! You shall be the one who crowns Germany's kings and dethrones them! You shall be the King of Germany's kings! In your hands shall be our destiny! At your feet, the whole of Germany, her strength and power! You have been Lord over the souls of men, you shall, from now, be Lord over their bodies as well as their souls, Ruler over the whole world!

HUGO. Listen to me, Gregory! Listen to me, Gregory!

HERMANN. Don't listen to this babbling monk!

HUGO. It's the voice of the tempter that is speaking to you!

HERMANN. It's the world that is calling you,—the world weary of the caprice of kings, weary of a reign by inheritance! We want a judgment seat, before which we can bring complaints against our kings; and this seat shall be here, in your Church, in the Church of Rome! We want a man who can chastise our kings for their caprices; you shall be this man,—you, Bishop of all bishops,—you, the Pope,—you, Ruler of the world!

PREFECT. Listen to what this German says! [*He throws himself before GREGORY.*] Rise, great Pope, seize the reins of the world!

PRIESTS AND PEOPLE (*crowding ecstatically about GREGORY, they throw themselves upon their knees*). Be Ruler of the world! Ruler of the world!

GREGORY (*stands stately erect, deathly pale, his whole bearing shows deepest emotion; he raises his right hand*). Silence! [*The commotion stops; there is a deep silence.*] He whose voice is heard in man's destiny, God the Almighty, is among us! Let no one disturb the peace of my spirit, let your lips be sealed, that I may hear God speaking within me!

[*As he is thus standing, in solemn attitude, his right hand raised, every one kneeling in silence about him, the curtain falls.*]

SCENE II

In Worms. A large, sombre room. At the back, a large door which leads to the square outside; this door is open. On the right, a small, closed door. On the left, a large fireplace, in which the fire, a wood fire, is about to go out; near the fireplace, two chairs. Against the back wall a wooden bench; over this bench two narrow windows. From the ceiling of the room is suspended a low-burning, smoky light. It is a late hour of an afternoon in winter, almost dark. When the curtain rises, the stage is empty.

KING HENRY enters from the rear. He is dressed in hunting costume, covered with snow. In one hand, he carries a hunting spear, in the other a dead fox.

HENRY (lifting the fox high up, speaking to it). You reckoned without your host, red skin, eh? You thought, "Today is Christmas, no man will hurt me, for today is, peace on earth," didn't you? Well, the hunter knew nothing about that! Lie there! You— [*He throws his booty on the floor in front of the fireplace; stands in front of the animal lost in thought.*] Sly-head! Simpleton! "If I sneak over the frozen Rhine," you thought, "he can't get after me," eh? You thought, "The Rhine won't hold up the cursed man, the excommunicated man," didn't you? You thought, "The ice will burst open beneath him, and the flood will swallow him."— [*He hurls the spear to the ground.*] Father Rhine, would you had done this! I'd now be dead, instead of being buried alive! This whole world would exist for me no longer! [*He takes the fur cap from his head, shakes the snow from it, and throws it on the bench. He walks up and down.*] Not a human voice! Not a human face! [*He pricks up his ears and listens.*] Hark! That sounds like man! [*He goes to the door on the right, opens it half way and listens; we hear in the distance the plaintive voice of a child.*] The cry of a child! [*Lost in gloomy thoughts.*] We all have once lain in a cradle. I wonder whether I too cried like that? I suppose so,

for, if I am not mistaken, it's my own flesh and blood that's crying! [*He shuts the door with a bang.*] Wretched thing! Why do you pierce my ear with your sharp voice? I can't help you! [*Throws his arms up.*] If I can't be king, I am no longer man. If no longer man, how can I be father?

[*He seats himself on the bench, his arm on the window sill, his head leaning upon his hand.*]

Enter QUEEN BERTHA from the rear. Dressed in a long, dark mantle. Seeing HENRY, she stops on the threshold. She lifts up her hands and presses them against her heart, like one who, having suffered great anguish, thanks God to have been freed from it. She disappears again in the rear, returns soon, however, with some sticks of wood in her arms. With these she goes to the fireplace, and throws them on the embers. All this takes place behind HENRY'S back.

HENRY (*without changing his position*). Well, sure enough, there're still some servants willing to wait on me!— My girl, what about your soul? Aren't you a little afraid to serve an excommunicated king?

[*BERTHA continues her labor in silence. There is a pause.*]

HENRY (*throws a furtive glance at her without recognizing her*). She's deaf, so it seems. To answer, to speak to him, may be dangerous, is it that? Very well, stir the fire; you're right, it's cold. And bring a light, it's dark; that I can read a penitential psalm, or something else that is spiritual.

[*He rises with an angry laugh. At the same moment, BERTHA has also risen, and has withdrawn quickly through the rear. HENRY steps to the fireplace and stares into the fire. BERTHA returns from the rear, carrying a candlestick with burning candles.*]

HENRY (*he turns toward her. BERTHA stands, her eyes on the ground*). You—was it you? [*He goes to her and takes the candlestick from her.*] I beg your pardon.

BERTHA (*with pale lips—in a low voice*). For what?

HENRY (*placing the candlestick on the mantel*). Because I took you for a servant.

BERTHA. You—you did not recognize me?

HENRY (*with a scornful look at her appearance*). In this apparel—how could I?

BERTHA (*attempting to laugh*). It did not trouble me.

HENRY (*with a quick motion*). It must have troubled you!

A queen mistaken for a servant! [*He turns away, and walks up and down. BERTHA remains in the same position.*] How humble. Going to be so always? [*Approaches her suddenly.*] Or think you I am no longer King? Is that it? And you no longer Queen?

BERTHA (*frightened, she lifts her hands instinctively, as though to ward off something*). Don't—!

HENRY (*steps back and looks with blank astonishment into her eyes*). What does this mean?

[*BERTHA makes an attempt to speak; her mouth twitches, but she is unable to say a word.*]

HENRY. You—you are afraid?

BERTHA (*still unable to speak, shakes her head, then speaks with difficulty*). No! [*Pause. HENRY looks quietly into her face.*] Not any longer. I was afraid—

HENRY. You were afraid? Why?

BERTHA. When I was out—in the Chapel of Our Lady, outside of the walls of the city—

HENRY. You were outside of the walls of the city? Why?

BERTHA. Because—because the churches within the city—you won't be angry—

HENRY. All right, I understand. Well, then, when you were out there?

BERTHA. I saw, on the ice of the Rhine, in the centre of the stream—

HENRY. And you thought he would break through the ice and drown in the stream?

[*BERTHA drops her head, remaining silent.*]

HENRY. And that man was I?

[*BERTHA nods in silence.*]

HENRY. And if it had happened, would it not have been better for you and me?

BERTHA. Oh! [*Overcome with pain, she quickly places her hands over her eyes, and weeps despairingly.*]

HENRY (*withdraws slowly from her toward the back of the stage. He stares at her with almost terrified eyes, speaking to himself*). Does—does she weep for me? [*Pause. HENRY approaches her.*] Bertha!

BERTHA (*forgetting herself, she throws herself into his arms*). Oh! Oh! Oh! [*She lies sobbing on his bosom.*]

HENRY (*cold, without embracing her*). Don't weep.

BERTHA. I—I can hold out no longer! I—I can hold out no longer!

HENRY. You can't bear it any longer, here, with me? I understand that. It's much better you leave me, and go with your boy down to Turin, to your mother. No church is closed to you there; no priest denies you sacrament. All you need and can't get here, you'll find there. [*Pause.*] Will you go?

BERTHA (*looks up into his eyes*). Do you command me to go?

HENRY (*freeing himself angrily from her*). Command? Do you need always some one to command you?

BERTHA (*with a sudden light in her eyes*). Maybe you will go with me?

HENRY. To your mother? To eat the bread of charity with her? To flee from my enemy? To run away from Germany? To be a king who deserts his country? Remember it's a king to whom you make this proposal! [*He walks up and down in wild excitement, then stops again before BERTHA.*] Now, how is it—will you go?

BERTHA (*softly*). No.

HENRY. No?

BERTHA (*twisting nervously the kerchief she holds in her hands*). Because I—

HENRY. Because you?—

BERTHA. Because you—you are so unhappy! [*She stretches her arms toward him.*]

HENRY (*startled*). I don't want your pity!

BERTHA (*dries her eyes hastily*). I've stopped weeping already—forgive.

HENRY (*to himself*). And she asks my forgiveness. [*Pause. Motioning with his head toward the door on the right.*]

The boy is crying. See what's the matter with him.

[*BERTHA takes a candle from the candlestick, and leaves on the right. HENRY takes a seat at the fireplace, and is lost in brooding thought. BERTHA returns from the right, leading her little boy, KONRAD.*]

HENRY. Why did he cry?

BERTHA (*putting the candle into the candlestick*). It was so dark and lonely in his room.

HENRY. It's Christmas today. Have you nothing for him?

BERTHA. In—in the city—

HENRY. In the city—?

BERTHA. They won't sell us anything.

[*There is a pause.*]

HENRY. Come here, boy! [*He puts out his hand; KONRAD clings to his mother.*]

BERTHA. He's afraid.

HENRY (*looking gloomily at the boy*). I see that. [*He turns his face back to the fire.*]

BERTHA (*to KONRAD, softly, in a quiet tone*). Come—come. [*She goes with him to the bench, where they seat themselves.*] You are with your mother; don't weep. Do you feel cold? Wait; I'll give you my mantle. [*Takes off her mantle and wraps it around the boy. She is now in a white dress. Bending over her child and speaking caressingly and softly to him, she is not aware that HENRY is looking gloomily upon the group.*]

HENRY. As you look now, in your white dress, I should not have taken you for a servant. [*A pause. BERTHA'S*

eyes are on the ground.] Why do you sit over there on the hard bench, in the cold?

BERTHA. It isn't cold.

HENRY (*rises*). Indeed, it is cold. Come here, with the boy, and sit down near the warm fire.

[BERTHA rises with KONRAD to go over to the fireplace.]

HENRY (*steps toward her, while both are crossing the stage, and takes hold of the boy. The boy clings to his mother with a cry: "Mother!"*). I won't hurt you. Don't you know that I am your father? [*Holds the boy's head in his hands.*] But the mother is better than the father, isn't she? [*He lets the boy go, and turns abruptly away from him.*] You're right! You're right! [*He stands, biting his lips, in front of the stage. BERTHA seats herself on a chair near the fireplace, draws the other chair toward her, and puts the boy on it. HENRY suddenly turns, goes to BERTHA, and holds her head in his arms.*] She is better than he is — she's good! [*He kisses her head.*]

BERTHA (*takes his hand, and looks up at him*). Henry — !

HENRY (*places his hand over her eyes*). Be still! You're right to be good to him. I know what it means to be deprived of a mother's love! [*He rushes from her, and seizes madly his hair.*] I know it!

[HENRY returns to the boy, lays his hands on his head, and bends the child's face over toward him.]

HENRY. They say he resembles me?

BERTHA (*with a light in her eyes*). He's a perfect picture of you.

HENRY (*takes hold of the boy, and, paying no attention to his struggles, lifts him up in his arms*). Change your face! There was a time when your father had also bright eyes, and young, sweet blood in his veins! Don't take after him! I warn you! Be wise! There was a time when he had blissful dreams, and faith in man, and love for God! But now? Poison is in his veins,

desolation in his heart! [*He puts the boy down.*] Don't tell anybody whose son you are! Don't say it even to yourself! [*He pushes him away back to his mother.*] Return to the source of life! Imagine a woman gave birth to you who had never known a man! Don't take after your father! Sit down in a quiet corner, hide yourself there, that you may not be found when fate is looking for Henry's descendants! Don't become like your father! Not like him! No: not! If you do, you will one day be what he is now, abandoned by God, a monster in the eyes of men, a source of unrest in the midst of their peace, a spirit of evil in their cities and in their homes! [*He approaches BERTHA, and takes hold of her shoulders.*] And you mean to stay with such a one? Bear up with such a one? That's what you want to do? Can do? What is it that gives you such a power?

BERTHA (*looks at him with big eyes*). I am your wife.

HENRY. My wife? Is it because, in time past, when you were five years old, you put your hand in mine, and promised me, as you were told to do, to be my wife? Is it that? Therefore you can do it? From obedience? Has obedience ruled you these twenty years? Is that the source of your strength?

BERTHA. No: not that.

HENRY (*reading her lips*). What then?

BERTHA. Because—because I love you.

HENRY (*startled*). Because—you—?

BERTHA. Because I love you as I did on the first day, and will love you on the last, always, ever and ever.

HENRY (*throwing up his arms*). There must indeed be a God in a world in which such a being lives! [*He falls to the ground before her like a felled tree; he folds her in his arms, and lays his head in her lap.*] Bertha! My wife!

BERTHA (*bending far over him*). Henry! My Henry! We were so close to one another, yet could not find each other; we were obliged, this long time, to walk apart!

HENRY. *You did not! You did not!* Blessings on you and curses on me! What a fool I was! Fool! Like a child I despised my own happiness! For years I was blessed with riches and did not know it! A life-giving drink before me, my languishing lips rejected it rudely! For years—for years! For years I've groped in error and delusion! Oh, for my lost happiness! Oh, for my life! My lost life!

BERTHA. We have found each other! Henry, my husband, my beloved! Could this meeting ever be to us such a joy, if we had not been parted so long!

HENRY. You were not parted from me—you were not! You did not! Like the beating heart in my bosom, forever beating though I did not know it, you were always with me. But I? I scorned your tears! Rejected your proffered hand! Treated you like a scoundrel! Like a mean wretch—mean wretch!

[*He sobs, bending over her lap.*]

BERTHA (*dries his eyes with her kerchief*). Oh, Henry—your first tears! What a joyous Christmas, God has given me!

HENRY. Misery is about you! Darkness, sorrow, contempt!

BERTHA. Joy is in my heart, all the riches and blessings of this world!

HENRY (*presses her to him, covers her face with kisses*). You are more than merely good! Oh, you—Oh, you—

A group of children enter from the rear. They wear fur jackets and caps; they carry Christmas trees with burning candles, and bags of nuts and apples. When they arrive at the entrance, they stop; they are embarrassed as though they did not know what to do.

KONRAD (*has jumped from his chair*). Mother! Trees! Lights! Mother, see! Mother, see!

[*BERTHA and HENRY look with speechless astonishment at the children.*]

BERTHA. Children—whom do you seek?

A LITTLE GIRL (*advancing*). We are here to find the poor little prince — [*Turning to KONRAD.*] Are you the poor little prince?

BERTHA (*drawing the little girl to her*). What have you for him?

A LITTLE GIRL. We bring apples and nuts, because the poor little prince has no Christmas, and because the poor little prince should have a Christmas.

A LITTLE BOY (*coming closer, producing a little horse carved out of wood*). A little horse — too.

KONRAD (*pointing to the horse*). Mother! A little horse! Mother, see!

A LITTLE BOY (*gives him the horse*). That you may have something to play with, poor little prince.

ALL THE CHILDREN (*crowding about him*). Here! Take this! Take this!

[*They put apples and nuts into little KONRAD's hands.*]

HENRY (*has jumped from his seat*). Is this a dream?

BERTHA (*has also risen. Has her arm about HENRY, and looks happily upon the group of children*). See, Henry, our child!

HENRY (*taking the little girl by the chin*). Who sends you, children?

THE LITTLE GIRL. Our parents sent us.

HENRY. Your parents? [*He looks up; his eyes are turned toward the rear.*]

LAMBERT, GOZZO, GOZZELIN *have, in the meantime, appeared in the rear. They stop and talk to one another; then they take off their fur caps, and enter. They take a place behind their children.*

HENRY (*sinks on the chair*). There are men. They are — they are from Worms.

LAMBERT. That's what we are.

HENRY. And these are your children?

GOZZO. Yes: our children.

[*A pause. The three men stand, a little embarrassed, their hands on the heads of their children, who are clinging to them.*]

HENRY (*rising slowly*). Your city has become poor and wretched because of me. Your churches are closed and their chimes are no longer heard because I live with you. People turn away from the walls of your city, and you—you sent your children to my child?

LAMBERT. It's all true what you say, but— [*He becomes silent, and exchanges glances with Gozzo and Gozzelin.*]

GOZZO (*breaking the silence*). But we love you nevertheless!

GOZZELIN. Yes, King Henry! We love you nevertheless!

HENRY (*covering his face with his hands*). Germany! My native country! My native country! Thine own true heart I've never known! [*He sinks on his knees.*] My God! I lost thee; and now, in this hour of the night, have found thee again in the bosom of man! My God, let me be a true King to my people!

LAMBERT. Rise, King Henry!

GOZZELIN. My dear King, rise!

GOZZO. You are our King!

HENRY (*rises, holds out his hands to them*). My people! My people!

GOZZO. Let me speak, King Henry. The princes of the empire are putting their heads together—they want another king in your stead.

LAMBERT. They want to have Rudolph for their king.

GOZZELIN. The Duke of Suabia.

HENRY (*meditatingly*). Who knows—Rudolph is not a bad man.

GOZZO. But we will not have him! For you have a heart for the common man! They know that, therefore they do not want you! We know it also, and because we know it, we love you!

LAMBERT. You, King Henry, shall be our king.

GOZZELIN. None other but you.

GOZZO. Do not think that this is the opinion of Worms only. Go up and down the Rhine, all the cities along its banks think as we do.

LAMBERT. Wherever you may knock, you will find an open door.

GOZZO. And when springtime comes, we want you to lead the armies of our cities. We want you to attack these princes and lords. And then — then we'll see!

HENRY (*lost in brooding thought*). Then we'll see — what? Battles?

GOZZO. Yes: like the battle on the Unstrut!

HENRY. Where the horses waded through German blood! [*Strikes his forehead with his hands.*] Yes, now I see the truth. I am indeed cursed!

GOZZO. To serve God —

HENRY. Into murder, blood, and revenge my enemies plunged me. Now my friends come, and incite me again to murder, blood, and revenge. The German peasants must again search for food in their forests, and scratch the bark from the trees to feed their starving children! The German women must again spend sleepless nights, and weep, and utter curses on King Henry, who killed their husbands and sons! [*He falls on his knees.*] My God! If it be true that Thou canst do what Thou wilt, and that Thou wilt the good, then free me from this bloody pool of corruption! Show me a way out, my God! A way out! A way out! [*He is kneeling at the chair, his arms on the chair, his face on his arms. An embarrassing pause.*]

BERTHA (*feeling her way — in an undertone*). Henry! — [*HENRY remains in the former position.*]

BERTHA. When I went into the room to see our child, a moment ago, the light I had in my hand cast my shadow upon him; he was frightened and cried, till he saw that the shadow was made by his mother. Then he became quiet, and stopped crying. [*Approaching HENRY, she puts her hand on his head.*] May I go on, Henry?

HENRY (*as before*). Speak.

BERTHA. You see, Henry, a shadow rests on you and on the world. It is the curse which the Pope in Rome

pronounced against you. [*Bends still farther over him.*] Shall we continue to live in this shadow? [*During these last words she has fallen on her knees, so that she is now kneeling by the side of HENRY; she has thrown her arms about him, her mouth is close to his ear, her words become a fervent, passionate whisper.*] It is God's holy vicar that is angry with us; and his anger is just. May I go on speaking, Henry?

HENRY (*as before*). Go on.

BERTHA. Therefore, Henry, you see the shadow only, not the man that casts the shadow. When we were children, you and I—you remember? It was at your father's court at Goslar. He held your hand in his; he looked kind and great—and holy—you remember, Henry?

HENRY (*as before*). Go on.

BERTHA. Suppose you should offer him your hand—should open your heart to him; suppose you—you said [*she comes nearer and nearer to him*]—Oh, Henry! Would—would it not be the best thing? Would it not be the right thing, Henry? Suppose he should press you to his heart, to his big, holy heart, and you should receive forgiveness in place of his curse, and peace in place of his anger, and joy in place of all this misery which we can bear no longer,—would it not be the best thing, Henry? Would it not be much better than all we are now bearing?

HENRY (*lifts up his head, rises, and looks at BERTHA, who is still kneeling*). Why do you kneel on the ground, you who should dwell where God's holy angels dwell? [*He lifts her up, embraces her, tears stream from his eyes.*] You opened my blind eyes to see the light! Oh, Bertha! My wife! [*He puts her away gently, holding out both hands.*] Men of Worms, you mean it well; but I must not be Germany's destroying fire-brand, but its light. Give me your hands, tomorrow I'll go forth from here,—a long, long way.

GOZZO. Where will you go?

HENRY. Where I'll find what I need,—a great man. I am going to Pope Gregory.

GOZZO. You can't do this.

HENRY. An hour ago I could not have done it, for then I should have gone to him as a beggar. Now, that I feel myself again a king, now I can do it, now I will do it,—now, of my own accord, I'll leave behind the wrong, and seek the right. *[There is a pause.]*

GOZZO. In the middle of the winter?

LAMBERT. Across the Alps? In ice and snow?

BERTHA (*rushes to HENRY, and throws both of her arms about his neck*). Why agitate his soul, why darken with doubt the light God has kindled? No abyss will engulf him. His footing will be sure on ice and snow. The Almighty will watch over him, and by his side will be his wife!

[HENRY presses her to him in silence.]

GOZZO (*steps among the children, and pushes them toward HENRY*). Come here, children, look at him! You may not see him again. This is your King Henry. *[To HENRY.]* We'll pray for you, King Henry, when you set out on your long journey.

LAMBERT AND GOZZELIN. We'll pray for you.

GOZZO. For it's true, I feel it, if you can accomplish what you've planned, you'll do a great thing for Germany.

HENRY (*slowly and solemnly*). Men of Worms—you have given me back my faith in mankind! Should the voice now speaking in my heart,—should that deceive me, the very earth on which we stand would no longer be secure. I leave behind me Germany's crown, and take with me Germany's misery and sorrow. I will humble myself before the Pope, and he will humble himself before Germany's great sorrow. He will open his arms to me; and when spring is descending from the Alps, I will bring you what kings owe to their people—peace.

ACT III

SCENE I

A room in the castle of Canossa. The room is small. In the back wall a single window, somewhat sunk into the wall. Doors on the right and on the left. On the back wall a large crucifix. No other furnishing. An afternoon in winter. We see through the window, in the distance, snow-covered peaks.

Pope GREGORY is seated on a chair near the middle of the stage. Abbot HUGO is standing behind him in the alcove of the window. Bishop LIEMAR, RUDOLPH of Suabia, HERMANN BILLUNG, ECKBERT VON MEISSEN, HENRY VON DER NORDMARK, are standing in front, on the right and left of GREGORY'S seat.

RUDOLPH. All that Henry did not give you, refused to give you, I promise you. No bishop shall be ordained in Germany by regal power; but shall be chosen by the people and the clergy, and confirmed by you. No priest, lawfully married, shall, from now on, be permitted to remain in office; he shall be driven from his parish.

GREGORY (*who has listened with bent head*). You promise a great deal.

RUDOLPH. I promise still more. The princes and the bishops have chosen me for their king; yet I promise you that I will not take the crown until you have first accepted me as king. We have arranged to convoke a diet at Augsburg; and there, if it be your will, I shall be crowned by you before all the people.

[*There is a pause.*]

GREGORY (*lost in thought*). A great deal — a great deal —

RUDOLPH. A great deal — but what I promise, I'll do.

GREGORY (*turning his face up suddenly, he looks RUDOLPH in the face*). Can you give me surety for all you've promised?

RUDOLPH. These German princes are my surety.

HERMANN, ECKBERT, HENRY. We'll be surety.

GREGORY. I don't mean that.

RUDOLPH (*surprised*). Because you spoke about surety—

GREGORY. I need you yourself. Are you—a king?

RUDOLPH. The princes and the clergy have chosen me.

GREGORY. So I've heard. But do you feel yourself a king,
—in your own heart?

RUDOLPH (*becoming more confused*). You mean—you
mean—?

GREGORY (*impatently*). Never mind! [*Again lost in
thought for a moment, then rising abruptly from his
chair.*] Years ago when I was at Goslar, at his father's
court, I became acquainted with him, with—with the
other one. He was still a boy—but he took hold of
my hand. [*Holding out his hand to RUDOLPH.*] Give
me your hand.

[RUDOLPH bows, and places his hand in that of
GREGORY.]

GREGORY (*presses RUDOLPH's hand, as though to test it*).
Soft—

HERMANN (*with a smile*). He'll strike, you may be sure,
when the time comes.

GREGORY (*lets RUDOLPH's hand go, takes a step to the front
—speaks to himself*). That's no Henry! [*A pause.*
GREGORY turns again toward RUDOLPH; he approaches
him, his eyes travel from RUDOLPH's face to the win-
dow, and from the window again back to RUDOLPH's
face.] What's this? Does it come from the snow
outside—?

RUDOLPH. From—from the snow? What?

GREGORY. That white light on your face? You are pale.

RUDOLPH. I—I'm pale?

GREGORY (*his hand on RUDOLPH's shoulder*). Can you kill
dragons?

RUDOLPH. Whom do you mean?

GREGORY. Your friends there call Henry a dragon. Can
you fight with him?

RUDOLPH. If it needs be,—certainly.

GREGORY. If it needs be? How can it be otherwise?

RUDOLPH. I shall fight with him.

GREGORY. Will you conquer him?

RUDOLPH. So I hope.

GREGORY. But you are not sure.

HERMANN. He'll conquer him; Rudolph is the best general in Germany.

RUDOLPH. But no fight will be necessary.

GREGORY (*surprised*). No—no fight—?

RUDOLPH. Henry lost his support.

LIEMAR. He has yet support.

HERMANN. Yes—he has you, who are in love with the fellow. There isn't anybody else, though.

LIEMAR (*very calmly*). There are the cities.

HERMANN. Pshaw! This handful of cities!

LIEMAR. The cities along the Rhine are powerful and rich.

RUDOLPH. But the right is on our side.

LIEMAR. Not yet.

HERMANN. Not yet?

LIEMAR. You know it as well as I do. It's not a year yet since Henry's excommunication.

ECKBERT. In a week the year will be over.

LIEMAR. In a week, yes; but if he, in that time, frees himself from the ban of the Church, he'll be king again.

GREGORY. Who says that?

LIEMAR. The German law.

GREGORY. Who can prove it?

HUGO (*without changing his position*). I.

[*All faces turn toward him.*]

GREGORY. You—know the law?

HUGO (*as before*). Yes.

[*There is a pause.*]

GREGORY (*going to LIEMAR, he takes him by the hand, and draws him to the front, where he speaks to him in an undertone*). Liemar—

LIEMAR. Holy Pope?

GREGORY. You are Henry's friend.

LIEMAR. I was his friend.

GREGORY. But you know him. If I release him from the ban, do you think Henry would give me what that man over there promises?

LIEMAR. May I speak?

GREGORY. I want you to speak.

LIEMAR. He will not do it.

GREGORY (*withdrawing his hand abruptly*). Then that man is the only choice! [*He turns to RUDOLPH and the Saxons.*] When is the diet of Augsburg to be?

HERMANN. At Easter time.

RUDOLPH. And to convince you that our proceedings are lawful, we'll invite King Henry to be present; there he may defend himself.

ECKBERT. It will not be necessary to invite him. Henry, according to all rumors, is dead.

GREGORY (*turning abruptly*). What did you say — ?

ECKBERT. From Worms, where he still lived at Christmas-time, he suddenly disappeared. No one knows where he went.

GREGORY. And therefore — ?

ECKBERT. Every day he went out hunting on the Rhine when the river was frozen. Suddenly the ice broke up —

GREGORY. And he drowned?

ECKBERT. That's what people believe.

GREGORY. Why haven't you told this sooner?

ECKBERT. Because I haven't had the chance to speak.

HUGO. It's well you did not speak. Henry is not dead!

[*All faces turn toward him.*]

GREGORY. What do you know of him?

HUGO. Henry has crossed the Alps —

GREGORY. Crossed the Alps?

HUGO. He is in Italy.

HERMANN. What?

ECKBERT. Where?

RUDOLPH. In Italy?

HUGO. On his way here; this very day he may be with us.

*

[*Great alarm.*]

GREGORY (*pointing toward the left*). Leave me till I call you. Hugo, you—stay!

[RUDOLPH, HERMANN, ECKBERT, HENRY VON DER NORDMARK, LIEMAR, *leave on the right.*]

GREGORY (*walks excitedly up and down. then stops before HUGO*). And all this you knew?

HUGO. I know still more.

GREGORY. What?

HUGO. When he descended from the Alps, the Lombards received him, many thousands. Their castles they've offered him—arms and gold. They've asked him to wage a war of revenge against you.

GREGORY (*almost speechless*). All—all this you—you knew, and kept from me? [HUGO *looks silently into his face.*] That he was marching, at the head of the army of the Lombards, against me,—that you knew, and kept from me?

HUGO (*with a smile*). If he were coming with the Lombards, do you really believe I should have kept it from you? If danger threatened you from him, Gregory, do you really believe I should not have warned you?

GREGORY. What then—

HUGO. He is coming without the Lombards. He has rejected their offer.

GREGORY. He's coming—alone?

HUGO. Penitents travel alone; he is coming to do penance. Those who seek peace travel without arms and army; he is coming to make peace. He is coming to seek you, Gregory,—will he find you? [*A pause.*] Gregory, will he find you?

GREGORY (*turning to the crucifix on the back wall, he holds out both of his arms*). Help me, Saviour! Counsel me! [*He sinks down before the crucifix, embracing the feet of the figure. A pause.*]

HUGO. Raise your eyes and behold the Saviour's face: He moves his lips, He is speaking, do you hear what He is saying? [GREGORY *instinctively lifts his head up to*

the face of the figure.] “My Kingdom is not of this world.”

GREGORY (*rising quickly from the ground*). You’re allied with Henry!

HUGO. As I am allied with every contrite human soul.

GREGORY. He means to get absolution by force! He means to compel me to release him!

HUGO. If he meant to get it from you by force, he would come with the Lombards. He means to wrestle with you for it. Have you never wrestled with God in your prayer?

GREGORY. And if—if I should grant it to him—

HUGO. He’d return from Canossa to his native country a purified king; and that country across the Alps, that whole, immense country, would lie on its knees, and thank the great Pope, who gave it peace.

[*We hear the blast of a trumpet behind the scene, coming from a distance.*]

GREGORY (*pricking up his ears*). Do you hear that?

HUGO. I hear that some one asks admittance to the castle of Canossa.

GREGORY (*listening for a repetition of the sound*). Who—who do you think—that is?

HUGO. I think it’s Henry, Emperor Henry’s son.

GREGORY (*sinks on the chair*). Why, terrible God, didst Thou put this on me? Why on me?

HUGO (*with deep feeling*). Gregory, why are you afraid? What troubles, what torments you? Think of Goslar, and the boy who at Goslar stood before you! You loved him at once for you recognized in his words the heart of a king. This boy, this same boy, is coming to you today. He went astray; from his own free will, he is now returning. You have seen him, that other one, who wants to be king in his stead. Gregory, you have the instinct for inborn greatness—which of the two is the born king?

GREGORY (*his head pressed in his hands*). Oh God! A

spark of Thy light! A word of Thy counsel! Thy voice!

HUGO. God's voice and His counsel are within you! Ask your own heart!

GREGORY (*springing up*). My heart? My heart? Questions of destiny are not answered by the heart!

HUGO. They are, when one is a priest.

GREGORY (*walking up and down excitedly*). They are not when one is a pope who is to establish a new order in the world. Do you mean to tell me who this Henry is? Do you mean to acquaint me with this Rudolph, this pale-faced man? With those German peasants, those wood-dwellers, who goad him on to do the wrong, as you would goad on a horse to leap a ditch? Yes,—if I could take my ease on the soft pillows of sentiment;—but I— No,—Henry does not belong to my world! Therefore, he must go!

HUGO. An evil monster is lurking back of your words! What is that new order of which you are speaking? What do you call *your* world?

GREGORY. The Church.

HUGO. Have we no Church?

GREGORY. No. What we called the Church, was no Church! By the grace of the Emperor it lived. From now on, kings and emperors shall go begging at her door; for the spirit shall rule over force, not force over spirit.

HUGO. God created the Church to foster His own love; to give comfort and spiritual solace to the world. You, however, are seeking to rob her of this spiritual meaning, and clothe her with mundane power.

GREGORY. I mean to bestow a new blessing on the world; to erect a new altar, a permanent altar, before which mankind may kneel!

HUGO. Let man kneel before the *invisible* God! "He who is poor in gold is rich in soul." Gregory—it was you who said these words—don't rob the Church of her soul!

GREGORY. Is it to rob the Church of her soul when I give her a body?

HUGO. Bodies are mortal. Don't change the immortal Church into one mortal!

GREGORY. We'll know how to protect her.

HUGO. By means of human bodies? With weapons and swords?

GREGORY. Why not with weapons and swords? I mean to give Christendom a new mission,—to fight for the holy Church.

HUGO. A new battle cry you will raise in this bloody world.

GREGORY. What of it, if it be a good cry? Cursed be he who keeps his sword free from blood in a fight for a holy cause.

HUGO. Is that the new mission? What gave refuge to the oppressed bleeding from the sword of the oppressor? The Church which had no swords. What gave refuge to the poor stricken down by the rich? The Church which had no gold. This was the Church in which we grew up, you and I; which we loved, you and I; the Mother of mankind, the kind, merciful Mother. This was the Bride of the Man of Nazareth, the poor Bride of the poor Man; poor as He was, chaste as He was, holy and immortal as He was.

GREGORY (*pressing his hands to his ears*). Dreamer! Dreamer! Dreamer! [*He turns suddenly, rushes toward Hugo, kisses and embraces him.*] Oh, Hugo! God be praised, that He put such men as you are in this wretched world! Return to Clugny, to your flowers and trees, which are not any purer than your own soul. When Gregory is old and weary, he'll come to you, to dream with you of this our Church. Now, however, he has no time to dream. He must create and build, and build now, in this hour!

HUGO. Create and build? What?

GREGORY. A judgment seat before which the peoples of the world can stand, and present their grievances

against their kings. On this judgment seat will sit the son of a poor man; the crowns of the mighty will roll in the dust at the feet of Hildebrand, the common man.

HUGO. You will sit as judge; but your successors will dwell, as servants of lust, in the golden house you built for them.

GREGORY. I'm not responsible for my successors, but only for myself. I shall die; God will survive me,—to Him I leave my work.

HUGO (*pointing to the left*). And to help you in this your work, you called these men?

GREGORY. Bring Henry over to my side, and I will chase these men away as you would chase beggars!

HUGO. Henry is coming.

GREGORY. He is not coming.

HUGO. I tell you he is coming, I tell you that he is coming to humble himself.

GREGORY. He'll humble himself as man, not as King. Henry cannot come.

HUGO. Why not?

GREGORY. Because he's a king by nature!

HUGO. And therefore—

GREGORY. Therefore he must be smitten to the ground, that from his body the Church may arise!

HUGO. You know him, you love him, you know that his foes are scoundrels,—and yet you mean to crush him?

GREGORY. The cause demands it, he must be crushed.

HUGO. But you are a human being, you cannot possibly wish to do this?

GREGORY. The tool has no power to wish: it is made to serve. I am a tool in the hands of destiny.

HUGO. Then destiny is the devil.

GREGORY. Destiny is God.

HUGO. And that is the God who commands you to found your new order with the help of robbers and traitors?

GREGORY. Who cares for the trowel when the house is built? Who cares for the means when the end is holy?

HUGO (*walks up to him, stands before him with wide open eyes, and lifts up both of his arms, as though conjuring him*). Monster!

GREGORY (*returns his look, murmuring with quivering lips*). Weakling!

[*Behind the scenes, in greater proximity than before, we hear another trumpet call; also the sound of approaching steps, and a confusion of many voices.*]

The Prefect of Rome appears at the door on the right.

PREFECT. Holy Pope,—King Henry stands at the gates of Canossa!

The door on the left opens quickly from outside. RUDOLPH, HERMANN, ECKBERT, HENRY, and LIEMAR appear at the door, where they remain in silent expectation.

PREFECT. Countess Matilda surrenders her authority as mistress of the castle to the holy Pope. Shall King Henry be admitted?

GREGORY (*takes a step to the front, and is now standing in the middle of the stage. All eyes are directed on him with breathless expectancy*). He shall not be admitted!

HERMANN, ECKBERT, HENRY VON DER NORDMARK (*bursting out at once*). Ah! That's right! [*The Prefect makes a move to withdraw on the right.*]

HUGO (*rushing toward the Prefect, holding him by the shoulder*). Wait a moment! Ask him again before you go! Ask him once more!

PREFECT. Because the good Abbot commands me, I ask you once more,—shall King Henry be admitted?

HERMANN, ECKBERT, HENRY VON DER NORDMARK (*they rush toward GREGORY, fall on their knees, and take hold of the hem of his garment*). Holy Pope! Great Pope!

GREGORY (*freeing himself from them*). Be gone! Leave me! All! All!— [*He takes another half step toward the front, passes through a severe inner struggle, wrings his hands, strikes his forehead with his hands, then drops them, and straightens himself out.*] No!
[*A deep silence.*]

SCENE II

Another, larger room in the castle of Canossa. In the back wall two windows. Doors right and left. On the left, between door and footlights, a fireplace with burning fire. A few chairs along the back wall. A stone bench under the windows. A candlestick with burning candles, now almost burned down, is standing on the broad back of the bench.

GREGORY, wrapped in a fur coat, is seated in an arm-chair near the fireplace. The Prefect is standing behind the chair. RUDOLPH, HERMANN, ECKBERT, HENRY VON DER NORDMARK, are standing, a silent group, at the door on the left. A servant in the door on the right.

The Prefect motions to the servant; the latter extinguishes the lights, and draws back the curtains at the windows.

GREGORY (*wholly absorbed, has been lost in brooding thought*). Why have the lights been put out?

PREFECT. It is morning, holy Pope.

GREGORY (*shivers as if in a chill*). Stir up the fire.

PREFECT (*with a look into the fireplace*). It's been done already.

GREGORY (*points to the floor of the room, on which we see the flickering red sun-light*). The red on the floor— is this the sun?

PREFECT. It doesn't shine brightly today: winter mists conceal it.

GREGORY. Is it still cold?

PREFECT. It's very cold.

GREGORY. SNOW?

PREFECT. A fresh snow has fallen over night.

GREGORY (*rises slowly, with the feebleness of an aged man; he stands at the chair, his hand before his eyes to shield them from the sun*). And—out there—that man—is he still standing?

PREFECT (*steps to one of the windows*). King Henry is still standing at the gate. If you wish to see him—

GREGORY (*turns his face away from the windows*). I will not see him. [*He supports both of his hands on the back of the seat.*]

[*The servant steps to the Prefect, whispers something to him, and leaves on the right.*]

PREFECT. Countess Matilda wishes to know, whether you will take some food and drink?

GREGORY (*without changing his position*). No.

PREFECT. You have had no nourishment for two days, no sleep for three nights.

GREGORY (*as before*). I will not! I cannot! [*There is a pause. GREGORY lifts up his face, and looks searchingly about.*] Hugo not here? Where's Hugo, the Abbot? [*The Prefect look silently out of the window.*]

GREGORY. Below there?

PREFECT. Indeed. [*A pause.*]

GREGORY. Where's the Bishop of Bremen?

[*The Prefect looks as before out of the window.*]

GREGORY. Also with him?

[*The Prefect makes a silent bow. GREGORY walks slowly around the chair, and sinks again into it.*]

PREFECT. Countess Matilda wishes to know, whether you are ready to receive her.

GREGORY. What does the Countess want?

PREFECT. I don't know.

GREGORY. She may come.

[*The Prefect leaves on the right. The door remains open.*]

Empress AGNES, in penitential garb, enters from the right with weary step. Countess MATILDA and Queen BERTHA are by her side, supporting her.

GREGORY (*rising quickly*). Emperor Henry's wife!

AGNES (*stops, her eyes fixed on GREGORY with a piercing look. Her lips tremble, then she utters an almost in-*

articulate cry). Am I? You know me? Do you?
 [*She staggers.*]

GREGORY (*a chair for her. The Prefect moves a chair toward her. She sinks heavily upon it*). You are tired.

AGNES. Very tired.

GREGORY. Where do you come from?

AGNES. From my cell in Rome.

GREGORY. When did you arrive?

AGNES. This night. [*There is a pause.*]

GREGORY. Why do you come here?

AGNES (*lifts up her head, her eyes take on the piercing look of a moment ago, then starts suddenly from her chair in the direction of GREGORY*). Why—?

GREGORY (*looking at her terrified, he falls back one step*). Come—come to yourself.

BERTHA (*trying to quiet AGNES*). Be calm! Be calm!

AGNES (*pushing BERTHA from her, she remains in the middle of the stage, opposite GREGORY*). I've suffered every pain known to woman. I've had a child, yet it was not mine. I've prayed to God that He might take me; yet was afraid to go to Him, because I knew that with Him I'd not find my child. I've heard that my son Henry, of his own free will, turned from sin to repentance and penance. I've come, facing winter and night, that he, who was lost to me a whole life, might now be mine if only for one hour. And there—stands a man who tells me that I shall never hold him in my arms; that my child shall be denied God's grace in spite of repentance and penance. [*She points with her finger to GREGORY.*] And the man who says this is the one in whom I believed as I believed in God! [*She comes closer to him.*] Who are you to leave Emperor Henry's son standing at your door like a dog? Who are you to deny eternal blessedness to my child?

GREGORY. Come to yourself! Come to yourself!

AGNES (*her whole body trembling*). Give me back my child's right to eternal blessedness!

GREGORY (*withdrawing still farther*). Listen to me!

AGNES (*shrieking*). Give me back my child's right to eternal blessedness!

GREGORY (*places his arms on the back of the chair behind which he stands, and lays his face on his arms*). The whole world is in revolt and sends this mother to fight against me! Prefect, go down! Let the gates be opened to Henry, Emperor Henry's son! [*Whispers and a commotion throughout the room. The Prefect leaves hastily on the right.*]

BERTHA (*to AGNES*). Mother, be quiet now: you will see him. [*BERTHA points to the right.*] There, over that threshold he will step, there he will enter, your Henry, my Henry, your son!

The Prefect and two servants enter hastily from the right. The Prefect moves quickly the chair back on which AGNES was seated, so that the entrance from the right becomes free. The two servants remain on the right and the left of the door, holding back the curtain on both sides.

PREFECT (*while moving the chair*). King Henry is coming!
 [GREGORY is standing behind his chair, his eyes turned toward the right. The Saxons are in a state of rigid tension. BERTHA and MATILDA put their arms about AGNES and lead her to the rear. A breathless expectancy prevails.]

KING HENRY enters from the right, slowly, and with heavy step. He is in armor, without sword; over his armor, he wears a penitential cowl made of hair. His head is bare; in his brown hair, which hangs down dishevelled, there is snow. His eyes are deeply sunken; his face deathly pale. Abbot HUGO and Bishop LIEMAR follow him. After they have entered, the two servants let the curtain fall, leave, and close the door behind them.

HENRY (*has advanced to the middle of the stage, his eyes fixed on GREGORY, looking neither to the right nor to the left, nor seeing anything else. Then stops, and makes a move to kneel down. We perceive that this is not easy for him to do, since his limbs have become*



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FRITZ VON UHDE

THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT

stiffened with cold. He turns a little toward HUGO and LIEMAR). My knees and limbs are stiffened with cold—help me. [Abbot HUGO and Bishop LIEMAR take a position on his right and left; KING HENRY places his arms on their shoulders, and, thus supported by them, lets himself down on his knees. His eyes remain immovably fixed on GREGORY.] I, Henry, King of the Germans, confess myself guilty in the sight of God for having insulted you, His vicar, with slanderous, degrading words. I confess myself guilty in the sight of mankind for having rewarded with ingratitude the most faithful of hearts, for having been faithless to my wife. I confess myself guilty in the sight of nature for having risen in enmity against my own mother. Three times I have deserved death. Three days and three nights you have kept me standing in my repentance. [He bends his head.] I acknowledge— [He stops abruptly.] I acknowledge that the penance you put upon me was righteous.

[A deep silence prevails. BERTHA has pressed her head on AGNES' bosom; we can hear suppressed sobs.]

GREGORY *(has stood immovable during KING HENRY'S confession. We see in his features the strong emotion which HENRY'S words have awakened. He now moves slowly two steps toward him, then stops). Yes,—here is indeed the King! [Overcome by his emotion he opens both of his arms.] Henry! Henry! Henry! [He rushes toward HENRY, clasps both of his arms about his neck, and presses his face against his head; tears stream from his eyes.]*

HENRY *(without moving, with bowed head). Don't kiss the head on which the curse still rests.*

GREGORY *(placing his hand on HENRY'S head). This hand has put it upon you; this hand shall take it away; be no longer cursed.*

HENRY *(opens both of his arms, lifts up his face, and*

embraces GREGORY). Oh!— [*He kisses him, then rises; his eyes fall upon AGNES.*] Mother!

AGNES (*falls into his arms*). My child! My child! My child!

HENRY. I've been your son so many years; so many years were needed for me to learn how to pronounce the holy word,—mother.

AGNES It is late,—not too late; I shall now be able to tell your father that I have heard it from your lips.

HENRY (*clinging to her*). It is not yet time for you to die.

AGNES. My last hour has come; there is nothing more to come after this hour. [*She falls upon his bosom. Upon a motion of HENRY, the chair is moved to the front; he places her gently upon it. MATILDA and BERTHA go to her; BERTHA kneels before her.*] Stay with me. My eyes are growing dark. [*She reaches out her hand, HENRY takes her hand in his.*] What shall I tell Emperor Henry from his son?

HENRY. Tell him, his son Henry had many enemies; but since he overcame the worst of them all, Henry himself, he has none other to fear. Tell him, he had also friends. [*He offers his right hand to HUGO, the Abbot.*] Hugo, my friend! [*He offers his left hand to Bishop LIEMAR.*] Liemar, my faithful one! [*His eyes fall upon RUDOLPH of Suabia, and on the Saxons; seeing them, he lets go the hands of HUGO and of LIEMAR, and advances a step.*] And there—Rudolph, you? And with you—those others? [*He advances another step toward the group, and offers them his hands.*] Does this mean reconciliation? [*He turns to GREGORY, who, in the meantime, has withdrawn nearly to the back wall, and is standing there between HENRY and the group of the Saxons.*] Pope Gregory—that's your work?

GREGORY. The princes of your country have come to me, and I have heard them. You will promise them safe conduct back to Germany?

HENRY. I—promise them safe conduct—? They shall go back with me; and when we, hand in hand, shall descend the Alps, the church bells of Germany will ring of their own accord, her fields will bear new fruit, and peace will be throughout the land. Rudolph, why do you stay there? Come to me—

HERMANN. Not yet.

ECKBERT. The holy Pope must first decide.

HENRY. What?

HERMANN (*bursting out rudely*). Which of you shall be king in Germany.

HENRY (*uttering a low cry*). Ah— [*With a sudden start he straightens himself; a new vigor transforms him.*]

HERMANN. For Rudolph shall be our king! Not you!

ECKBERT. We have chosen Rudolph in your place.

HENRY (*stands motionless, then turns slowly his face toward GREGORY*). Why—they didn't tell you that?

GREGORY. They did tell me.

HENRY (*starts, controls himself quickly*). And—you?

HUGO (*steps behind GREGORY and whispers to him over his shoulder*). Your heart told you what to do.

GREGORY (*softly, with quivering hand*). Leave me!

HENRY. And—you?

GREGORY. The princes of your country proposed to have a Diet at Augsburg—

HENRY. At Augsburg? A Diet—? And there shall be decided—what?

HERMANN. Which of you shall be king.

ECKBERT. And the holy Pope shall decide this.

HENRY (*to GREGORY*). You are silent. Because you are astonished—is it not? But you must speak—for if you are silent much longer, those men may think that you agree with them. For that reason, speak. Speak! [*His limbs begin to quiver; we see that his emotion increases.*] For if you do not speak, it may be that I myself—myself shall come to think that the voice which has driven me to you was after all not God's

voice—[*swept away by a terrible vehemence*]—but that of the devil, who lied to me, and deceived me, and now laughs at the fool whom he has drawn into his net!

HUGO (*who during these last words, with every sign of fearful anxiety, has taken a place near HENRY, now rushes toward him, and throws both of his arms about him*). Henry—my Emperor's son—dearer to me than my own child, lose not your faith in God! Lose not your faith in God!

HENRY (*gnashing his teeth*). Three days and three nights I've spent in hunger and in affliction, amid ice and snow, in shame and disgrace—and behind my back a wily plot—

AGNES (*rising rigidly from her chair*). Who has entered? Take my veil from my face, I cannot see; I hear Henry's voice, the voice that spoke at Worms on that terrible day!

HENRY (*doubling up his fist*). Blood and revenge! Cry of my soul! [*He controls himself.*] It shall not yet be! My God, help me against myself! Christ, Saviour, who wast a King among the heavenly hosts, and yet didst bow Thy neck under the scourge, help me against myself! [*He turns suddenly toward GREGORY.*] Once already I've knelt before you. I did it for myself. [*He throws himself down on his knees.*] I am kneeling before you a second time! For Germany I am kneeling here! Do not be silent! Your silence is the coffin in which Germany's salvation and happiness will be buried! If you knew Germany's misery and need, you would speak—speak! You, appointed by God to make peace on earth, give me this peace on my way, not war, raving civil war!

GREGORY (*motionless*). The princes of your country assured me that no war was necessary.

HENRY (*rises, bows with an icy scorn toward GREGORY*). And you believe them! Credulous man! Happy child of innocence! Because a handful of robbers took it

in their heads to ply their shameful trade in Germany, you believed the German King would at once toss his crown to them, and run away? [*He moves to the centre of the stage.*] Rudolph of Suabia, come to me! [*RUDOLPH makes a motion, HERMANN, ECKBERT, and HENRY hold him back, speaking to him in a low tone. HENRY takes hold of the penitential cowl that he wears over his armor, tears it from top to bottom, and throws the pieces on the ground.*] Don't you recognize your Lord and King? [*RUDOLPH remains as before. HENRY crosses the stage toward him, and seizes his hand.*] Then I'll show you how to come!

HERMANN, ECKBERT, HENRY VON DER NORDMARK (*take hold of their swords*). Ah—!

HENRY (*stands before them, and lifts up his clenched fists*). Don't wake up my sword! It is ready! [*He pulls RUDOLPH forcibly to the front, lets him go, and faces him.*] You are the man who permits himself to be placed by his underlings upon Emperor Henry's throne? [*He strikes him on the shoulder, uttering a coarse laugh.*] You'll have to be glued on, my man, else you'll fall off! The measure of your head—it's too small for Germany's crown! The measure of your soul—it's too weak for this great crime! Rudolph, I pity you! Beg my pardon, and I'll forgive you. [*He points to the ground at his feet, waiting a moment.*] But, if you don't, instead of forgiveness will come the law! [*He seizes RUDOLPH's right hand, and opens the fingers of his hand.*] See, this is the hand, with which you swore the oath of allegiance to me! I know how to read hands. Take heed! Death is written in this hand, an early death, the death that traitors die!

AGNES (*who, in the meantime, supported by BERTHA and MATILDA, has stood erect*). I see flames before my eyes! Flames of the fire of hell! Of— [*She collapses, and falls on the chair.*]

BERTHA (*with a shriek*). The Empress is dying!

[*She kneels down with MATILDA by the side of AGNES.*]

HENRY (*overcome by sudden emotion, throws himself at the feet of his mother*). You are going to leave us now, mother? Going to leave your son? Going to leave Germany? [*He rises.*] Go!— It is best: for I fear the time has come that threatens disaster to all to whom Germany is more than a mere name!

[*The head of the Empress falls backward; Countess MATILDA presses it with both arms against her bosom. BERTHA steps to HENRY who is standing in the centre of the stage, looking gloomily upon his mother.*]

BERTHA (*embracing him*). Pray with me; pray to God for your mother.

HENRY. The happy may pray to Him! He promised me what He did not fulfil. The voice with which I once called upon Him is gone. I can no longer pray.

ACT IV

In the castle of Sant' Angelo at Rome. A vaulted room. Walls and ceiling made of hewn stone. The entrance door is cut diagonally in the right corner. In the back wall is a bay window, the two windows of which meet in a sharp angle. The windows are small. The room has the appearance of a chamber in a fortress. It is night. A lamp hangs from the ceiling, which gives a dim light. When the curtain rises the entrance door stands open; through this door we look out upon a hallway, dimly lighted, the walls and ceiling of which are, like the room in front, built of hewn stone. A couch stands in the front room placed crosswise on the stage.

The Prefect of Rome, the Captain of the castle, and two soldiers are seen walking up the hallway.

PREFECT (*entering*). The Captain of the castle!

CAPTAIN (*approaches*). Prefect?

PREFECT. Did you receive my order?

CAPTAIN. All preparations have been made to receive him. Is the Pope coming?

PREFECT. From Saint Peter's. You may expect him any moment.

CAPTAIN (*motions to the soldiers and points to the bay-window*). From this point you can see Saint Peter's. Station yourself there, and watch! [*The soldiers step into the bay-window and look out of the window.*]

PREFECT. Tomorrow morning it may be too late; King Henry is besieging the walls of the Vatican.

CAPTAIN. He has lain there twice before.

PREFECT. But we are standing: to stand makes one tired.

CAPTAIN. Hm? Can a Roman become tired?

PREFECT. Let us be so among ourselves. Moreover, Gottfried von Bouillon has joined him with fresh troops; it's not impossible that he may make an attack tomorrow with his whole army.

CAPTAIN. If the walls give way, Saint Peter's will fall into his hands.

PREFECT. And with Saint Peter's, the Pope.

CAPTAIN (*with a smile*). Therefore, he is preparing for the retreat. [*In a confidential undertone.*] Do you know—

PREFECT. What?

CAPTAIN. It's a pity he didn't go into the army.

PREFECT. The Pope—?

CAPTAIN. He would make a much better soldier than priest.

ONE OF THE SOLDIERS (*calling from the window*). Prefect!
[*Prefect and Captain look up.*]

THE SOLDIER. A procession of priests! From Saint Peter's! With torches! In their midst, one in a sedan chair!

PREFECT. Let me see! [*Hastens to the window.*] That's he! [*Returns from the window and looks about.*] Have you prepared for his comforts?

CAPTAIN (*pointing to the couch*). Well—there.

PREFECT. Of course—no one would want to live here unless obliged to. [*He beckons the soldiers to come from the window.*] You there, come from that win-

dow, and get out! [*To the Captain.*] As soon as he has entered, see that the gates of the castle are locked and bolted.

CAPTAIN. It shall be done.

[*We hear a confusion of voices and the noise of approaching steps behind the scene. They increase in loudness as they approach.*]

A multitude of priests come with hasty tripping step along the hall, their leader is carrying a large cross. They enter and crowd together, timidly, along the rear and in the bay-window, where they remain. GREGORY, supported by two other priests, enters slowly. His walk, his bearing, and the features of his face, show extreme exhaustion.

PREFECT. Holy Pope! You are exhausted! [*Pointing to the couch.*] We have prepared a couch for you.

GREGORY (*stops in the centre of the stage, looks about, without noticing the Prefect*). The crown!

PREFECT. What is it you wish?

GREGORY. The crown!

A young priest enters hastily, carrying a metal box in his two hands.

THE YOUNG PRIEST. I'm bringing it, your Holiness!

GREGORY (*his face lights up. He lifts quickly the cover of the box; in it lies the imperial crown*). Leap now over the wall! Break into Saint Peter's holy Church! Here is the soul of Saint Peter's! In this chamber, the world!

PREFECT. It's too much for you. I beg you, take a rest. [*He makes GREGORY sit down on the couch.*]

GREGORY (*seats himself*). Who says I'm weak? It's not true. Come here! [*He beckons the young priest to come to him.*] I must see it! [*The young priest kneels in front of the couch, supporting the box on his knees. GREGORY gazes at the crown with devouring looks.*] That's food and drink, and solace and power! Do you see the rays of light that flash from it? Flames and sparks, blue flames, like the blue light in the eye of a

hungry wolf! They are Henry's thoughts!—Imperial crown is it's name! The head on which it rests aspires to realms beyond the clouds! Down with thee, pride of the world! Down! Down!—

THE YOUNG PRIEST (*placing the box on the floor*). At your feet! At your feet!

GREGORY. I've sworn to God, that I will cast the crowns of this world into the dust before His feet! I've grown old since I made this oath! My work is done! For a sign of what I've done, I'll do this! [*He puts his foot upon the crown.*]

THE PREFECT AND THE CAPTAIN. God be with us!

GREGORY. Fools! Don't you see that God is with me? Ten thousand are outside, with horses and arms, shouting and clamoring for this crown! And here am I, I alone! I have it—I will keep it—and will not surrender it!

[*He sinks down exhausted. There is a pause. Behind the scene, we hear, coming from below, three long, measured beats, as though a hammer was struck against a door. The soldier, who before had stood in the bay-window, appears in the hallway.*]

THE SOLDIER. Prefect!

PREFECT. What is it?

THE SOLDIER. There is some one at the gate.

PREFECT. Who?

THE SOLDIER. One of the army of the king.

CAPTAIN. What?

PREFECT. The Romans allowed him to come in?

THE SOLDIER. They allowed him to come in, and conducted him to the castle. They are below, a great crowd. They demand that he be admitted. They say he comes to treat of peace with the holy Pope.

GREGORY (*who, in the meantime, has lain as in a swoon, sits up*). Who is speaking of me?

PREFECT (*to GREGORY*). Holy Pope, the tidings come, that King Henry has sent an envoy, to negotiate peace with you.

GREGORY. Does he offer submission? Will he through penance release himself from the ban?

PREFECT (*to the soldier*). Is that what he wants?

THE SOLDIER. That I don't know.

PREFECT (*to GREGORY*). Holy Pope, that we don't know.

GREGORY. No other conditions will admit him.

PREFECT. Holy Pope, it—it might well be—?

GREGORY. No other conditions will admit him.

[*From below come repeated, irregular sounding beats, as though a great number of hands were beating on the gates. Cries of voices are heard from below.*]

CAPTAIN (*hastens to the window, and looks down*). Holy Father, the Romans are losing their patience! They demand by force of arms that he be admitted.

GREGORY. Are the Romans allied with him?

PREFECT. Not that, exactly; to tell the truth, they—they are longing for peace.

GREGORY (*speaking to himself*). Bodies are defending the Church! Bodies are mortal! They become tired and fagged out! [*Lifts up his head.*] Prefect!

PREFECT. What is your wish?

GREGORY. Does any one know where the Abbot of Clugny is?

PREFECT. Abbot Hugo? They say he is in the camp of the King.

GREGORY (*lost in gloomy thought*). Hugo—in Henry's camp—

PREFECT. Have you no instructions to give?

GREGORY (*in an angry voice*). They shall fight; and, if needs be, die for the holy Church!

PREFECT. But—but, possibly,—very many will have to die.

GREGORY (*with a scorn*). How cautious you are, Prefect! [*To himself.*] Of course—what does he care about

the Church? Hugo even left it! I'm shivering with loneliness! [*Renewed noise coming from below.*]

GREGORY. Let him come! Open the door!

[*The Prefect and the Captain leave. A long pause.*]

A knight enters wearing a helmet with lowered visor, a mantle over his armor. The Prefect, and the Captain come up the hall.

PREFECT (*to the Knight*). Surrender your sword! When you leave, you shall have it back.

[*The Knight surrenders silently his sword to the Prefect, and motions him and the Captain to withdraw. Both leave. The Knight beckons also to the clergy to withdraw; these look inquiringly at GREGORY. Receiving no sign from him, they leave, closing the door behind them. The Knight is standing in the rear stately erect.*]

GREGORY (*without turning toward him*). You bring me Henry's submission?

THE KNIGHT. He submitted himself when you were the stronger.

GREGORY (*startled at the words of the Knight, as though listening to the sound of his voice; he turns slowly his head toward him, and stares at him for awhile in silence*). Am I not—still the stronger? Is Henry not under the ban?

THE KNIGHT. He was freed from it at Canossa.

GREGORY. But I put the ban upon him a second time. Did they not hear of it in Germany?

THE KNIGHT. They heard of it.

GREGORY. What then did they do in Germany? What did the people say?

THE KNIGHT. They heard of it.

GREGORY. What did they do when they heard of it?

THE KNIGHT. That's all there was about it.

[*GREGORY clutches the pillows, and utters a low sound.*]

THE KNIGHT. When Gregory cursed Henry the first time, God's anger was in his words; when he did it a second time, it was a man's impotent hatred.

GREGORY. Did Henry send you? Is that what he said to you?

THE KNIGHT. Henry did not send me.

GREGORY. Not? You are a German? You come from Germany?

THE KNIGHT. I am a German, I come from Germany.

GREGORY. And—and Henry did not send you? [*A pause.*] Who did send you? Did King Rudolph send you?

THE KNIGHT. That may be.

GREGORY. What has he to say to me? What is his message?

THE KNIGHT. He sends you his farewell: he's dead!

GREGORY. Rudolph dead?

THE KNIGHT. Slain in a battle against Henry. He sends you a legacy.

GREGORY. A—a legacy?

THE KNIGHT. The hand with which he swore allegiance to his king, which was cut from his body in bloody battle, the hand, which Henry read to him at Canossa, prophesying his death,—as a legacy he sends you this hand!

[*He puts his hand under his mantle, produces a man's right hand, and throws it at GREGORY's feet.*]

GREGORY (*rises with a cry of terror, sinks down by the side of the couch, burying his face deep in the pillows*). Oh!— [*Kneeling at the couch.*] How do you know that Henry read his death in Rudolph's hand?

THE KNIGHT. Because it was I who read it!

GREGORY. You—you are—?

THE KNIGHT (*lifts quickly his helmet*). I am Henry, the King. [*There is a pause.*] Do you feel the silence round about us? It's the world, holding its breath, because we are, for the first time, alone. [*He points to the hand.*] Death is between us! I will cover it. [*He takes the mantle from his shoulder, and throws it over the hand.*] May life spring forth from this hour!

GREGORY (*rises from his knees, and seats himself on the couch*). What do you ask of me?

HENRY. My right.

GREGORY. What do you call your right?

HENRY. The imperial crown.

GREGORY (*scornfully*). You say I am not stronger than you are; yet you come begging of me.

HENRY. I do not come begging: tomorrow I shall be emperor!

GREGORY. If I refuse it to you?

HENRY. Then some one else will crown me.

GREGORY. The Pope only can crown an emperor!

HENRY. Then another pope will reign in your place tomorrow.

GREGORY. Who?

HENRY. Wibert of Ravenna.

GREGORY. Wibert? The priests will tear the holy vestments from his body!

HENRY. A hosanna the priests will sing him.

GREGORY. Who tells you that?

HENRY. One in whom you believe,—Hugo, the Abbot of Clugny.

GREGORY. Hugo—for Wibert? That's not true!

HENRY. Come into my camp, ask him yourself! [GREGORY *collapses on his couch. A pause.*] But it is my wish, that *you* crown me!

GREGORY. Why—I?

HENRY. Because I cannot forget the day when I saw you for the first time, many years ago, up there, at Goslar. You looked so different from other people! [GREGORY *turns slowly toward him.*] You looked to me like one who could work wonders! If it be true that you have this power, use it: it is your last opportunity!

GREGORY. What wonder do you expect of me?

HENRY. Since my visit at Canossa, I lost my faith. Give me back my faith!

GREGORY. So—that's what you want?

HENRY. Since then something died within me—cause it to live again!

GREGORY (*his eyes turn away from HENRY, his head drops on his breast; he wrings his hands; his whole body trembles, showing that intense emotion surges through him*). How his heart yearns after mine! How my heart answers his! [*He wrings his hands more wildly, suddenly they fall asunder; he rises quickly.*] Henry! I wish to God you were not King!

HENRY (*with a grave smile*). My foes say that also.

GREGORY. Not King just at this time—while I am Pope!

HENRY. I don't understand you.

GREGORY (*standing at the head of the couch*). But if you did understand me, the miracle you are asking for would be wrought!

HENRY. I want you to restore my faith.

GREGORY. Then you would have what will give you faith.

HENRY. What?

GREGORY. The Infinite, the Eternal, the Divine, the Church.

HENRY. I want the invisible God, in whom I once believed!

GREGORY. He lives in the Church! Believe in her, and He will again be yours!

HENRY (*looks at him in blank astonishment*). And—if I—would—

GREGORY (*stretches, from the place where he stands, both hands toward HENRY*). Oh, if only you would! Oh, if you would come! If you would come to her, as a son to his mother! Come, Henry! Henry, come! Do you remember what you said to me on that day in Goslar? You said that you would not suffer any one to put out people's eyes! Kingly boy, kingly man, think of what you said! Put it now into practice,—make the blind see, make them see what will give them eternal salvation! You, first among men, you, mightiest among men, humble yourself first, submit yourself first, kneel before the one who is greater than you!

HENRY. Before the Church?

GREGORY. Yes, yes, yes, before the Church, which is as great as God Himself!

HENRY. I understand what you ask of me — tell me, What will you give me in return?

GREGORY. What will I give you? What will I give you? I will take the ban from you; I will recognize you before the whole world as King; I will crown you Emperor before the world; I will receive you as my partner in my great work, as my friend, my brother, my son, as the most beloved son of the Church! Henry, you who have suffered so much from hatred — your soul will be filled with the light of heavenly bliss, when the stream of universal love which the Church is able to give, overflows you!

HENRY. Give me your love of your own free-will.

GREGORY. I do give you my love of my own free-will.

HENRY. No, you sell it to me. Let me be your friend without being your servant!

GREGORY. Does the son become a servant in submitting himself to his mother?

HENRY. No true mother lets her son feel this submission.

GREGORY. You shall not feel it! The outside world shall not see your submission, the outside world shall not see you kneel! A thousand steps I take toward you — one only I ask of you! Here where I am is the Church; where you are, is the world. Let this stone chamber become the place of that momentous event where the body humbled itself before the spirit! Subdue the king, bow your neck, kneel before me; no one will know it, no one will see it —

HENRY. One will see it!

GREGORY. Who?

HENRY. I!

GREGORY. Do it for humanity's sake!

HENRY. I cannot kneel.

GREGORY. Did you not kneel once before?

HENRY. It did not help me. At that time when I knelt,

God died within me. Return to me the God I sought to find in you and you have taken from me!

GREGORY. I cannot, unless you humble yourself. Humble yourself!

HENRY. No!

GREGORY. You must—

HENRY. No!

GREGORY (*throwing up both hands*). Were all my words in vain that I have spoken, all that I implored of you? Is this hour lost, this one hour, which once was and will never return? Oh, you stubborn man!

HENRY. Oh,—deceiver!

GREGORY (*taken aback*). Deceiver—?

HENRY. Yes, deceiver! Who wishes people to believe that he is above weakness and desire—yet who hungers after power, and is satisfied with empty show! Twice I have searched your soul, twice I've found there nothing but emptiness!

GREGORY. Now you shall not be emperor!

HENRY. Now I shall be emperor without your help! [*He takes the mantle from the floor, pointing to the window.*] The day is dawning red. Thousands have died because of you, ten thousands will die because of you—shall their blood be upon you? Shall there be war?

GREGORY. War from generation to generation, between father and son! War there shall be! And a curse upon you from now on till eternity!

HENRY (*throws the mantle about his shoulders*). It's not a wonder worker—it's a sorcerer that is cursing the world! Your voice is drowned by another, mightier than yours—the voice of despair! Your curse is made void by another, mightier than yours—the curse of the deceived! All those that have sought refuge in hope, all those that have struggled to keep their faith, have yearned after God, all those that have put their trust in you, and have received a stone in place of bread, and a glittering plaything instead of eternal

life,— for all those I speak, for all those I say to you,
You shall be cursed, cursed, cursed! [*He rushes out.*]

GREGORY (*stretches out both arms*). Let me pray— pray—
pray—

[*He staggers, and falls across the couch, so that his
head is hanging down.*]

*The priests appear at the door; they look about anxiously for a moment,
then enter tumultuously.*

THE PRIESTS. The Pope is dying!

[*The moment they are drawing near, they perceive
the dead hand on the floor.*]

ONE OF THE PRIESTS. See— what's lying there on the floor!

A SECOND PRIEST (*bending over*). A man's hand hacked
from the body!

ALL THE PRIESTS. A dead man's hand!

[*They fall back terrified to the rear.*]

THE YOUNG PRIEST (*the one who brought the crown is kneeling
by the side of GREGORY and has lifted his head on
the couch*). Don't run away! Don't you see that he
is dying? Let us pray for his soul!

THE PRIESTS. Let us pray for his soul!

[*They kneel down in the rear.*]

THE YOUNG PRIEST (*leading in prayer*). "When the hour
is at hand which is followed by no hour—"

THE PRIESTS (*repeating the words*). "Which is followed
by no hour—"

THE YOUNG PRIEST (*leading in prayer*). "When the night
is at hand which is followed by no day—"

THE PRIESTS (*as before*). "Which is followed by no
day—"

THE YOUNG PRIEST (*as before*). "Then lead me in the
darkness, have pity upon me, O Lord!"

THE PRIESTS (*as before*). "Have pity upon me, O Lord!"

GREGORY (*raising his head*). What are you muttering?

THE YOUNG PRIEST. We are praying.

GREGORY. Prayers for one dying?

THE YOUNG PRIEST. Prayers for the last hour.

GREGORY. Is there a dying one here?

ALL THE PRIESTS. Pray with us, holy Father! Pray with us!

[*Behind the scene, coming from the distance, a loud trumpet blast. The priests jump from the ground, and rush to the window.*]

ONE OF THE PRIESTS. That's King Henry, who is attacking the walls of Rome!

SECOND PRIEST. Death is upon us!

ALL THE PRIESTS (*run in deathly fear to the front, throw themselves before GREGORY, embracing his knees*).

Pray with us! Pray! Pray!

GREGORY (*pushing them away*). Cowards!

[*From the distance a second trumpet blast, then a great uproar and confusion of sounds.*]

ALL THE PRIESTS. Did you hear that?

GREGORY. To arms!

ALL THE PRIESTS. Pray for the salvation of your soul!

GREGORY. Fight for the holy Church!

ALL THE PRIESTS. Pray! Pray!

GREGORY. Upon the walls with you! [*He struggles up from the couch.*] Give me the crucifix! [*He reaches after the crucifix; it is given him.*]

ONE OF THE PRIESTS. What are you going to do?

GREGORY. I am going up on the walls! [*He straightens himself out, leaning against the cross.*] Help me onto my feet! Upon the walls! Fight! Die for the holy Church! [*He staggers, lets the cross fall and sinks back on the couch.*] Oh, my body—my body—wretched body!—

The Prefect comes rushing in.

PREFECT. Holy Father—Holy Father—Gottfried von Bouillon has scaled the walls! The Germans are inside the city!

GREGORY. Fight for the holy Church! Fight against Henry and hell! For the holy Church!

The Captain appears at the door.

CAPTAIN. Prefect! You are wanted! King Henry has entered Saint Peter's! There is a frightful massacre in the church!

[The Prefect rushes out followed by the Captain. The priests jump to their feet. They are greatly terrified.]

ONE OF THE PRIESTS. That's God's own judgment!

A SECOND PRIEST. Look at the dead man's hand! It's pointing to him!

FIRST PRIEST. He can't pray!

SECOND PRIEST. God has forsaken him!

ALL THE PRIESTS. God has forsaken him! Save yourself! Flee! Save yourself!

[They crowd together in wild confusion toward the door, and leave in haste. GREGORY sinks back with a moan.]

THE YOUNG PRIEST (*carried away by the confusion of the fleeing priests, is returning, and throws himself at GREGORY's feet*). I will not flee! I will not! I will not!

GREGORY. Who are you? The lamp burns dimly—who are you that is speaking to me?

THE YOUNG PRIEST (*throwing his arm about GREGORY, presses his face upon GREGORY's breast*). One of your people, the last, the least, but one of them!

GREGORY (*groping for the head of the young man*). You are the boy who—who brought me the crown?

THE YOUNG PRIEST. I'm the one! I'm the one! Unknown, I've looked up to you; in obscurity, I've prayed to be with you! I was a beggar all my days, death leads me now to you, to your side! I may die now with you,—you, my sanctuary,—you, my God!

[Behind the scene a great tumult arises. We hear the words: "Henry for Emperor, Wibert for Pope!"]

GREGORY (*startled*). What do these call?

THE YOUNG PRIEST (*throwing himself upon him*). Don't listen to them! Don't listen to them!

[*Behind the scene repeated cries: "Henry for Emperor, Wibert for Pope!"*]

GREGORY (*starting up*). They are calling,—“Wibert for Pope!”

THE YOUNG PRIEST (*throwing himself with redoubled passion upon him*). They are lying! They are lying! They are lying!

GREGORY (*raising himself feebly on his feet, he supports himself with both hands on the shoulders of the young priest, who is kneeling before him*). Who—is your Pope?

THE YOUNG PRIEST. You are the Pope, none but you!

GREGORY. Do you believe in me?

THE YOUNG PRIEST. As I believe in God so I believe in you!

GREGORY. You love me?

THE YOUNG PRIEST. Father and mother, brother and sister, I'll give up for you!

GREGORY. O my God! Thou hast sent him to me in this my last hour! Thou didst know that I wanted nothing for myself, but all things for the holy Cause alone! Thou didst send him to me in my last hour, this man here, O my God! [*He puts his hands on the head of the young man.*] My hands are on your head! Youth, golden season of life, I bless you! Future, I link you to my work! You shall remain when I have passed away; you shall live when I have died! Shadows are dimming my vision! Look into my eyes! Sun is in your eyes! You are the Tomorrow, which is dawning in triumph over the Yesterday!

[*Behind the scene, in immediate proximity, once more repeated cries of: "Henry for Emperor, Wilbert for Pope!"*]

GREGORY (*in a rigid position, standing, his right hand raised*). The Future—the Future! That—that's mine!——

[*He staggers, falls backward on the couch, and dies.*]

NOBLE BLOOD

By ERNST VON WILDENBRUCH

TRANSLATED BY MURIEL ALMON



ARE there people, I wonder, who are entirely free from curiosity?—People who, when they see someone looking attentively and interestedly at an unknown object, are able to pass by without feeling in the least an itching desire to stop, to follow the direction of the other's gaze and find out what mysterious thing it is he sees?

If anyone should ask me whether I, personally, belong to that strong sort of men, I do not know whether I could honestly say yes, and certain it is that there was one moment in my life when I not only felt such an itching desire but actually yielded to it and did what any curious person does.

The place where that happened was a wine-tavern in the old town where I was practising at the court as a young, unpaid barrister; the time was a summer afternoon.

The wine-tavern, on the ground floor, at the side of a large square of which its windows commanded a view in all directions, was almost empty at that hour. To my mind—for I always have been a lover of solitude—it was only the pleasanter on that account.

There were three of us: the fat tapster who poured golden yellow muscatel into my glass from a bottle gray with dust, then I myself, sitting in a corner of the many-angled, cosy room, sipping the fragrant wine, and finally another guest who had seated himself at one of the two open windows, a goblet of red wine before him on the window-sill, a long, well-colored meerschaum cigar-holder in his mouth, from which he spread clouds of smoke about him.

This man, whose reddish face, tinged with a bluish hue in spots, was surrounded by a long gray beard, was an old pensioned colonel known to everyone in town; he belonged to the colony of retired officers who had settled in this pleasant place and were slowly advancing toward the end of their days in tedious monotony.

About noon they were to be seen strolling through the streets in groups of two or three, shortly to disappear into the wine-tavern, where, between twelve and one, they would gather about the round table in response to the "call to conversation." On the table stood pint bottles of sour moselle, above it hung a cloud of bluish cigar-smoke, and through the nebulous veil would be heard peevish, husky voices discussing the latest announcements in the list of promotions.

The old colonel also was a regular visitor in the wine-tavern; he did not come at the hour of the general roll-call, however, but later, in the afternoon.

His was a solitary nature. He was seldom seen walking with others; he lived outside the town on the other side of the river, and the view from his windows was of the broad meadow-lands that the stream, when it overflowed its banks in spring, usually covered with water. Sometimes when I passed by the house where he lived I had seen him standing at the window, his blood-shot eyes gazing meditatively out of their puffed and wrinkled lids at the gray wilderness of water beyond the dam.

And now, there he sat at the window of the wine-tavern gazing steadily out into the square across the sandy surface of which the wind swept the dust in swirls.

What could he be looking at?

The fat tapster who was bored with us two silent people, had noticed the Colonel's behavior before I did; he stood in the middle of the room, his hands behind his back, under his coattails, and looked out of the other window into the square.

There must surely be something going on out there.

As quietly as possible so as not to distract the attention of the other two, I rose from my seat. But there was nothing particular to be seen. The square was deserted, except that in the middle, near the ornamental lamppost, I noticed two school-boys who stood facing each other in threatening attitudes.

Was that what so engaged the old man's attention?

Human nature being as it is, once I had begun to watch I could not turn my eyes away till I had seen whether the threatened fight would actually take place. The boys had just come from the afternoon session; they still carried their schoolbags under their arms. They were probably about the same age, but one was a head taller than the other. This bigger boy, a thin, lanky fellow with a disagreeable expression on his freckled face, was blocking the way for the other, who was short and fat and had a good-natured face with chubby, red cheeks. At the same time the bully seemed to be teasing the smaller boy with irritating remarks. The distance was too great, however, for me to understand what he said. After this had lasted a little while the fight began. Both boys dropped their bags; the short, fat one lowered his head as if he meant to ram in his opponent's stomach and rushed at him.

"Now then, the big fellow will soon have him in chancery," said the Colonel, who had watched the fighters' movements attentively and seemed to disapprove of the little lad's tactics.

It was difficult to say to whom he spoke these words, he said them aloud to himself without addressing either of us.

His prediction was fulfilled immediately.

The taller boy avoided his enemy's attack; a moment later he had thrown his left arm around the other's neck so that he held his head as if in a noose; he had him, as we say, "in chancery." With his right hand he seized his antagonist's right fist with which the latter was trying to belabor his back and after he had captured him completely and got him into his power he dragged him in mocking tri-

umph round the lamppost, once and again and then a third time.

“He’s a flabby chap,” said the old Colonel, continuing his monologue, “he always lets himself be caught that way.” Apparently he was dissatisfied with the short, fat fellow and could not bear the tall, thin one.

“For they fight every day,” he went on, looking at the tapster now, to whom it seemed he wanted to explain his interest in the matter.

Then he turned his face again toward the window.

“I’m curious to see whether the little lad will come!”

He had scarcely finished growling these words when a slender little fellow came rushing out of the parkway that ran into the square at that point.

“There he is!” said the old Colonel. He took a swallow of red wine and stroked his beard.

The little lad whose resemblance to the chubby-cheeked boy marked him as his brother, but who looked like a more delicate and improved edition of the latter, had come up to the others. With both hands he raised his school-bag and gave the tall, thin boy such a blow with it on the back that we could hear the sound.

“Bravo!” said the old Colonel.

The tall, thin boy kicked at his new assailant like a horse. The little chap avoided the kick and at the same instant another blow descended on the tall, thin boy, this time on his head, knocking off his cap.

In spite of that he did not relax his strangle hold and still gripped his prisoner’s right hand firmly.

Now the little boy tore open his bag with truly mad haste; out of the bag he took his pencil-box, out of the pencil-box his penholder and, using the steel pen as a weapon, he suddenly began to stab the tall, thin boy’s hand.

“The confounded youngster!” said the Colonel to himself, “a capital little chap!” His red eyes shone with delight.

Things grew too hot now for the tall, thin boy; irritated

by the pain he let go his first antagonist and fell upon the little fellow, pummeling him furiously with his fists.

But the latter turned into a regular little wildcat. His cap had fallen from his head; his curly hair clung about his deathly pale, delicately formed face in which his eyes flamed. His schoolbag with all its contents lay on the ground and across them he flew at the tall, thin boy.

He pressed close to his antagonist and belabored his stomach and body with his convulsively clenched little fists so effectively that the other began to retreat step by step.

In the meantime the chubby-cheeked boy had collected himself again, had picked up his bag and now joined once more in the fight with blows on the enemy's back and flanks.

At last the tall, thin boy shook off the little one, stepped back two paces and picked up his cap. The fight was drawing to a close.

Panting breathlessly the three stood opposite one another. The tall, thin boy sought to hide his shame at his defeat by a hateful grin; the little one, his fists still clenched, followed his every movement with glowing eyes ready at any moment to rush at him if he should begin again.

But the tall, thin fellow did not come again; he had had enough. Scornfully he withdrew farther and farther, shrugging his shoulders as he went, and when he had reached a certain distance he began to shout insults at the other two.

The brothers gathered up the little one's belongings which lay scattered over the ground, put them into the schoolbag, picked up their caps, brushed the dust off them and turned to continue their way home. This led them past the windows of our wine tavern. I was able to look closer at the brave little lad; he was really a thoroughbred. The tall, thin boy followed them again shouting at them loudly across the square; the little one shrugged his shoulders with unutterable contempt. "What a big, clumsy coward," he said, and suddenly he stopped and

turned to face his enemy. Instantly the tall, thin boy stopped too, and the brothers broke into derisive laughter.

They were now standing directly under the window at which the old Colonel was sitting. He leaned out.

“Bravo, my boy!” he said, “you’re a plucky little chap. Here, take a drink for a reward.” He picked up the goblet and held it out the window to the little fellow. The boy looked up surprised, then he whispered something to his older brother, gave him his bag to hold, and took the big glass in both his little hands.

After he had drunk a generous swallow he held the glass in one hand by the stem, took his schoolbag from his brother again and, without asking further permission, offered him the glass too.

Chubby Cheeks also took a draught.

“Such a rogue,” said the old Colonel, grinning to himself; “I offer him my glass and without a ‘by your leave’ he gives his brother a drink out of it.”

The little chap was now holding the glass up to the window again. It was easy to see by his face that what he had done had seemed to him a matter of course.

“Did it taste good?” asked the old Colonel.

“Yes, thank you, very good,” said the boy, pulled at his cap, politely, and continued on his way with his brother.

The Colonel watched them till they turned the corner of the street and disappeared from his view.

Then, resuming his soliloquy, he said, “Boys like that—it’s curious sometimes about boys like that.”

“That they should fight like that, right in the street,” said the fat tapster disapprovingly, who still remained standing where he was; “it’s a wonder that their teachers allow it; after all they seem to be the children of respectable families.”

“That doesn’t matter a bit,” grunted the old Colonel. “Boys must have freedom, the teachers can’t be after them all the time; boys must fight.”

He rose from his seat so heavily that the chair creaked

under him, knocked the cigar stump out of his cigar-holder into the ashtray, and walked stiffly over to the opposite wall where his hat hung on a peg. At the same time he continued his thoughts.

“With boys like that nature shows itself just as it really is—afterward, when they grow older, they all seem to be alike—they are good subjects for study—boys like that.”

The tapster had given him his hat; the Colonel once more took up his goblet in which there were still a few drops of red wine.

“Confounded scamps,” he growled, “they’ve drunk up all my wine.” He looked at the scanty remnant almost sadly, then set the goblet down without draining it.

The fat tapster suddenly grew animated.

“Will you have some more, sir?”

Standing at the table the old man opened the wine-list and growled to himself.

“Hm—some other kind perhaps—but they don’t keep that on tap—a whole bottle—that would be rather too much.”

His gaze wandered slowly over to me; in his eyes I read the dumb question of the man who asks his fellow whether he will help him conquer a bottle of wine.

“If you will allow me, Colonel,” I said, “I shall be glad to share a bottle.”

He did allow me and, apparently, not unwillingly. He pushed the wine-list over to the tapster, underscored a line with his index finger and said in a tone of command: “A bottle of that.”

“That’s a brand that I know,” he said turning to me as he threw his hat on a chair and sat down at the table, “it’s noble blood.”

I had seated myself at the table with him so that I saw his face from the side. His gaze was turned toward the windows and, as he looked past me at the sky, the crimson glow of the sunset was reflected in his eyes.

It was the first time I had seen him in such close proximity.

There was an expression in his eyes as if he were lost in day dreams and, as his hand mechanically stroked his long gray beard, it seemed as if figures were rising before him out of the torrent of years that had streamed away into silence behind him, figures of those who had been young when he was young and now were—who could tell me, where? The bottle that the tapster brought and put down before us on the table contained a delicious draught. Old Bordeaux, very dark and very mellow flowed into our glasses. I took up the expression that the old man had used just before.

“I must agree with you, Colonel, it is really ‘noble blood.’”

His red eyes returned from the distance, wandered over to me and remained fixed upon me as if he would say: “What do you know of—”

He took a generous swallow, wiped his damp beard and gazed across the glass. “It’s so strange,” he said, “when we grow old, we think much more of our earliest days than of the time that came after.”

I remained silent. I felt that I ought not to speak and question. When a man recalls old memories he becomes poetical, and men who are creating poetry must not be questioned. A long pause ensued.

“How strange it is—the people we meet,” he continued. “If we begin to think—some who go on living and living—sometimes it would be better if they were no longer alive—and others—they had to go—much too young.” He passed his hand over the top of the table. “There’s much down below there.”

It looked as if the top of the table meant the surface of the earth to him, and as if he were thinking of those that lie under the earth.

“I had to think of that a few minutes ago”—his voice sounded gloomy—“when I saw the boy. Nature sticks right out of a boy like that, as thick as your arm. We can see right into his blood. But it’s a pity—noble blood

easily goes to waste—more easily than the other kind. I knew a boy like that once.”

There we had it!

The tapster had seated himself in the far corner of the room; I kept perfectly quiet; the stillness of the room was broken by the old Colonel's heavy voice which came at intervals like the gusts of wind that precede a thunder storm or some natural calamity.

His gaze wandered over me again as if examining me to see whether I could listen. He did not question, I did not speak, but I looked at him and my glance may have replied: “Tell the story.”

Still he did not begin at once but first with deliberation drew a large cigar case of hard brown leather out of his breast pocket, took out a cigar and lighted it slowly.

“You know Berlin, of course,” he said, blowing out the match and puffing the first cloud of smoke across the table, “and I suppose you've also been on the elevated railway.”

“Oh yes, sometimes.”

“Hm—well, when you go from Alexander Square to the Janowitz Bridge, along behind New Friedrich Street, on the right side in New Friedrich Street there stands a large, plain old building—that is the old military school.”

I nodded corroboratively.

“The new one, out in Lichterfelde, I don't know at all, but the old one I do know—hm—yes, I know that one.”

The repetition of his words made me feel that he knew not only the building but also not a few things that had happened there.

“Coming from Alexander Square,” he continued, “you come first to a yard with trees in it. Grass grows there now, but that wasn't so in my day; it was used for a drill ground then and the cadets used to walk about there at recess. Then comes the big main building which surrounds a rectangular court called the “Square Court,” and there too the cadets used to walk. You can't see it from outside as you pass.”

Again I nodded in corroboration.

“And then comes a third yard; it is smaller and a house faces it. I don’t know what the house is used for now; at that time it was the hospital. And then as you go past in the train you can see the roof of the gymnasium too, for next to the hospital was the main athletic field. There was a ditch to jump over and climbing poles and all sorts of things—that’s all been taken away now. A door opened from the hospital into the athletic field, but it was always locked. To enter the hospital you had to approach it from the front, by way of the yard. This door, as I said, was always locked; that is, it was only opened on special occasions and they were always very sad occasions. For you must know that on the other side of the door was the mortuary and when a cadet died he was laid there and the door was opened and remained so until the other cadets had been led past to take a last look at him, and until he was borne away—hm.” A long pause followed.

“As I said, I know nothing about the new building out there in Lichterfelde,” continued the Colonel disparagingly, “but I’ve heard that it is a big affair now with lots of cadets. At that time, in New Friedrich Street, there were not very many, only four companies, and they made up two classes: juniors and seniors, and then there were the special students who afterward entered the army as officers and whom we called ‘the bullies’ because they had the supervision of the others and we couldn’t bear them on that account.

“In the company to which I belonged—it was the fourth—there were two brothers who were with me in the junior class. Their name is immaterial but—well—it was von L—. The masters called the older of the two L-1, and the little one, who was a year and a half younger than the other, L-2; but among us cadets they were known as Big L and Little L. Little L,—well—hm.”

He moved on his chair and a far-away look came into his eyes. He seemed to have arrived at the object of his memory.



THE LAST SUPPER

From the Painting by Fritz von Uhde

Again I nodded in agreement.

"And then came a third attempt to establish another house-faces it. I don't know what the house is now for now; at that time it was the hospital, which was as you go past in the train you could see the end of the hospital building, for next to the hospital was the athletic ground. There was a ditch to jump over and electric poles and all sorts of things—that's all been taken away now. A door opened from the hospital into the athletic field but it was always locked. To enter the hospital you had to approach it from the front, by way of the yard. This door, as I said, was always locked; that is, it was only opened on special occasions and they were always very sad occasions. For you must know that on the other side of the door was the mortuary and when a cadet died he was laid there and the door was opened and remained so until the other cadets had been led past to take **THE LAST SUPPER**, and until he was borne away—hm." A long pause followed.

"As I said, I know nothing about the new building out there in Lichterfelde," continued the Colonel disparagingly, "but I've heard that it is a big affair now with lots of cadets. At that time, in New Friedrich Street, there were not very many, only four companies, and they made up two classes: juniors and seniors, and then there were the special students who afterward entered the army as officers and whom we called 'the bullies' because they had the supervision of the others and we couldn't bear them on that account.

"In the company to which I belonged—it was the fourth—there were two brothers who were with me in the junior class. Their name is immaterial but—well—it was von L—. The masters called the older of the two L-1, and the little one, who was a year and a half younger than the other, L-2; but among us cadets they were known as Big L and Little L. Little L,—well—hm."

He moved on his chair and a far-away look came into his eyes. He seemed to have arrived at the object of his memory.



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“Such a difference between two brothers I have really never seen since,” he went on, blowing a thick cloud out of his meerschaum cigar holder. “Big L was a thickset fellow with clumsy limbs and a heavy head; Little L was like a willow-wand, he was so slender and supple. He had a small, narrow head and blond, wavy hair that curled naturally and a little nose, like a young eagle and altogether—he was a boy—”

The old Colonel breathed hard.

“Don’t imagine that the cadets were indifferent to these things; on the contrary. The brothers had scarcely come to the military school in Berlin from the preparatory school—they came from Wahlstatt I think—before the matter was decided; no one paid any attention to Big L, and Little L was a general favorite.

“It’s queer about boys like that. The big, strong ones are kings and whomever they favor has an easy time of it. And that wins him the respect of the others too and they would scarcely dare to bother him. Nature still comes out in boys like that; it’s something the same as it is with animals: among them all the others crouch down before the biggest and strongest beast.”

Renewed puffs from the meerschaum cigar holder accompanied these words.

“When the cadets came down at recess, those who were good friends always joined one another and then walked arm in arm round the Square Court and to the yard where the trees stand, and so they kept on till the drum sounded the call to work again.

“Big L—well—he joined any one he could and strode along ill-humoredly. Little L, on the contrary, scarcely got down into the yard before two or three of the other big boys took him by the arm and made him walk with them. And they were seniors too, whereas generally a senior would never have dreamed of walking with a ‘knapsack’ as they called the boys in the junior class—that was far beneath their dignity. But it was very different when the

boy was Little L; they made an exception in his case. In spite of that he was not less a favorite with the juniors than with the seniors. That could be seen in class where, of course, we were all juniors together. We were seated in alphabetical order and so the two L's sat about in the middle next to each other.

“ Their standing in the class was fairly equal. Big L had a good head for mathematics; he wasn't much good at any other subject but in mathematics he was a ‘ star,’ and Little L, who was not exactly clever at figures, copied from his brother's work. In everything else Little L excelled his elder brother, and was, in fact, one of the best in the class. And this was one of the differences between the brothers: Big L kept his wisdom to himself and did not prompt; Little L prompted,— Oh yes, he positively roared, yes, indeed — ”

An affectionate smile passed over the old man's face.

“ When a boy in the first row was called on and didn't know his lesson, Little L hissed across all the intervening benches at him what to say; when it came the turn of a boy in the last row, Little L murmured the answer half aloud.

“ There was one old professor who taught us Latin. Almost every time we recited to him he would stop in the middle of the class. ‘ L-2,’ he would say, ‘ you are prompting again! And you are doing it in the most unabashed way! Take care, L 2, I will make an example of you the next time. I warn you today for the last time.’ ”

The old Colonel laughed to himself.

“ But it was always the time before the last,” he said, “ and it never went beyond the warning, for although Little L was not a model boy, but quite the contrary, he was nevertheless a favorite with the masters and officers too— and it couldn't have been otherwise. He was always as jolly as if he'd had a present every day, although he never had any present given him, for the father of the two boys was a very poor major in some infantry regiment and they scarcely had a groshen for pocket money. And he always

looked as if he were just fresh out of a bandbox, so neat and smart — outside and in — altogether — ”

The Colonel paused; he seemed to be searching for a term which would express all his love for his little comrade of long ago.

“As if nature had been in a really good humor for once,” he said then, “and had stood the boy on his feet and said, ‘here you have him!’”

“And that was curious,” he continued, “different as the brothers were, still they were very much attached to each other.

“Big L didn’t show it so much; he was always morose and didn’t show anything; but Little L couldn’t hide anything.

“And because Little L was conscious of how much better than his brother he was treated by the other cadets, he was sorry for his brother. When they were walking in the yard he could be seen looking round for his brother from time to time, to see if he too had somebody to walk with. He prompted his brother in class, of course, and let him copy his work when extemporaneous exercises were dictated; but besides that he took care that no one hurt his brother and sometimes when he looked at him from the side without the other’s noticing it, his little face often grew quite remarkably serious, almost as if he were worried about his brother.”

The old man smoked harder.

“It was afterward that I pieced all that together,” he said, “after everything had happened that was to happen; he probably knew more about Big L’s state of mind than we did at that time, and what tendencies his brother had.

“The cadets knew that, of course, and although it did Big L no good, for he remained as unpopular as ever, it made Little L even more of a favorite than he had been, and he was generally called ‘brotherly love.’

“The two slept in the same room and, as I have already said, Little L was very neat, while Big L, on the contrary,

was slovenly. Little L made himself into a regular servant for his brother and sometimes he even polished the buttons on his coat for him and, before we formed for the roll-call, he would take the clothes brush and go all over him once again, brushing his uniform and almost scrubbing it—particularly on the days when the ‘cross Lieutenant’ was on duty and had the roll-call.

“To explain that I must tell you that for the roll-call the cadets had to go down in the morning to the yard and then the officer on duty passed along through the ranks and inspected the cadets to see if their uniforms were in order.

“And when it was the ‘cross Lieutenant’ who did that the whole company was always in a blue funk, for he never failed to find something wrong. He went behind the cadets and filliped their coats with his fingers to see if any dust came out and if there was none then he lifted up their coat-pockets and beat them with his hand and, of course, however well a coat is beaten and brushed there is still always a little dust in it and as soon as the ‘cross Lieutenant’ saw that he said in a voice like the bleat of an old billy-goat, ‘Take his name—to report on Sunday,’ and then that cadet’s Sunday leave was done for, and that was very sad.”

The old Colonel paused, drank a swallow energetically and stroked his moustache into his mouth so that he could suck off the beads of wine that glistened on it; the recollection of the “cross Lieutenant” apparently made him as savage as a wolf.

“If you think,” he growled, “how mean a man must be to deprive a poor boy of his Sunday leave when he has been looking forward to it for a week, and all on account of a trifle—well, anyway—afterward whenever I noticed that any one was setting out to harass and torment the men—there was none of that in my regiment later; they knew that I was there and that I wouldn’t have it. To bark at the men once in awhile, even to make it pretty strong at times, to send them to the guard-room, that does no harm—but to torment a man—it takes a mean chap to do that!”

“Very true,” shouted the tapster from the background, thus betraying the fact that he had followed the Colonel’s tale.

The old man calmed down and continued.

“Things all went on like that for about a year and then came the time for the examinations and that was always a most important time.

“The seniors took the ensign’s examination and the special students, who, as I said, were also called the ‘bullies,’ took the officer’s examination, and as soon as it was over they were sent home out of the cadet corps, and so for a time only the juniors were left and they were promoted into the senior class.

“That lasted till the new juniors entered from the preparatory schools and the newly appointed ‘bullies’ came, and then the wheels all went round again as before. But in the interval there was more or less disorder and especially when the last detachment of seniors left — they were examined and sent off in batches — everything was in confusion.

“Now in the room where the two brothers slept there was a senior who was known among the other cadets as a dandy. He had made up his mind that as soon as he had passed his examination and got out into the world he would play the fine gentleman; so instead of using one of the sword-belts that were provided for us cadets at the school, he had had one of his own made; it was of patent leather, narrower, and more elegant than the ordinary belts furnished by the government. He could afford to do things like that, for he used to have money sent him from home.

“He had shown the sword-belt to everybody, for he was disgracefully proud of it, and the other cadets had admired it.

“Now when the day came for him to pack up his belongings and leave for home, he wanted to buckle on his sword-belt and — it was not there.

“There was a great hue and cry; we hunted everywhere; the sword-belt could not be found. The senior had not put

it in his locker but had laid it down with his helmet in the bedroom where the cadets' helmets stood merely covered by a curtain—and it had disappeared from there.

“There was no other possibility—some one must have taken it.

“But who could it have been?

“First we thought of the old attendant who cleaned the cadets' boots and kept the dormitory in order, but he was an old former non-commissioned officer who had never been guilty of the slightest irregularity in all his long life. Might it have been one of the cadets, impossible as that seemed? But who would even think of such a thing? So the matter remained a mystery and a foul one at that. The senior swore and stormed because now he should have to go off with the government sword-belt after all; the other cadets in the room were silent and gloomy. They had all opened their lockers at once and asked the senior to look in them, but he had merely answered, ‘that's absurd—whoever would think of anything like that!’

“And then something very remarkable happened, something that made more of a sensation than what had gone before; all at once the senior got his sword-belt back again.

“He had already left the room with his bag in his hand and was on his way downstairs when suddenly some one called him from behind and when he turned there was Little L running after him with something in his hand—and that was the senior's sword-belt.

“A few of the others happened to be passing and they said afterward that Little L was as white as a corpse and that his limbs actually shook, he was trembling so. He said something in the senior's ear and the two exchanged a few words in whispers and then the senior stroked Little L's head, took off his regulation belt, buckled on the handsome one and went; he gave Little L the other to carry back.

“Well, of course the affair could not remain a secret after that and it soon became known.

“There had been a re-assignment of rooms; Big L had

to move and just while all the excitement was going on he had carried his things into his new room.

“Afterward the cadets remembered that he had been remarkably quiet about it—but we all know how that is; after the grass is high then everybody remembers having heard it grow. But so much was true: he had not let anybody help him and when Little L took a hand he had spoken quite crossly to his little brother. But Little L, ready to help as he always was, had not allowed that to deter him and as he took his brother’s canvas gymnasium jacket out of his locker he suddenly felt something hard carefully folded up in it—and that was the senior’s sword-belt.

“What the brothers said to each other at that moment, or whether they spoke at all, nobody ever knew, for Little L had enough presence of mind to leave the room in silence. He was scarcely outside the door and in the passage before he threw the jacket on the floor and, without thinking of the consequences, ran after the senior, with the sword-belt.

“And then, of course, there was nothing to be done; in five minutes the story was common property in the company. The devil had got hold of Big L and made him light-fingered.

“Half an hour later the word went quietly round from room to room: ‘We are all to meet in council tonight after the lamps are out, in the company hall.’

“In the quarters of every company there was one larger room where reports were given out and other public ceremonies went on, that was called the company hall.

“So in the evening, when the lamps were out and everything was quite dark the cadets streamed out of all the rooms down the passage; no door was allowed to slam and every one was in stocking feet, for the Captain and the other officers did not know anything yet and must not know anything of the meeting or we should have had a grand blowing up.

“When we came to the door of the company hall a boy was standing against the wall by the door and he was as

white as the plaster of the wall itself — that was Little L. A few of the others took his hand at once. ‘Little L can come in, too,’ they said, ‘it isn’t his fault.’ There was only one boy who opposed that — a big, tall fellow called — names don’t matter — well, he was called K. But he was overridden at once, Little L was taken in, a couple of tallow candles were lighted and stood on the table and then the council began.”

The Colonel’s glass had become empty. I filled it and he took a deep draught.

“Any one that likes can laugh at all that now,” he went on, “but I can say this much, that we weren’t in the least inclined to laugh; we felt quite uncanny. A cadet who was a rascal — that was horrible. All the cadets’ faces were pale and they spoke only half aloud. Usually it was considered abominably mean for one cadet to denounce another to their superiors — but if any one did such a thing as actual stealing, then he was no longer a cadet to us and so we were to consider whether we should report to the Captain what Big L had done.

“The tall fellow called K spoke first. He declared that we must certainly go to the Captain and tell him everything, for when it came to such low conduct all consideration was at an end. Tall K was the biggest and strongest boy in the company; consequently his words made a particular impression and at the bottom we others were of the same opinion.

“For that reason no one had any reply to make and a general silence followed. But at that moment the row that stood round the table parted and Little L, who till then had squeezed himself into the farthest corner of the room, stepped into the circle. His arms hung limp at his sides, his head was bent, and he kept his gaze on the floor; we could see that he wanted to say something but could not pluck up courage to speak.

“Tall K was ready again to lay down the law. ‘L-2,’ he said, ‘has nothing to say here.’

“ But that time he was not lucky in his remark. He had always been hostile to the two, no one knew just why, particularly to Little L. He was not at all popular either, for boys have a tremendously keen instinct, and they probably felt that the fellow had a very mean, cowardly, miserable soul in his big body.

“ He was one of those who never dare to attack boys of their own size, but ill-treat smaller and weaker ones.

“ Consequently his remark was followed by whispers from all sides.

“ ‘ Little L shall speak! That’s all the more reason why he should speak! ’

“ When the boy, who was still standing there rigid and motionless, heard how his comrades took his part, big tears suddenly began to run down his cheeks; he clenched both his fists and dug them into his eyes sobbing so frightfully that his whole body shook from top to toe and he couldn’t get out a word.

“ One of the others went up to him and patted him on the back.

“ ‘ Pull yourself together,’ he said, ‘ what is it that you want to say? ’

“ Little L still went on sobbing.

“ ‘ If — he is reported —,’ he finally gasped between sobs, ‘ he’ll be turned out of the corps — and what is to become of him then? ’

“ There was silence; we knew that the boy was right and that that would be the result if we reported his brother. And we also knew that his father was poor, and involuntarily each one of us thought what his father would say if he learnt that his son had done such a thing.

“ ‘ But you must see, yourself,’ the cadet went on to Little L, ‘ that your brother has done a low, mean thing and deserves to be punished.’

“ Little L nodded dumbly; his mind fully agreed with those who accused his brother. The cadet thought a moment, then he turned to the others.

“ ‘ I have a proposal to make,’ he said, ‘ don’t let us make L-1 unhappy for his whole life, unless it can’t be helped. Let us see whether he still has any decent feeling in him. L-1 shall choose himself whether he would rather that we should report him or that we should keep the thing to ourselves, give him a good flogging and then bury the whole matter.’ ”

“ That was a capital way out. Every one agreed eagerly.

“ The cadet laid his hand on Little L’s shoulder. ‘ Go on, then,’ he said, ‘ and tell your brother to come here.’ ”

“ Little L dried his tears and nodded his head quickly — then he was gone and a moment later he was back again with his brother.

“ Big L didn’t dare to look any one in the face; he stood before his comrades like an ox that has been struck on the head. Little L stood behind him and did not take his eyes off his brother.

“ The cadet who had made the proposal just before began to examine L-1.

“ He asked him whether he admitted having taken the sword-belt.

“ He admitted it.

“ Did he feel that he had done something that made him unworthy to be a cadet any longer? ”

“ He did feel so.

“ Would he rather that we should report him to the Captain or thrash him soundly and then bury the affair once for all? ”

“ He would rather take the thrashing.

“ A sigh of relief passed through the whole room.

“ It was decided to settle the thing then and there.

“ A cadet was sent to fetch one of the canes that we used to beat our clothes.

“ While he was gone we tried to persuade Little L to leave the hall so that he might not be present at the punishment.

“ But he shook his head in silence; he wanted to stay.

“ As soon as the cane had been brought Big L was made to lie down on his stomach on the table, two cadets took hold of his hands and pulled him forward, two others held his feet, so that his body was stretched out at full length.

“ The tallow candles were taken from the table and held up high and then the whole scene was positively horrible.

“ Tall K was to execute justice because he was the strongest; he took the cane in his hand, stepped to the side of the table and brought the stick down with all his strength on Big L who was clad only in his canvas jacket and trousers.

“ The boy actually reared under the frightful blow and was about to scream, but at that moment Little L rushed up to him, took his head in both his hands and pressed it to him.

“ ‘ Don’t scream,’ he whispered to him, ‘ don’t scream, or the whole thing will come out.’

“ Big L swallowed the scream and gurgled and groaned half aloud to himself.

“ Again tall K raised the stick and a second blow sounded through the room.

“ The boy’s body fairly writhed on the table so that the cadets were scarcely able to keep hold of his hands and feet. Little L had thrown both arms round his brother’s head and hugged it with convulsive strength. His eyes were wide open and staring, his face was like the plaster on the wall, his whole body trembled.

“ The whole room was as silent as death so that only the gasping and groaning of the boy who was being punished was heard and his little brother smothered that against his breast; all eyes were fixed on the lad; we all had the feeling that we could not look on much longer without interfering.

“ So when the third blow had fallen and the same scene that had followed the second blow was repeated, excited whispers arose all over the room, ‘ now it’s enough — don’t strike again!’

“ Tall K, who had grown quite red from his exertions, was preparing to deliver a fourth blow, but all at once three or four of the cadets threw themselves between Big L and him, tore the cane out of his hand and pushed him back.

“ Big L was released; he got up slowly and stood beside the table as if broken; Little L stood beside him.

“ Justice had been done.

“ The cadet who had spoken before raised his voice again, but still spoke only half aloud.

“ ‘ Now the affair is over and buried,’ he said, ‘ every one of us will now shake hands with L-1, and whoever says another word about this matter is a scoundrel.’ ”

“ A general ‘ yes, yes ’ showed that the others were in thorough agreement with what he said. The cadets came forward and shook hands with Big L and then, as if at a word of command, they all rushed at Little L. There was a regular scrimmage around the boy, for every one wanted to shake his hand and press it. Those on the outside of the throng reached in over the others’ shoulders. Some of the boys even climbed up on the table to get at him; they stroked his head, patted his shoulders and back, and all the time a general whisper went on: ‘ Little L, you splendid little chap, you splendid Little L.’ ”

The old Colonel raised his glass to his lips — there seemed to be something in his throat that he had to wash down. When he set his glass on the table again he sighed from deep down in his chest.

“ Boys like that,” he said, “ have instinct — instinct and feeling.

“ The lights were blown out, the boys crept softly back through the passage to their rooms; five minutes later they were all in bed and everything was over.

“ The Captain and the other officers hadn’t heard a sound.

“ Everything was over,” — the narrator’s voice grew heavy; he had thrust both his hands into his trousers’ pockets and gazed into space through the smoke that rose from the burning cigar.

“So we thought that night when we went to bed.

“I wonder whether Little L slept that night. He didn't look as if he had next day when we met in the class room.

“Before that it used to seem as if a hobgoblin were sitting in his place, joking across the whole class — now there seemed to be a gap — he sat there perfectly quiet and pale.

“Just as if you'd rubbed the bloom off a butterfly's wing's — that's how it was with the boy — I can't describe it any other way.

“From then on he was always seen walking with his brother in the afternoon. He probably felt that now, more than ever, Big L would have difficulty in finding some one to join him — for that reason he made himself his companion. And so they went, arm in arm, all round the Square Court and across the yard where the trees stand, both of them with their eyes on the ground; they could rarely be seen exchanging even a word with each other.”

Again there was a pause in the tale, again I had to fill the Colonel's empty glass, and the cigar smoke rose thicker than ever.

“All that, however,” he went on, “might perhaps have been lived down in the course of time — but people!”

He laid his clenched fist on the table.

“There are people,” he said grimly, “who are like a poisonous weed in the grass that kills the cattle when they eat it. Such people are poison to others.

“Well, one day we were reciting in physics. The master was showing us experiments with the electrical apparatus and was about to conduct an electric current through the whole class.

“To that end we each had to take hold of the next boy's hand to form the circuit.

“Now when Big L, who was sitting beside the tall fellow K, held out his hand to the latter the lout made a face as if he were being asked to take hold of a toad, and drew his hand back.

“ Big L sank back in his seat without a word and sat there crimson with shame.

“ But at the same moment Little L got up from his place, went round his brother, squeezed into the latter’s place beside tall K, seized his hand and brought it down on the bench with all his strength so that the great bully screamed with the sudden pain.

“ Then he grabbed the little fellow by the throat and the two began a regular fight right in the middle of the class.

“ The master, who had still been tinkering with the machine, now rushed up with fluttering coat-tails.

“ ‘ Why! Why! Why!’ he cried.

“ He was an old man and we did not stand much in awe of him.

“ The two boys held each other in such a clinch that they didn’t let go, although the master was standing directly in front of them.

“ ‘ How disgraceful!’ cried the master. ‘ How disgraceful! Let go of each other instantly.’

“ Tall K made a face as if he wanted to start blubbering.

“ ‘ L-2 began,’ he said, ‘ although I didn’t do a thing to him.’

“ Little L stood up straight in his place—we always had to stand up when the master spoke to us—a big drop of sweat ran down each of his temples; he said nothing; his teeth were clenched so hard that you could see the muscles of his jaws through his narrow cheeks. When he heard what tall K said a smile passed over his face—I’ve never seen anything like it.

“ The old master continued for some time to give his views, in well-rounded sentences, about such shameful impropriety, spoke of the abyss of inward brutality that such behavior indicated—we let him talk; our minds were occupied with Little L and tall K.

“ The period was scarcely over and the master out of the room before a book came flying through the air, from the

back, across the whole class, right against tall K's head, and when he turned furiously toward his assailant another book came flying from the other side at his head and then a general yell broke out: 'Knock him down! Knock him down!' The whole class jumped up, scrambled across tables and benches to get at tall K, and when they had him they tanned the big bully's hide till it fairly smoked."

The old Colonel smiled to himself with grim satisfaction and looked at his clenched fist which still lay on the table.

"I did my share," he said, "and thoroughly—I can say that."

It seemed as if his hand had forgotten that it had grown fifty years older; the fingers that were closed so convulsively showed that in spirit it was still belaboring tall K.

"But as such people always are," he continued; "of course this tall fellow K was a revengeful, vindictive, treacherous villain. He would have liked best to peach, to go to the Captain and tell him the whole story from the beginning—but he didn't dare to do that, on our account; he was too much of a coward.

"But that he had been licked by the whole class and that it was Little L's fault he never forgot, and treasured it up against Little L.

"Well, one afternoon at recess the cadets were walking about the grounds as usual; the two brothers were together, as always; tall K was walking arm in arm with two others.

"To get from the Square Court to the yard where the trees are you had to go through the archway that was cut in one of the wings of the main building and it was one of the rules that the cadets must not walk there arm in arm, so that the way should not be blocked.

"Now on that afternoon, as ill luck would have it, tall K, going through from the Square Court to the yard with his two companions, met the brothers under the arch and they, absorbed in their thoughts, had forgotten to let go of each other's arms.

“As soon as he saw that, tall K, although it was none of his business, stopped, opened his eyes wide and his mouth still wider and yelled at them: ‘What do you mean by walking here arm in arm? Do you want to block the way for decent people, you gang of thieves?’”

The Colonel interrupted himself.

“That’s fifty years ago,” he said, “and more—but I remember it as if it had happened yesterday.

“I was just walking round the Square Court with two others and suddenly, from the arch, we heard a scream—I simply can’t describe how it sounded—when a tiger or some other wild animal breaks out of its cage and leaps on a man, then, I imagine you might hear something like it.

“It was so horrible that we three let our arms drop and stood there as if turned to stone. And not only we; every one who was in the Square Court stood still and suddenly they were all silent. And then every one raced toward the arch and others came from the yard so that the scene was black with cadets and a scrambling swarm surged about the entrances. Of course I was in the thick of it—and what did I see?

“Little L had climbed up tall K just like a wildcat. He was hanging onto the latter’s collar with his left hand, so that the tall fellow was half-strangled, and with his right fist he was hammering him, smash—smash—smash—right in tall K’s face wherever he happened to hit him, so that the blood streamed out of his nose like a waterfall.

“Then the officer on duty came from the yard and made a way for himself through the cadets.

“‘L-2, let go at once,’ he thundered—he was a great tall fellow with a voice that could be heard from one end of the school to the other and we stood as much in awe of him as of the devil.

“But Little L didn’t hear and didn’t see; he went on pounding tall K’s face and at the same time there came again and again the fearful piercing shriek that went through and through us all.

“When the officer saw that he interfered himself, seized the boy by both shoulders and dragged him away from tall K by force.

“As soon as he stood on his feet, however, Little L rolled his eyes, fell full length on the ground and writhed in convulsions.

“We had never seen anything like that and we looked on in amazement and horror.

“The officer who had bent over him stood upright again: ‘The boy has terrible convulsions,’ he said. ‘Forward, two take his feet’—he himself lifted his shoulders—‘over to the hospital.’

“And so they carried Little L into the hospital.

“While they were taking him away we went up to Big L to find out what had really happened and from him and the two cadets who had been walking with tall K we heard the whole story.

“Tall K stood there like a beaten cur, wiping the blood from his nose, and if it hadn’t been for that nothing could have saved him from another murderous thrashing. As it was, every one turned away from him in silence, no one spoke a word to him: he had shown himself to be a scoundrel.”

The table resounded with the blow the Colonel gave it with his fist.

“How long the others kept him an outlaw,” he said, “I don’t know. I sat in the same class with him for a whole year after that and never spoke to him again. We entered the army at the same time as ensigns; I did not give him my hand at parting. I don’t know whether he rose to be an officer. I never looked for his name in the list of promotions. I don’t know whether he fell in one of the wars, whether he is still alive or dead—for me he no longer existed, no longer exists—the only thing that I regret is that the blackguard ever came into my life and that I can’t tear out the recollection of him like a weed that you throw into the fire!

“ Next morning bad news came from the hospital: Little L lay unconscious with a severe case of nervous fever. In the afternoon Big L was sent for, but his little brother did not recognize him again.

“ And in the evening when we were sitting at supper in the big common dining room a rumor went through the hall like a big, black bird flying inaudibly—Little L was dead.

“ When we went back from the dining room to the company quarters our Captain was standing at the door of the company hall; we were told to go in, and there the Captain announced to us that our little comrade L-2 had fallen asleep that evening not to awake again.

“ The Captain was a very good man—he died a brave hero’s death in 1866—he loved his cadets and when he made his announcement he had to brush the tears off his beard. Then he commanded us to fold our hands; one of us had to step forward and repeat the Lord’s Prayer aloud before us all— ”

The Colonel bowed his head.

“ Then, for the first time,” he said, “ I felt how beautiful ‘ Our Father ’ really is.

“ And then, the next afternoon, the door leading from the hospital to the athletic field was opened, that evil, ominous door.

“ We had to go down to the hospital yard, we were to see our dead comrade once more.

“ Our steps tramped and resounded as we were led over to the hospital; no one spoke a word; nothing was heard but heavy breathing.

“ And there lay Little L, poor Little L.

“ He lay there in his little white shirt, his hands folded on his breast, his blond locks curling about his brow which was as white as wax; his cheeks were so fallen in that his fine, saucy little nose stood out prominently—and in his face—the expression— ”

The old Colonel stopped speaking, his breath came pantingly.

“I’ve grown to be an old man,” he resumed, speaking in jerks. “I have seen men lying on battlefields — men on whose faces despair and agony were written — but such heartfelt suffering as there was in that child’s face I have never seen again, never — never.”

Absolute silence reigned in the wine tavern in which we sat. When the old Colonel ceased speaking and did not go on, the tapster came quietly out of his corner and lit the gas that hung above our heads; it had grown quite dark.

I lifted the wine bottle again, but it was almost empty — only one more tear flowed out of it — a last drop of noble blood.

HERMANN SUDERMANN

By M. BLAKEMORE EVANS, PH.D.

Professor of German, Ohio State University



O the average American reader and theatre-goer German literature of the last quarter of a century is embodied in the work of two men, Gerhart Hauptmann and Hermann Sudermann.

Hauptmann and Sudermann — the two names slip off the tongue almost as readily as Goethe and Schiller. And yet how little we know of these two protagonists of the new and the modern in German letters. To most of us it is as if the two were one personality, though if pushed into a corner we should confess to a feeling that Sudermann is the easier to follow, the more intelligible. And if this feeling were further analyzed it would result simply in the admission that we had seen and read more of Sudermann than of Hauptmann.

If this first rather vague feeling is true, what is its source? And why have we seen and read more of Sudermann than of Hauptmann? One is tempted to answer both questions categorically: because Hermann Sudermann is the lesser poet. But this, though true, is not the whole truth. Sudermann's art has not the severe chastity, the complete contempt for mere effect, of Hauptmann's. It is often prurient, always theatrical, but it is effective. The infinitely sensitive Hauptmann, possessing to a high degree the intuition and fervor of a prophet, is the poet; Sudermann, more robust, more masculine, is also a poet, but at the same time — a journalist; and a journalist with a tendency, which unfortunately, in the later phases of his development, seemed at one time to be growing on him, toward the sensational, toward "yellow journalism."

I would not underrate the value of this journalistic vein in Sudermann's genius. It explains to a great extent his extraordinary popularity. It enables him to pick those types out of the "passing show" which are so characteristic of our own day and to reproduce them with a definiteness and exactness that is amazing. These people we know, they are our acquaintances, though not, we add with a pharisaical sigh of relief, our friends.

There is also another element in Sudermann which explains his great vogue, especially in countries beyond the German boundaries—in France, England, America. His critics call it compromise, his friends cosmopolitanism. Both are right. Though the first German dramatist to present the new doctrine of realism from a public theatre, Sudermann never was a "dyed-in-the-wool" realist. Even in his first play the masterly stage-craft, the brilliant style, the pointed dialogue of the school of Dumas fils vie with and at times almost overshadow the cult of the new realism, whose triumphant banner inscribed with the names of Zola, Ibsen, and Leo Tolstoy had been but recently unfurled in Germany. Sudermann was merely flirting with realism; since then he has flirted with Nietzsche's conception of the Superman, he has flirted with symbolism; but his real love has remained all the while "la belle France." More than any other great German writer save only Heinrich Heine, Sudermann is imbued with the spirit and the technique of the French. Naturally his welcome in France was an enthusiastic one, and the rest was easy, for the English and we of America are still accustomed to accept the judgment of Paris as final in things literary.

The story of Sudermann's life may be written in a single sentence. He was born in the small village of Matziken in far away East Prussia and close to the Russian frontier, on September 30, 1857, and twenty years later, in 1877, he came to Berlin; in comparison with these two facts all else is insignificant. To be sure, for a time, since his parents were poor, he was apprenticed to a chemist.

In some way he managed to secure the excellent training of the Prussian secondary schools and even spent a couple of years at the University of Königsberg. But what of it? All that really counts is his youth spent on the moors, on the fields and in the woods of his East Prussian home, and his manhood in Berlin, where day and night, especially night, he drank down with feverish haste great draughts of the knowledge of good and evil. "But the sum of evil was greater than the sum of good." Listen:

"The moonlight drew him out upon the heath. In the silence of midnight it lay there; only a garden warbler on the heather-twigs chirped now and then as in sleep. The champions bent their reddish heads—and the mullen glistened as though it would outshine the moonlight.

"Slowly, with dragging steps, he advanced, at times stumbling over mole-hills or entangling himself in creepers. In glowing sparks the dew sprayed out ahead of him. So he came close to the juniper bushes, which appeared more than ever like elves.

"Like to some black wall the wood towers up before him, and on it rested the moonlight like fresh fallen snow."*

But listen again, this time to a conversation between the artist Riemann and the author Dr. Weisse, taken from the drama *The Destruction of Sodom*. Riemann has just seen for the first time the famous painting of his former friend and fellow student, Willy Janikow:

RIEMANN. And what is he doing now?

WEISSE. Why you just heard.—He dances quadrilles and cuts out costumes.

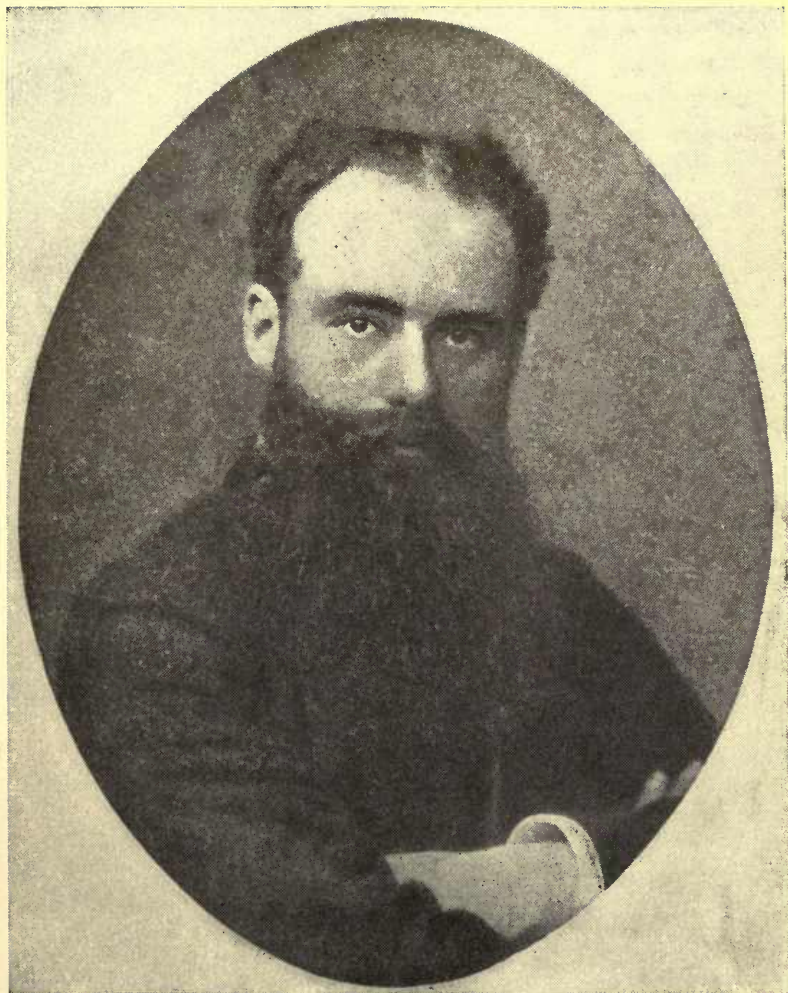
RIEMANN. For God's sake, be serious!

WEISSE. In all seriousness, my dear sir.

RIEMANN. You frighten me!

WEISSE. Gad, you know, it's not half so bad. There's a place where the growth of almost every individual halts * * * and rightly so. * * * Look at me! In the provinces I'm called a celebrity, and if you open up a paper you'll be certain to find my name. * * * And nevertheless, I'm down and out. * * * My verse is poisoned. * * * Not an idea can I get; so I've turned critic. The dog has quit his howling and gone to biting. * * * Oh, what a chap I was in those

* From *Dame Care*, Sudermann's first novel.



HERMANN SUDERMANN

days, when in every German bookcase the place of honor stood open to me beside Henrietta Davidis' Cook-book and the Family Buchholz! * * * How it bubbled and boiled! * * * But now! * * * dregs, marasmus, senility, my soul's dead.
* * *

RIEMANN. And Willy Janikow?

WEISSE. Yes — same as I.

RIEMANN. But how?—What, by what means?

WEISSE. Oh, you naive soul — by what means the man goes to the dogs! He doesn't know!"

In sharp contrast we see here the two phases of Sudermann's nature, so incompatible that it seems scarcely possible that both can exist side by side in one man — on the one hand the romanticist reveling in the beauties of nature, on the other the bitter satirist, the pessimist. That such strange bedfellows may take up their lodgings in the soul of one poor mortal we know; I need only point again to Heine. But is Sudermann a twentieth century Heine, is his poetry a reincarnation of that familiar smile and sneer? In other words, are both the romanticist Sudermann and the pessimist Sudermann sincere? Or, is only the one genuine and the other a pose? And which?

The smile is most evident, purest in the character of Hans Lorbass in *The Three Heron-Plumes*:

Denn bei jedem grossen Werke,
Das auf Erden wird vollbracht,
Herrschen soll allein die Staerke,
Herrschen soll allein, wer lacht.

(Freely rendered it runs: For in the accomplishment of every great work of the world, strength alone shall rule, he alone shall rule, who laughs.)

More frequently, however, the smile is one of resignation. The curate Haffke, one of the minor characters of *St. John's Fire*, is speaking with the woman of his love, who has been irresistibly attracted to another: "The most beautiful, the greatest possession of man, is his melody — a certain melody that always rings, that his soul, waking or dreaming, always sings, loud or low, from within or without.

Others say: his nature is so or so, his character is so or so, but he only smiles at it all, for he alone knows his melody. Yes, my life's fortune you have destroyed for me today, but my life's melody you can't take from me — that is pure and will stay pure."

And the sneer: "It was an old custom of Niebeldingk's — a remembrance of his half out-lived Don Juan years — to send a bunch of Indian lilies to those women who had granted him their supreme favors. He always sent the flowers the next morning. Their symbolism was plain and delicate; in spite of what has taken place you are as lofty and as sacred in my eyes as these pallid, alien flowers whose home is beside the Ganges. Therefore have the kindness — not to annoy me with remorse."*

Which is Sudermann, the real Sudermann — the sneer or the smile? Or, did the smile turn into a sneer? And is this sneer final or has it already given place again to the smile? Let us see.

Sudermann's purpose in coming to Berlin was to study literature, both within and without the University. After a while, however, we find him as a private tutor in the family of Hans Hopfen, a story-writer and novelist of some prominence. Later he entered the field of journalism, rising even to the lofty position of editor of a small popular weekly. He tried his hand at the drama, but his efforts proved flat failures. He has told us himself how these first fruits of his dramatic pen, beautifully copied and with broad white margins, were submitted to the director of the *Residenztheater* with the request that whatever was serviceable be retained. The director kept the broad white margins and returned the dramas. For ten years Sudermann bided his time, he waited and worked, but then his wheel of fortune began to turn — at first slowly but soon with amazing rapidity. The year 1887 witnessed the birth of the first of his literary offspring — twins: *In the Gloam-*

* From *The Indian Lily*, a recent collection of short stories, translated into English by Ludwig Lewisohn, M.A., and published by B. W. Huebsch, New York, 1911.

ing and *Dame Care*. They are twins in age but in nothing else. *In the Gloaming* is a collection of short stories, for the most part frivolous, but told with a vivacity and charm that is none too frequent in German literature. De Mau-passant so evidently acted the part of god-father that one needs scarcely mention him.

In the Gloaming was favorably received, but *Dame Care* gave its author his first foothold in German literature, and now, on the eve of its hundred and fiftieth edition, may justly claim a place of honor on that very small shelf of books labeled "German Classical Novels."

Over the cradle of the hero, Paul Meyhoefer, whose father was a braggart egotist and whose mother was a martyr, hovered the gray spectre *Dame Care*.

"And the mother begged: 'Dear *Dame Care*, O give him free.'

But *Care* smiled — and whoever has seen her smile has been forced to weep, and she said: 'He must free himself.'

'How can he do that?' asked the mother.

'He must sacrifice to me all that he loves,' said *Dame Care*."

And upon this altar Paul heaps sacrifice after sacrifice. In the eyes of the world he becomes a common drudge. The mother slowly fades away into the shadow world and the father becomes a helpless, drunken sot. Not yet is *Dame Care* appeased; even the fruits of his own toil must be offered. He becomes a self-confessed incendiary and knows that he is responsible for the death of his father. But then the shackles fall away, he stands a free man — and the princess is still waiting.

It would not be difficult to pick flaws in this masterpiece. Occasionally it smacks of the melodrama, and occasionally the action lags or is too long drawn out; but after all it remains a great achievement. Every page bears the stamp of perfect sincerity. Written as no other of Sudermann's works, from the heart, it speaks to the heart.

Several other novels and short stories have followed, but not one has reached the high level of *Dame Care*. In 1888 appeared *Brothers and Sisters*, two tragic stories which

treat the same problem from two points of view. The *Tale of a Lonely Mill* tells of two brothers and a wife, and *The Wish*, of two sisters and a husband. Of infinitely greater value, however, is *Regina* (1889), a story of the violence and crime that followed in the wake of the war of Liberation, 1813-14. Boleslav von Schranden, the worthy son of an unworthy father, is forced to drink to the bitter dregs the cup that was brewed for him by the treason of this father. His only friend is the humble Regina, an uncannily beautiful creature—one can scarcely call her human—of uncomplaining, dog-like faithfulness. In the days of the gay past she had been his father's mistress; it was she who had led the French soldiers, at her master's command, across the "Cats' Trail"* and so enabled them to surprise and massacre the Prussians. And all these years she has ministered to this master's needs, physical and sensual. Dragged through the deepest pools of hell, she emerges without sin. Body and soul she is part of the father's legacy to the son, and, thank God! he lays no claim to the body. But the fight within is a bitter one—yes, and painted with an all too glaring minuteness. *Regina* is a powerful piece of workmanship; it holds one fast from beginning to end, but the after-taste is not sweet, not pure.

Iolanthe's Wedding (1892), full of grim humor, a capital picture of one of those massive, self-assertive squires of East Prussia—in their various phases Sudermann's favorite masculine type—scarcely counts. Nor need *Once Upon a Time* (1894) detain us. Through and through it is permeated with a sultry atmosphere of sensuality. To be sure, in the end the Nietzschean gospel—repent nothing—is overthrown; but before we reach this end our ideals are too completely shattered to recover.

With *Once Upon a Time* Sudermann deserted the field of the novel for years, but he returned in 1908 with the startling *Song of Songs*, the psychological chronicle of a chaste prostitute, who ends her career by—marriage. The work-

* i. e., *Der Katzensteg*, which is also the title of the German version.

manship is wonderful and the theme, at least on the scale here presented, a new one, but still I doubt whether the *Song of Songs* may be regarded as a real contribution to German literature. Even less fortunate is Sudermann's latest attempt in narrative prose, *The Indian Lily* (1911), a collection of short stories.

It is the proper thing to rate the novelist Sudermann above the dramatist, and it may be that in this case the judgment of the higher critics is correct. Certainly he has produced no drama as yet which, in loftiness of conception and excellence of execution, even approaches *Dame Care*, and yet the Sudermann craze was fanned into a flame by the tremendous popularity of his dramas. The novel *Dame Care* made him known, but the drama *Honor* made him famous. Nor is the cause of this greater vogue of Sudermann's dramas, especially in the case of the earlier, the really successful plays, difficult to explain. In the novel he is the cunning psychologist, patiently chronicling the victories and defeats of an individual soul. The problem may be one of universal importance, the background may be limned never so broadly; nevertheless our interest is centred on one or two individuals and we feel them as individual personalities. Not so in the dramas. Here the battle is waged on a larger stage. We sense the characters not so much as individuals as types. It is a clash of social conventions, a protest against the existing order of things — and who can resist the attraction of satire directed against those whom we have long envied or despised? It is this element of social satire in his dramas, combined with a masterly technique and a thorough knowledge of the stage as it actually is, that has made the dramatist Sudermann such a favorite with the theatre-loving public.

The long list of dramas is opened by *Honor*, first played in November, 1889. Only a few weeks before Hauptmann's first play *Before Sunrise* had been given on the same stage, but as a private performance. *Honor* was the first German drama to present publicly the new doctrine of realism.

Robert Heinecke, born of the humblest parents, was educated by the wealthy merchant Muehlingk, his father's employer. For ten years Robert has successfully represented the firm in the far East and has now just returned. And how he has longed for home! In what bright colors he has painted to himself this home, and he finds—filth, deceit, dishonor. The young and romantic idealist had still to learn the bitter lesson that all moral values, all questions of personal honor, are merely relative. To his way of thinking his own lowly family, the dwellers of the rear-house, bear the mark of shame, branded upon them by the family of the rich merchant who dwell in the front-house; and, even more galling, they feel no shame! Money is the balm. Money so patches up even the lost honor of his sister that the injured article has a greater commercial value than the original.

The conflict in the soul of the young Heinecke is sharply drawn, the tragedy of his position is apparent, there seems to be but one outcome possible, and yet the curtain falls upon a happy couple. Robert has a friend, the "coffeeing" Count Trast, who has lived through all this in his own experience. At every critical moment he appears, like some beneficent *deus ex machina*, and the Gordian knots slip loose. The filthy money, the price of his sister's shame, Robert hurls back into the face of the wealthy merchant—he has borrowed it from his friend for this purpose. The merchant's daughter, a goodly maiden, throws herself upon Robert's neck—of course she has loved him from childhood—and Count Trast completes his shower of blessings. Robert becomes his partner.*

It all sounds ridiculous, melodramatic to a degree, and yet the play proved wonderfully effective. It seemed so new—and yet was it? The conflict between the front and

* I have sometimes wondered if this surprising *denouement* were not perhaps influenced by the version of Ibsen's *A Doll's House* which during the eighties played in Berlin with a happy ending. Nora is on the point of leaving the house, when she suddenly hears the voices of the children. She hesitates, mother-love asserts itself, she remains.

rear houses is as old as the *bourgeois* drama itself. A hundred years before *Honor* the German classic of this type had appeared in Schiller's *Love and Intrigue*, for surely front and rear houses are today as indicative of class distinction as was the little word *von* a hundred years ago. Nor was there anything new or strange in the character of Count Trast, the typical confidant of the French theatre; while the unscrupulous merchant, brutally rich, was an international type. What then was new? Simply and solely the inmates of the rear-house, characters who not only in their outlook upon life, but even in the details of their speech, were drawn true to life. They were the very flesh and blood of the proletariat. The *milieu* of the rear-house was painted with the minute brush of the realist; all else was of the old school. From the viewpoint of dramatic criticism *Honor* is then a compromise. But let us give the devil his due. Sudermann had accomplished the biblically impossible—he had poured new wine into old skins and the skins did not burst.

Excitement ran high on the eve of the *première* of Sudermann's second play, *The Destruction of Sodom* (1891)—an excitement that was artificially fanned by a temporary prohibition on the part of the censor. But the play was a disappointment. In technique it was undoubtedly far superior to *Honor*, but, unfortunately for its success, the author had chosen the "upper four hundred" as the target of his satire. That his arrows sped true, the result proved; the "upper four hundred" sulked at home and the drama was withdrawn. "Sodom's End, Sudermann's End" were the winged words that passed from mouth to mouth.

Not a whit daunted, though profiting by the failure of his second play, Sudermann brought out, two years later (1893), his *Magda* (*Heimat* is the German title), his most widely known and most popular play. Again, as in *Honor*, it is the story of a home-coming. This time it is the daughter. Magda had been driven from her home in one of the principal cities of the provinces—Königsberg is

doubtless intended — by the capricious autocratic demands of her father, a Prussian officer of the old school whose mental horizon was as narrow as his life was conventionally correct. It had been a bitter struggle with life, but she emerges, not spotless to be sure, but nevertheless victor. As a world-famed *prima donna* she returns to her native city unknown, but of course is discovered; indeed, she desires nothing else. Almost willingly she submits to the will of her father, until the demands take on such proportions that her own self-respect is endangered. She has earned the right to live her own life, and for the second time refuses to obey. In his anger the father would murder his own child, when he is stricken down by a power mightier than he. But no words of forgiveness pass from his dying lips.

Magda, as *Honor*, is a conflict of two worlds. In *Magda* the world of rigid convention does battle with the demand of the individual for opportunity of free development. As Kuno Francke says: "It is one of those literary thunderclouds which are charged with the social and intellectual electricity of a whole age." In dramatic structure *Magda* offers perhaps more points of attack than most of Sudermann's plays — e. g. how opportunely the characters come and go, almost like puppets in the hands of a showman. But when one witnesses a performance of the play with a Sarah Bernhardt or a Duse in the title rôle all this is forgotten. One sees only the glorious, noble woman.

With *Magda* Sudermann scored his last great success. He has given us, however, a number of plays of somewhat similar character, one and all satires of society. *The Battle of the Butterflies* (1895), styled a comedy, but with very little of the comic about it. *Happiness in a Nook* (1896), in which one of Sudermann's east Prussian giants does his best to break in upon the "Happiness" and to destroy the "Nook"; even after the curtain falls, one cannot but wonder if he won't succeed. *Fritzchen* (1896), the second of the three one-act plays in the collection, entitled *Morituri*,

depicts a boy lieutenant doomed to death because in carrying out his father's bidding he has sown his wild oats too freely, and who now goes forth to meet his fate with a smile on his lips. *St. John's Fire* (1900), extremely melodramatic and improbable, an unintended caricature of free love, closing with the marriage ceremony of one of the principals. *The Joy of Living* (1902), which I would prefer to call "The Survival of the Fittest," a picture of conventional high life, and next to *Magda*, the most popular of Sudermann's plays upon the English and American stage. *Der Sturmgeselle Sokrates*—one might translate it *Citizen Socrates*—(1903), a comedy, with its beginnings in the Revolution of 1848, but a sad caricature of a movement that was full of the loftiest political idealism. It is justly repudiated even by the poet's warmest admirers. *Stone among Stones* (1905), in my opinion decidedly the strongest of all these later social dramas. It represents the struggles, finally crowned with success, of a former convict to gain the right to win his daily bread honestly. *The Float* (1905), reminiscent, in a way, of *The Destruction of Sodom*, but without the ghastly conclusion of the earlier play; in this drama Sudermann undertakes the bold venture of introducing in an interlude the broad jests of the "cabaret." *Roses* (1907), a collection of four one-act plays in which the graceful and delicately humorous *Far-away Princess* contrasts strangely with the more sombre, blood and guilt stained *Roses* of its companions.

Nor does this complete the list. The many-sided author has tried his hand at the strictly historical drama and also at the fantastic drama of symbolism and the *Maerchen*. His first venture in the field of history was *Teja* (1896), the first of the one-act plays in the collection *Morituri*. The last of the kings of the Ostrogoths is doomed with all his people to certain death, but it is a death only of the body. The lofty heroism of the wives, silently consecrating their husbands with the kiss of death, renders the defeat of the flesh a victory of the spirit. It is one of the

noblest productions of Sudermann's genius. In 1898 followed the second of the historical group, *John the Baptist*, a psychological study of the biblical character. He is represented as a stern prophet of the Old Testament, whose faith demands "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." And now from all sides is borne in upon him a new doctrine of love. Wherever he turns, love meets him in some one of its many guises. He speaks, indeed, with "the tongues of men and of angels" but has not charity, and so must "become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal." The psychological treatment of the familiar character has naturally challenged comparison with the *Herodes und Mariamne* of Friedrich Hebbel, the master of the psychological drama, and not to the advantage of Sudermann. The last of the group is *The Beggar of Syracuse* (1911), a semi-historical tragedy in blank verse, dealing with the wars between Syracuse and Carthage. It is Sudermann's only attempt in the Shakespearian style and not entirely successful—one feels through it all the nervous pulse of the twentieth century. In the title rôle, however, he has created a figure of genuine dramatic force.

Midway between the historical drama and that of the fairy world of the *Maerchen* stands *Waifs of the Strand* (1910), a tale of the moorlands and dunes of the Baltic coast at the time of the Teutonic Knights. It is a drama of elemental passion and humble purity. The first of the symbolic dramas was the trivial and bizarre fantasy in verse *The Eternally-Masculine* (1896), the third of the one-act plays in the collection *Morituri*. Sudermann's only real contribution to the symbolism that followed in the wake of the realistic movement in German literature is *The Three Heron-Plumes* (1898), a dramatic poem. It is the only one of the plays that reads better than it acts. The hero, Prince Witte, a strange mixture of Faust, Hamlet, and Don Juan, fritters away his life in the vain search for the blue flower of his love, which all the while had been blossoming beside him.

In rapid review the many children of Sudermann's facile pen have passed before us, and now that we have caught through them at least a glimpse of the poet's soul we may return to the question—what is Sudermann's outlook on life? Is it the smile or the sneer? Had we attempted an answer after discussing the novels, we should have been forced to admit that the smile had become a sneer, that the lurid pleasures of a modern Babylon had completely blotted out all the pure joy of the romanticist; but now that we have also considered the dramas the picture changes and the smile remains. "The sum of good is greater than the sum of evil."

Sudermann's poetic output has been prodigious. The nervous rapidity with which one work has followed another is marvelous, but it is just this element of his nature which his friends most deprecate. It seems as if at any cost he would keep in the public eye. Much of his work is ephemeral, perhaps the greater part of it, but there is some small portion that bears the hall-mark of genuine poetry and will live. He has furnished the repertoire of the German stage with a goodly number of most effective plays and has enriched the German novel and the German drama with at least one new and striking type—achievements which in themselves suffice to write his name in letters of gold on the annals of German literature.

And finally, let us not forget that he is still with us, but fifty-seven years of age, in the full prime of mature manhood.

HERMANN SUDERMANN

JOHN THE BAPTIST

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

- HEROD ANTIPAS, *Tetrarch of Galilee*
HERODIAS
SALOME, *her daughter*
VITELLIUS, *Legate of Syria*
MARCELLUS, *his companion*
MEROKLES, *the rhetorician* }
GABALOS, *the Syrian* } *At the Court of Herod Antipas*
JABAD, *the Levite* }
JOHN, *called "The Baptist"*
- JOSAPHAT }
MATTHIAS } *His disciples*
AMABIAH }
MANASSA }
- JAEL, *Josaphat's wife*
Their two children
HADIDJA, *Maid in the Palace*
MIRIAM }
ABI } *Playfellows of Salome*
MAECHA }
- MESULEMETH, *a beggar-woman*
AMASAI }
JORAB } *Pharisees*
- ELIAKIM }
PASUR } *Citizens of Jerusalem*
HACHMONI }
- SIMON, *the Galilean*
FIRST GALILEAN
SECOND GALILEAN
A PARALYTIC
FIRST PRIEST
SECOND PRIEST
A CITIZEN OF JERUSALEM
THE COMMANDER OF THE ROMAN SOLDIERS
FIRST }
SECOND } *ROMAN SOLDIER*
THIRD }
- THE CAPTAIN OF THE PALACE GUARD
THE GAOLER

*Men and Women from Jerusalem, Pilgrims, Roman Legionaries, Men and
Maid-servants in the Palace*

Time of Action: The Year 29 after Christ

*Scene of Action: During the Prelude a rocky wilderness near Jerusalem
In the First, Second, and Third Acts: Jerusalem
In the Fourth and Fifth Acts: A town of Galilee*

JOHN THE BAPTIST* (1898)

A TRAGEDY IN FIVE ACTS AND A PROLOGUE

TRANSLATED BY BEATRICE MARSHALL

PRELUDE

*A wild, rocky scene in the neighborhood of Jerusalem. . . . Night —
The moon shining dimly through jagged clouds. . . . In the distance
appears on the horizon the reflection of the great flaming altar of burnt
offering.*

HADIDJA and MIRIAM advancing. *Dark shadows flit in groups across the
background from right to left.*

MIRIAM. Hadidja, I am afraid!

HADIDJA. Come!

MIRIAM. I am afraid. Seest thou not those gliding shadows
there? Their feet scarce touch the rock, and their
bodies are like the breath of the night-wind.

HADIDJA. Fool that thou art! Thou art afraid of thy com-
panions in misery and suffering. The same need as
thine brings them hither; the same hope leads them on
to the heights of the sanctuary.

MIRIAM. Do they also wish to go to him?

HADIDJA. Every one wishes to go to him. Is there a light
in Israel which doth not radiate from his head? Is
there water for the thirsty which doth not flow from
his hand? Streams of sweet water gush forth from
the dead rock, and his voice is born out of silence.

MIRIAM. But I am afraid of him. Why dwelleth he among
the terrors of the desert? Why flieth he from the
paths of the joyous, and shunneth the suffering?

HADIDJA. The joyous need him not. The suffering will
find their way to him.

MIRIAM. Look, Hadidja! There is the glow of fire yonder
above Jerusalem. The Romans are burning our
houses, and yet we tarry here!

* Permission John Lane Company, New York.

HADIDJA. What! Dost thou not know that is the great altar on which, day and night, the priests offer up a tenth part of the sweat of our brows?

MIRIAM (*in horrified amazement*). And would he have the great altar fall too?

HADIDJA. I know not. But what he willet is best. See — who comes?

Enter two men, half carrying, half dragging a paralytic who moans. Later,
MANASSA.

FIRST MAN. Women, say, have ye met the great Rabbi whom men call the Baptist?

HADIDJA. We also seek the Baptist.

THE PARALYTIC (*moaning*). Put me down; let me die!

FIRST MAN. We have carried this palsied man here in our arms, and they are weary, and he whom we hoped to find is not here.

THE PARALYTIC (*with a groan*). Let me die!

MANASSA'S VOICE (*crying aloud from the right*). John! John!

MANASSA (*rushing on the scene*). John, where art thou, John? I cry unto thee in my distress. Have mercy; let me behold thee, John!

MIRIAM (*pointing to the left*). Look! A crowd of people are drawing near. One man goes before them.

HADIDJA. Bow down; for it is he.

Enter JOHN, behind him a number of men and women, among them
AMARIAH.

JOHN. Whose wretchedness is so great that he wails over-loud, and forgets that grief should be silent?

MANASSA (*kneeling before him*). Rabbi, mighty Rabbi! If thou art he of whom men are talking in the streets of Jerusalem, help me, save me, help me!

JOHN. Stand up and speak.

MANASSA. I am Manassa, the son of Jeruel, and my father was sick and blind; and I lived with him on the road to Gibeon, close by the well which is never dry. And

men came unto me who said, "It is the will of the Lord our God that ye refuse to pay tribute to the Romans," and I refused to pay the Romans tribute. Then fell the soldiers on me and burned my house, and my young wife perished in the flames, and my child and my father, who was blind. And I am now left alone and desolate. Help me, Rabbi! Help!

JOHN. Am I lord over Life and Death that I can make thy father, wife, and child alive again? Can I build up thy house once more out of its ashes? What dost thou ask of me?

MANASSA. Then cursed be those who —

JOHN. Stop! Cursings enough hang over us. Israel is loaded with them, as the autumn boughs with ripe grapes. Wherefore dost thou lament? Look before, instead of behind. If thou canst not withhold thy lamentations, put a gag between thy teeth; for there should be only silent prayer, and breathless longing and patience.

MANASSA. How shall that help me, Rabbi, in my loneliness and desolation?

JOHN. Thou speakest sinfully. Is *He* not with thee?

MANASSA. Rabbi! Who?

AMARIAH. Hearken! He hath not yet heard the news of Him who cometh!

JOHN. Knowest thou not that soon there will be rejoicing in Israel? Bridal garments and music of cymbals! Knowest thou not that there will be no more sorrow in Israel? Therefore wipe the foam from thy lips and sanctify thyself.

ALL. Sanctify thyself!

MANASSA. No more sorrow? No more suffering? Rabbi, tell me — may I stay with thee?

JOHN. Join thyself to these and learn silence.

MANASSA (*stammering*). Rabbi! [*He steps back.*]

JOHN. I see not Josaphat among you. Neither is Matthias here. Who hath tidings of them?

AMARIAH. Rabbi, none hath seen them.

JOHN. Who is that creeping on the ground groaning?

THE PARALYTIC. Master, I am a poor man, sick of a palsy and in great agony. If thou canst not cure me, I would die!

JOHN. Die *now*? Now, when One is at hand who bringeth relief for thy tumors and balm for thy sores? I say unto thee thou wilt thank the Lord thy God with shouts of joy for every hour of thy pain, for every inch of the road thou hast crawled along on inflamed knees, when thou shalt have beheld Him for whom our soul longeth and hopeth, for whose coming we wait and watch in patience by the roadside, looking toward the East. Therefore endure sevenfold suffering and groan no more.

THE PARALYTIC. Rabbi, thou hast done wonders for me. I feel no pain any more — I —

[He makes an effort to rise, but sinks back. His companions lead him to the background of the scene. He breathes more easily, and smiles as he is being carried away.]

MURMUR OF PEOPLE. See! a miracle. He works miracles!

ONE OF THE PEOPLE. Truly the time has been fulfilled — Elijah is risen. The Great Prophet is risen from the dead!

ANOTHER. No, not Elijah, not one of the Prophets! See ye not, ye blind? It is He Himself! He is the promised One. Worship Him! worship Him!

[All fall on their knees.]

JOHN. A man sick of a fever crawled out upon the road looking for the physician . . . And when a beggar or a slave came by, carrying water, he fell on his knees before him and cried, "Hail to thee, great physician! Thank God, thou art come!" And so he went on till evening, and the children mocked him. *[The people rise slowly.]* What have I, the beggar, to give you? The water I carry is to baptize you in; it is poor water

of repentance. But He who cometh after me will baptize you with fire and the Spirit, and I am not worthy to unloose His shoes, . . . so little am I in comparison with Him.

SEVERAL. Rabbi, tell us, when will He come of whom thou speakest?

OTHERS. Who is it, Rabbi? Be merciful and strengthen our souls. Speak to us of Him.

JOHN. Then sit ye down in a circle and hear the oft-proclaimed tidings, ye insatiable ones.

[*The people crouch on the ground.*]

MIRIAM. Hadidja, what is he going to tell us?

HADIDJA. Be silent.

MIRIAM. Let me grasp thy hand, Hadidja.

JOHN. It was on the banks of the Jordan. I baptized there, according to the command of the Lord. Many people were gathered round me and hearkened to what I preached, but my soul was consumed with doubt and misgiving. Then, lo, a youth came down from the cliffs above, and he was alone, and all the people drew back. And as I raised my eyes to his face, I knew that this was He, for the glory of the Eternal shone round about Him. And when He spake with me, and prayed me to baptize Him as if He were one among the sinners Himself, I trembled and refused, saying, "I would be baptized by Thee, and comest *Thou* to me?" And He made answer, "So be it, for thus shall the law be fulfilled." Then I yielded, and let it be as He desired. And when He had received baptism from my trembling hand, He rose from the water, and behold, suddenly the Heavens opened above Him and I saw the Holy Ghost descending like a white dove, and He was bathed in the Heavenly light. And a voice out of Heaven spake, "Behold, this is My Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." Then I fell on my face and adored. And I was no longer afraid.

ONE OF THE CROWD (*after a pause*). And whither did He go, He who was thus illumined by the radiance of the Lord?

ALL. Yes, whither did He go? Didst thou not hold Him?

JOHN. Plague me not with questions. He cometh and goeth, and no man holdeth Him. At this very hour He may be sitting in our midst.

[*All turn on each other an awestruck and inquiring gaze.*]

AMARIAH. Rabbi, we are all poor workpeople from Jerusalem, and every one knoweth his fellow.

ONE OF THE CROWD (*pointing to MIRIAM*). Yes, we men! But here is a woman whom I never saw before.

HADIDJA. Her name is Miriam, and she serves as maid in the Palace, as I do.

JOHN. Leave her in peace.

ANOTHER. But if He of whom thou speakest dwells among the living, He must bear a name, and His father's name.

ALL. Yea; tell us His name. His name!

JOHN. Ye would hear His name? Listen to the wind whispering among the rocks, mark well what it saith ere it vanisheth. So His name, heard first here and then there, passed by my ear. I am waiting with prayer and anxiety to hear it again. Therefore I say unto you, Question me not further, lest it melt away like a dream when the cock croweth.

AMARIAH. Yet give us withal some guidance. Whence came He to thee — He, the —

JOHN. The wind which wafted Him to me blew from Galilee.

ALL. From Galilee!

ONE. Does the Messiah belong to the Galileans, the fish-eaters?

ANOTHER. He shall come to us Judeans! Up, and let us seek Him!

ALL. Aye, let us seek Him!



EDUARD VAN GELHART

VNSER TAGLICH BROD
CIEB-VNS-HEVTE

Permission Franz Hanfstaengl, New York

THE MARRIAGE FEAST AT CANA

JOHN. Think ye that He will permit Himself to be found by you? Ye miserable creatures full of mutiny and revolt? Who are ye that ye should alter the course of the world's history by a hair's breadth? When the time for His harvest is ripe, then He shall appear to you of His own free will in glory as the Lord of Hosts. The four cherubim shall ride before Him on caparisoned horses, with flaming sickles in their hands, to mow down and to trample upon . . . Whatsoever hath been planted in sin and hath grown up rankly, that shall be mown down, root and branch; whatsoever hath reared itself against Him shall be trampled upon. Therefore, ye men of Israel, root up the weeds that flourish and encumber your bodies, that ye may not rot, and in your corruption be swept away with your polluters when *He* draweth near with the sevenfold rainbow about His head. He who shall come must come (*reflectively*), *must* come!

ONE OF THE CROWD. Rabbi, we have repented of our sins. We pray day and night, and our bodies are emaciated from fasting. Say, what more can we do?

Enter JOSAPHAT and MATTHIAS.

JOHN. Josaphat, so thou art here. And thou, Matthias.

JOSAPHAT. Master, chide us not for having lingered. We paused by Herod's Palace, which, as a rule, is dark and deserted. We saw rosy lights kindled, and the pillars garlanded with flowers. Fresh ignominy shall befall Israel, more deadly sin weigh upon her, if thou, Rabbi, comest not to the rescue.

JOHN. Speak out!

JOSAPHAT. Herod hath not come out of Galilee, as every year before, for the Passover. He is not expected till tomorrow. Another guest hath arrived. The wife of Philip, Herod's brother, hath deserted him, and taken with her Salome, Philip's daughter.

The guest at the palace is called Herodias, and tomorrow the marriage feast is to be celebrated.

JOHN. Between Herod and his own brother's wife?

JOSAPHAT. Thou hast said it, Rabbi.

JOHN. No! No! Whoever hath told thee this informed thee falsely. His lips were shameless, and his soul lied.

AMARIAH. Pardon, Rabbi; there are maids here belonging to the palace. . . . Question them.

JOHN. Hadidja, I know thee. Speak!

HADIDJA. Rabbi, my place is too humble. I only hear what the idle gossips say. But here is Miriam. She has been chosen as the playmate of the young maiden Salome since she came yesterday. She waits on her at the bath. Question her!

JOHN. Miriam, why art thou silent?

HADIDJA. Rabbi, she hath never yet conversed with strangers.

MIRIAM (*in a low, stammering tone*). Master, it is true what that man saith. And— [*Emotion.*]

JOHN. Continue!

MIRIAM. And after the wedding, on the first day of the Passover, Herodias is to enter the Temple, as far as the women's outer court, her new consort leading her by the hand. They will show themselves to the people.

JOHN. That the people may stone them? But what am I saying? They dare not! Those priests, lustful as they are, cowards cringing in the dust at the feet of the Romans, dare not permit this! The iron gates will close upon the scandal, and the High Priest will stretch forth his arm to curse them!

HADIDJA. Speak, Miriam!

JOHN. What else hast thou to say, Miriam?

MIRIAM. Master, at this very hour, messengers are passing to and fro between Herodias and the Temple. The Princess desireth that the High Priest shall meet them at the second gate, where the men and women separate, to bless her—

JOHN. Enough! Go home, all of you. I would be alone. Tomorrow ye will see me at Jerusalem.

[*Horror amongst the people.*]

ONE OF THE CROWD. Rabbi, wilt thou trust thyself to thine enemies?

OTHERS. Reflect, Rabbi! The Pharisees will trap thee. The priests will condemn thee.

JOHN. I am the son of a priest. I will speak priestly words to those who countenance this infamous crime. I will speak to them in the name of Him who cometh, for whom I prepare the way. Go! [*As they appear unwilling and hesitate.*] Go! [*The curtain falls.*]

ACT I

Square in front of the Palace of HEROD. The guard-room of the Roman soldiers is to the right of the Palace in the foreground, with benches before the door. To the right of centre is the chief entrance. Steps in background, which lead to the top of a hill. Behind, separated by an invisible valley, is a view of rising masses of house-tops belonging to another part of the town. A narrow street to the left of centre, and another street in foreground, which may be taken as a continuation of the one that runs to right of guard-room. In it is the shop of the woolen merchant ELIAKIM. At its right corner the shop of the fruit-seller PASUR, with wares exhibited. A fountain with seats round it, near the middle of the stage.

ELIAKIM and PASUR. *First, second, third common soldiers.*

PASUR (*as he comes forward glances anxiously at the soldiers, who sit in front of guard-room*). Neighbor, neighbor, dost thou not hear me?

ELIAKIM (*sitting outside his shop reading a parchment*).

It is written that whosoever disturbeth a man when he is reading the law shall forfeit his life.

PASUR. Thou readest the law?

ELIAKIM. Knowest thou not that I read the law day and night?

PASUR. Forgive me, neighbor; accuse me not. I sinned out of ignorance. . . . I was in fear of the soldiers who are quartered yonder . . . but I am going in.

[*Slinks back to his shop.*]

FIRST SOLDIER (*to the second who sharpens his sword*).

Marcus, wherefore handlest thou thy blade with such terrific zeal? There is naught to hew down in there. These damned Judeans have had enough. They'll rebel no more.

SECOND SOLDIER. Who can tell? Since that woman entered there yesterday, my nostrils have scented bloodshed. Everything is upside down in Herod's house, and when it is a question of their so-called princes, they are ticklish subjects.

FIRST SOLDIER. Here in Judea they have none; so we are masters.

SECOND SOLDIER. We are masters everywhere, with or without a Herod.

FIRST SOLDIER. What brings the Tetrarch of Galilee to Jerusalem?

SECOND SOLDIER. Yes, well mayest thou ask! Yet he cometh twice or thrice in the year to rub his nose on the fleeces of the Temple, and then away he goes again. God requires it of him, so they say. A crazy people!

FIRST SOLDIER. And we must stand by as guard of honor. A nice business for a Roman citizen!

[HADIDJA and two other maids, with jugs on their heads, come out of the Palace and go to the well, where they draw water.]

SECOND SOLDIER. Idiot! We are bound to do it, so that we may appear to honor him. In reality we guard him. He will soon be here now.

THIRD SOLDIER (*who has been squatting on a brick, without taking any part in conversation, sings*). Sweet smiling Lalage, thee will I love for ever. Thee, sweet smiling Lalage—

SECOND SOLDIER (*irritably*). Have done howling after thy Lalage! Before thou goest back to Rome again, she will be a grandmother.

THIRD SOLDIER (*stretching out his arms*). Alack, yes!

SECOND SOLDIER (*pointing to the maids*). Are not there women enough here?

THIRD SOLDIER. Ah! but they are Jew girls. They mean well enough, but the punishment of death hangs over them.

SECOND SOLDIER. A crazy people.

THIRD SOLDIER. If only there were no foreigners! I, for my part, take not kindly to these Asiatics. They wash all day long, and yet stink in spite of it. . . . Ha! yesterday a Syrian sweetheart made me a present of a necklace. There it is. Shall we dice for it?

SECOND SOLDIER. Show it to me. I lay fifty denarii.

THIRD SOLDIER. Rogue! A hundred and fifty!

SECOND SOLDIER. Very well.

FIRST SOLDIER. I will join.

THIRD SOLDIER. Come along.

[All three disappear into the guard-room.]

Ente ELIAKIM, PASUR, HADIDJA and the two other maids. Two Priests descend the central steps.

FIRST PRIEST. Damsels, you belong to the Palace?

HADIDJA. Yes, O priests.

FIRST PRIEST. Announce us to your mistress.

HADIDJA. Our mistress, priests, is gone forth to meet the Tetrarch Herod, to receive him at the gates.

FIRST PRIEST. When will she return?

HADIDJA. That we cannot say, priests; it depends on the coming of the Prince.

FIRST PRIEST. Do you desire our blessing?

HADIDJA. No!

[She vanishes with the other maids into the interior of the Palace. Both Priests look discomposed.]

FIRST PRIEST (*observing ELIAKIM and PASUR sitting in front of their doors, raises his hands unctuously*). Blessed be ye who—

ELIAKIM. No one asked thy blessing!

[Both Priests regard each other in dismay.]

SECOND PRIEST (*furiously*). These again are of the school of the Pharisees!

FIRST PRIEST. We hold the Temple. They shall yet be our servants. Come! [*Exeunt both Priests.*]

PASUR (*drawing near humbly*). Forgive me, neighbor, but now thou no longer reatest in the law?

ELIAKIM. No.

PASUR. This will be a sorry Passover for us tradesmen. See all this fine stock which I have laid in. There is the sacred pomegranate wood, whereon to roast the lamb. Here are the sweet herbs, with which to prepare the holy broth, and here are the bitter roots, the garlic, cresses, and bay leaves, all according to the precept. In six, or at latest seven hours the feast begins, and I shall be left stranded with my whole stock on hand. Oh, woe is me! Woe is me!

ELIAKIM. Well, have I not also superior and holy wares for sale? There are stuffs of the very finest quality. Beautiful tassels of white and hyacinth-blue wool. And are not my Tephilim the most beautiful ever worn by a son of Abraham at morning prayer? Nay, Abraham himself never wore a finer. I believe I have eighteen dozen or more. Yet one should take no thought of bodily raiment, but read the Scriptures. So it is written.

PASUR. But, neighbor, the man who deals in vegetables does not find it so easy to be righteous in the sight of the Lord. Thy woolen goods will keep till Herod is gone again with his new wife.

ELIAKIM (*shakes his fist at the Palace*). It's a shame, a crying shame!

PASUR. Yes; once this was always a good spot for business, but now grass groweth in front of the Palace.

ELIAKIM. Only priests do go in and out.

Enter a citizen of Jerusalem who comes to fill his pitcher at the fountain.

CITIZEN (*distressfully*). Neighbor, dear neighbor!

ELIAKIM. What is thy trouble?

CITIZEN. Thou art a righteous man and knowest the law. Give me advice, and thou shalt have my thanks. My poor wife has hurt her foot while working in the fields. It is burning and swollen, and I bathe it with cold water from the fountain, which does it good. But in a short time beginneth the feast. May I continue with the bathing then?

ELIAKIM. Sabbath breaking? Thou wilt be guilty, and deserve death.

CITIZEN. Oh, Lord eternal!

ELIAKIM. Yes. If it were her throat that ailed, then thou mightest pour the remedy into her mouth. But her foot! No!

CITIZEN. But suppose that it mortifies!

ELIAKIM. Yea, if it mortifies and is a danger to life, the law alloweth it.

CITIZEN (*crying out in despair*). But then it is too late!

[*Meanwhile a man wrapt in a cloak has come down the street, and looks up calmly at the windows of HEROD'S Palace.*]

ELIAKIM (*points to him, looking shocked*). Hush, if thou lovest thy life! The man thou seest yonder is one David, belonging to the Zealots who dwell in the desert. They come down to the towns with daggers hidden in the folds of their cloaks. And when they find people committing a breach of the law by word or deed, they strike at them from behind. [*Rising, as the stranger approaches.*] Greeting, thou holy man! Behold I know thee well. Wilt thou not bless thy servant?

[*The stranger passes, and disappears in the street to the left.*]

PASUR. I feel a shiver run through me. One can err and not know it.

CITIZEN. How many hours are there yet, ere the feast begins?

ELIAKIM (*regarding the sun*). Six.

CITIZEN. So long, then, I may use the cooling remedy, but I know not what to do afterward. [*Drags his pitcher away dejectedly.*]

PASUR. Of a truth, we Hebrews are hunted like vermin. If the Romans leave us alone, the law strikes at us.

The stage has become half-filled with people, who gesticulate in excitement, looking up at HEROD'S Palace. Among them HACHMONI; later, the soldiers.

ELIAKIM. What is going on there? Hachmoni, thou shalt speak. What ails the people?

HACHMONI. Hast thou not heard? John is in the town!

ELIAKIM. There are many Johns.

HACHMONI. The Baptist, man!

ELIAKIM. The Baptist; enemy of the Priests and of the Pharisees; to whom every Rechabite hath sworn death. Is he caught at last?

HACHMONI. Thou speakest like one in his sleep! If there is a man in Jerusalem safe and untouched by the curse of the Romans, it is he. He standeth in the marketplace and preacheth; he standeth at the gates and preacheth.—Did I say preach? Firebrands issue from his lips; scorpions leap out of his mouth.

ELIAKIM. Against whom doth he preach, then?

HACHMONI. Against Herod, naturally. And his paramour, and his paramour's whelp.

ALL. Down with Herod! Death to Herod!

[The first and second Roman soldiers step out of the guard-room.]

FIRST SOLDIER. What are the blear-eyed scum crying?

SECOND SOLDIER. Death to Herod! Did not I say it would be so? I can trust my nose. [*Draws his sword.*]

PASUR. Protect yourselves! The soldiers!

[The people fall back.]

FIRST SOLDIER (*laughing*). The dogs are affrighted already. Curs! *[They go in, laughing.]*

AMASAI and JORAB enter from left centre, remain in the street.

AMASAI. Look at them! Must this not appear a mad mockery in the sight of the Lord? Who that follows the straight path laid down by the law, after the manner of God-fearing men, can have anything in common with these sinners?

JORAB. They are infatuated with the Baptist's preaching, and yet too weak to kick against the pricks. Speak to them, so that they come to themselves.

AMASAI. After the Baptist? Rather would I grasp a mad bull by the horns. They would go up to the Temple to make an offering of sow's blood, if he bade them do it.

JORAB. Cannot we trap him?

AMASAI. And so stand before the people as the friends of Herod? Leave that kind of fame to the Priests and the Sadducees. The disaffection which we quelled, at a signal from him, screams aloud in the gutter. So what good have we done? That is why the people flock to him. We have missed our opportunity. But still, I know a way to entangle him. I will strike at him through his folly about the Messiah. [*Shouts of applause arise from the people.*] Listen! so they once hailed us.

[*They withdraw further into the street to the left.*]

Without AMASAI and JORAB. Enter JOHN, accompanied by JOSAPHAT, MATTHIAS, and MANASSA and a fresh crowd. People appear behind left.

[JOHN throws himself down on the edge of the fountain.]

JOSAPHAT. See, Rabbi, what power hath been given thee. They wag their tails like pleased hounds. Jerusalem the Blessed lies at thy feet.

JOHN. Give me to drink!

[MANASSA draws him water.]

HACHMONI. Behold! The great prophet drinks as if he were one of us —

PASUR. That is goat's hair wherewith he is clothed. It must prick his skin. It shows what a holy man he is.

ELIAKIM. But he doth not favor the woolen trade. If all were so holy, we should be beggared.

HACHMONI. And his food, people say, is nought but locusts and wild honey.

MATTHIAS. Get back. See ye not that ye plague him?

[*They retire.*]

JOSAPHAT. Rabbi, forgive. The people wait. What is thy command to them?

JOHN. Is this Herod's house?

JOSAPHAT. Yes, Rabbi. [*Silence.*] Rabbi, say, what shall they do?

JOHN. Am I the keeper of these people? The shepherd may drive his flock through thorns or flowers. I pine for the wilderness, for my rocky fastnesses.

JOSAPHAT (*dismayed*). Rabbi!

JOHN. I have awakened the slumbering conscience, scourged and roused the idle, shown the erring the right road. One great burst of indignation against Herod now flames toward heaven. So now they may let me go my way, or send their spies after me. But no priest has yet dared to stand in my path. It is well. My work in Jerusalem is at an end.

MATTHIAS. Not so, Rabbi. Thy work only beginneth. We have to face the Prince's entry. The people want a leader.

JOHN. Whither will they be led?

MATTHIAS. That we know not, Rabbi.

JOHN. And do I know? Am I one to subject my will to the fetters of a plan, or to spin a web for others? I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness. That is my destiny. Come! [*He stands up.*]

PEOPLE. Hail to thee, John! Hail!

[*As he is going, AMASAI and JORAB step in his way.*]

AMASAI and JORAB.

AMASAI. Pardon us, great prophet, that we have not yet been present at thy baptisms.

JOHN. Who are ye?

JOSAPHAT (*whispering*). Be on your guard, Rabbi. They wear the wide hem of the Pharisees. Their brethren are high in the Council.

AMASAI. We are diligent scribes, simple men, to whom the study of the law hath brought more honor than we deserve.

JOHN. May be. But what do ye want with me?

AMASAI. Many reports of miracles worked by thee have come to our ears. Some say thou art Elijah; and others, even greater than he. We are willing to believe this, even if thou performest not his miracles. Naturally thou mayest have reasons in thy heart for keeping thy power of miracle-working a secret from us.

PASUR. Hath he worked miracles?

ELIAKIM. Not for me.

PASUR. Ah!

AMASAI. We have heard, too, much of thy godliness; that thou fastest and prayest as one to whom meat and drink and earthly intercourse are of no account. We fast and pray also, and our desire for doing good cannot be satisfied. But the law is harder and more zealous than we. Therefore we beg thee to be so gracious as to bestow on us the benefit of thy teaching, Rabbi, and to tell us how we can keep the law.

JOHN. So? Ye lay traps for me under the cloak of your glib words. Ye generation of vipers! Who hath told you that ye shall escape the wrath to come? Woe unto you, when He cometh who is stronger than I! He hath His sickle already in His hand. He will gather the grain into His barn, but the chaff He will burn with everlasting fire.

PASUR. Of whom doth he speak?

HACHMONI. Hush! he speaks of the Messiah.

ELIAKIM. What Messiah?

JORAB. Come, Amasai. I am afraid of this man.

AMASAI (*shielding himself with his hand*). We approached thee as petitioners, and thou hast abused us. We will let that pass, presuming that thou hast a right thereto. The one of whom thou speakest as coming after thee has given thee the right. Is it not so? [*Silence.*] Behold, ye people of Israel, your prophet is silent. If it be not the Messiah, the Messiah of whom he preaches in the wilderness, and even in the market-place, who hath given him the right to chide us? Where else hath he obtained his authority? Ye know what we are, God-fearing, upright men, that strive to obey the law in everything.

ONE OF THE PEOPLE. Who is this?

ELIAKIM. Amasai, the wise and learned scribe.

PEOPLE (*murmuring*). Listen, it is Amasai.

ANOTHER. Rabbi, wilt thou not bless us?

AMASAI. Yea, in short, we are a piece of the law ourselves.

And we have never done this man any harm. If he is an enemy to us, it must be because he is an enemy to the law.

JOHN. Thou liest.

AMASAI. Good. If I lie, so teach me, great prophet, how thou keepest the law.

JOSAPHAT (*in a low voice*). Yes, Rabbi, explain! The people expect it.

JOHN. I have nothing to do with the law, of which ye and your like set up to be guardians and students.

[*Sensation among the people.*]

JOSAPHAT (*in a low voice*). Rabbi, think what thou art saying. Injure not thyself.

JOHN. Nay, it is not your law, but yourselves that I hate. For your hand lieth heavily on this people, and your well-being is its affliction.

AMASAI. That thou hast yet to prove, great prophet.

JOHN. Who are ye, ye men of worldly wisdom, that ye should look on the law as your special inheritance and possession? Here is an enslaved people crawling patiently on its belly beneath a scourge, oppressed by a heavy burden, and ye desire to tell it *how* it shall crawl.

AMASAI. Yea, because it must crawl somehow, great prophet.

JOHN. Ye think so. I say that it shall rise out of the dust.

AMASAI. Thus have rebels ever spoken, and the end hath always been the cross and the gallows. Thou, whom men call the great prophet, listen to me! When the Lord redeemed His people the first time, how did He do it? Through the law. And when He redeemed them a second time, knowest thou how He did it? Through the law. So if we guard and watch this law, and let it expand by itself, swelling like an ear of corn, a thousand times into a thousandfold blessings, what is our object? Redemption, the hope which lives in all of us. Only we do not noise it abroad in the gutter and on the housetops.

PEOPLE (*murmuring*). There he is right. Aye, he is right!

A troop of pilgrims have come up by degrees and slake their thirst at the fountain. Among them SIMON the GALILEAN.

AMASAI. See! Look around thee. Behold these pilgrims! They come with their knapsacks from far distant lands: from Egypt, from the Euphrates, and Syria, and from the accursed city of Rome itself. They are indifferent to hunger and thirst, the heat of the sun, and the dust of the road. And wherefore have they come? Because of this very law, which I and my brethren guard and study. And if thou sayest thou hast nothing to do with this law, and hatest it, tell us, then, what law thou lovest? Where do the Commandments leave off which the Lord made for His people, and where

begin the vain works of men? Enlighten us, great prophet, and upbraid us not.

[JOHN is silent, and uncertain what to say.]

JOSAPHAT. I warned thee, Rabbi!

AMASAI (*with a laugh of scorn*). Now see, all of you. See! Methinks the great — [*Breaks off as a woman, sickly and heavily loaded, comes accidentally near to him. He turns round in anger.*] Touch me not, lest I become unclean! I am a Rechabite!

SIMON (*to the woman*). No; touch him not, lest thou become unclean.

AMASAI. What?

SIMON. For the Pharisees who call themselves Rechabites are unclean from within. Come!

[*Leads her to the fountain.*]

AMASAI. He denies God!

PEOPLE (*murmuring*). He denies God!

AMASAI. A Rechabite unclean? A man who doth nothing day and night but fulfill the law; who performeth his sacred ablutions three times more than necessary; who sitteth, on the Sabbath, like a monument; who speaketh a blessing at meat twice, and over salt, bread — er — er — [*half choking.*] A Rechabite unclean?

JOHN. If I could not answer thy questions with their double meaning, thou thyself hast now answered them!

AMASAI. And may seven swine possess thee, thou great prophet, so that compared with them thou appearest to me a saint. (*To the Galilean.*) And what evil spirit hath taken possession of thee, man? Art thou a Jew? Where dost thou come from? What is thy name?

MATTHIAS (*in a low voice*). Tell him not thy name. He will ruin thee.

SIMON (*calmly*). I am a Jew. My name is Simon, and I come from Galilee.

AMASAI. And as one that there knoweth Law and Sacrifice —

SIMON (*interrupting*). Greater than law, greater than sacrifice, is love!

[*Sensation and dismay among the people.*]

AMASAI. See ye not now that he is guilty against the law?

[*He continues speaking earnestly to the people.*]

JOHN (*approaching the Galilean in great excitement*).

Who taught thee that? [*As SIMON is silent, more urgently.*] Who taught thee that?

MATTHIAS (*in a quick, low tone to the Galilean*). Before they capture thee, fly!

[*SIMON shakes his head.*]

JOHN. This knowledge, that comes straight from thy simple and timid heart, awes me, for it cannot be thine own. [*The people, hounded on by AMASAI, jostle the Galilean.*] Back! In the name of Him who cometh, keep back. Leave him alone! [*The people retreat.*]

PASUR. Thou playest with us and our great longing as if we were toys.

AMASAI. Ah, now I have caught thee! Thou who poisonest a thirsty people with foul water! Where is He who shall come? Where is thy Messiah? Where is the King of the Jews? Aye, show Him to us!

THE PEOPLE (*fiercely*). Yea, woe to thee if thou canst not show Him to us!

JOHN (*firmly*). Here cometh the King of the Jews whom ye acclaim!

HEROD, HERODIAS, SALOME *and their train appear above in the background.*

The company of soldiers, with their officers, have posted themselves at the Palace gates. In silence the procession descends.

ONE OF THE TRAIN. Hail to Herod! [*Still silence.*] Now, ye dogs! Cry, Hail!

HEROD. At what are the people gaping? (*To the Commander of the Guard.*) Ye, who in obedience to Rome's command are here to protect me, cannot ye clear them out of my way?

[*At a sign from their Captain the soldiers begin to charge the people with lowered spears.*]

AMASAI (*who is standing in the foremost row, turns with a shrill cry*). Woe! woe!

[*Takes flight. JORAB follows him. The people retreat with a subdued exclamation of fear. JOHN alone stands his ground, his head held high, and measures HEROD with his glance.*]

SALOME (*raising her veil*). Mother, look at that man. It is the same who stood in the market-place and at the gates and everywhere where we have passed.

HEROD. And everywhere caused dissension.

SALOME. Look! His eyes flash fire! Mother, look!

HEROD. Come along, ye women. And if the pious citizens of Jerusalem have unlearnt the way to welcome with rejoicing the representative of the great race of Herod (*with a glance at the Captain of the Guard*), Rome, I hope, will teach it to them again.

[*The Captain shrugs his shoulders with a slight smile.*]

HEROD. Come, I pray.

[*HEROD, HERODIAS, SALOME, go with their train into the Palace; the common soldiers into the guard-room.*]

Enter JOHANNES, JOSAPHAT, MATTHIAS, MANASSA, HACHMONI, PASUR, the people.

HACHMONI (*at the head of a group, pressing forward*). Pardon us, great prophet. The Pharisees have fled like cowards. But, see, we cling to thee. So now help us.

THE PEOPLE. Help us!

JOHN (*as if in a dream*). Tell me, whither hath the man from Galilee gone?

MANASSA. Rabbi, we know not.

JOHN. Then seek him. Bring him to me.

MANASSA. Yes, Rabbi.

ALL THE PEOPLE. Tarry with us, great prophet. Help us! We flee to thee.

JOHN (*pondering in uncertainty*). Matthias, Josaphat, did he not say Love?

ACT II

SCENE I

Hall in Roman style of architecture in HEROD'S Palace. On the right side, a balcony upheld by pillars, which extends the whole depth of the stage, and to which a flight of steps leads. Off the balcony a door opens into Salome's room. Underneath, on the ground floor, another door. In the centre of the background is the chief entrance. On the left, a window. Near it a couch and other furniture. To the right, between the pillars of the balcony, is a divan. Carpets and tiger-skins on the floor. A mixture of Roman and Oriental luxury.

MAECHA, MIRIAM, ABI on the balcony. After them, SALOME. The damsels step cautiously and listen.

SALOME (*through the door*). Is it safe? No one there?

MAECHA. Not a sound of any one.

SALOME. Then, come! [*They skip down the stairs.*]

SALOME. Ah, here it is light, and one can see oneself reflected in the walls. Do you know why we have been suddenly mewed up in the apartments above? Yesterday we were allowed to wander as we listed through all the passages, to dance unveiled in the gardens, and peep through the railings and mock the passers-by. But today, since my uncle came, we have had to sit moping in sackcloth and ashes. Why? Do none of you know why?

MAECHA. Mistress, the house is now filled with strangers who were not here yesterday. And, it is said that the men who are in the Tetrarch's following run after young maidens.

SALOME. Let them! I am not afraid of any men. . . . I take them as I find them. . . . I love them.

ABI. Thou knowest men, mistress?

SALOME. I mean not the men of our own people! They wear beards on their chins like great pads of hair, and before one can look round, they stand there barefooted . . . And then people say— No; I mislike that. But once, when I was with my father in Antioch, I met pale youths with golden brown hair, and they wore

red shoes and smelt of perfumes. . . . They were Greeks, my father said, real Greeks from Hellas. . . . They smiled, and it made me thrill. . . . Why dost thou stand there sulking, Miriam, and listenest not to my converse? It doth not please thee? Laugh, or I'll beat thee. If thou laughest not, I'll have thee whipped!

MIRIAM. Let me be whipped, mistress.

SALOME. Where wast thou last night? The palace guards said thou wouldst visit thy sweetheart. . . . Thou hast a lover? (*Roguishly.*) Whisper his name in my ear and I'll give thee a gold pin.

MIRIAM. I have no one that loveth me, mistress.

SALOME. The language of you Judeans hath an insipid flavor, and your eyes dissemble. Yet, I love Jerusalem. A purple haze hangs over its gables. And it seemeth to me ever as if the sun in Jerusalem kissed one secretly. But ye could not understand how that is . . . ye have not the blood of the great Herod in your veins. My mother hath it, and I have it from her. . . . And whatever they may say in Jerusalem, my mother was wise to run away from that other husband, for the one here is of more account than he. And because she was so wise, and at the same time so sadly foolish, I love her, and will share the consequences of her folly. [*She flings herself on the couch.*] I am not displeasing to my uncle Herod. . . . I have remarked that he casts stolen glances at me. . . . Now when my mother scolds me I shall know how to tease her! [*Trills forth.*] I am the Rose of Sharon, the lily of the valley. Cometh not my friend into his garden to eat of—
Miriam, where does that window look out?

MIRIAM. I do not know, mistress. I have never been in this hall before.

SALOME. Go and see.

[MIRIAM looks out of the window and starts.]

SALOME. Why dost thou start?

MIRIAM. Did I, mistress?

SALOME. Tell me what thou seest?

MIRIAM. There are many people standing round a fountain, and —

SALOME. And?

MIRIAM. I cannot —

SALOME (*stands up and goes to window*). Ah! (*Looking out for a moment in silence*). Miriam, who is that?

MIRIAM (*confused*). Whom dost thou mean, mistress?

SALOME. Is there any one else but him? . . . Miriam, thou gentle, brown Miriam (*half threateningly*), deny him not!

MIRIAM. It is — John — the Baptist.

ABI, MAECHA (*hurrying up, all curiosity*). The Baptist?

SALOME. Let him be who he may . . . See how the people surge round him! Have ye ever in your valley seen a rock bend? He doth not bend. Ha! ha! Not he! Only if — perhaps — [*She stretches out her arms.*]

HERODIAS *enters from centre.*

MAECHA. Mistress, thy mother!

[*The three maidens withdraw quickly from the window.*]

HERODIAS. What are ye doing here, damsels? Salome thou! Shall we let it be said that we have brought evil manners into Jerusalem?

SALOME (*intending to wound, but outwardly meek*). Methinks it is said already.

HERODIAS (*enraged*). Go!

SALOME. Yes, mother.

[*She crosses over, and lingers between the pillars of the balcony.*]

HERODIAS. Ye damsels, stay! Ye are Judeans?

MAECHA. Yes, mistress.

HERODIAS. Intelligence hath reached me of one they call the Baptist stirring up rebellion in the streets. Which of you know the man?

MAECHA. She does.

ABI. She hath this moment confessed it.

HERODIAS. What dost thou know of him?

MIRIAM. That last night I sat at his feet praying.

SALOME (*coming forward*). Thou? Thou?

MAECHA. Pardon! A moment ago he was standing close to the Palace.

HERODIAS. Show him to me.

MAECHA (*from the window*). Now is he gone.

HERODIAS (*to MIRIAM*). So speed after him, and when thou hast found him, bring him privately through yonder gate. [*Points below to the right.*]

SALOME. She shall not. . . . I will not . . . Not her!

HERODIAS. Why not?

SALOME (*throwing her arms round MIRIAM*). She is dearest to me. I will not let her go out of my sight. [*Comes over and supplicates HERODIAS.*] Mother!

HERODIAS. Art thou still such a child? (*To MIRIAM.*) Go!

SALOME (*angrily*). Miriam! [*Exit MIRIAM.*]

HERODIAS. Such a child, and already hast the tooth of a serpent in thy mouth!

SALOME (*kneels on the couch before her mother and encircles her knees with her arms*). Forgive me, mother. We, thou and I, are not like others. We sting those we love.

HERODIAS (*in a low voice*). And those we hate?

SALOME (*likewise*). We kiss!

HERODIAS (*laughing*). Child! [*She kisses her.*]

SALOME (*laughing*). Thou kissest me!

Enter the Palace Captain.

PALACE CAPTAIN. My master, the Tetrarch Herod, would see thee, mistress.

HERODIAS (*in growing anxiety covers SALOME'S face with her veil*). Go, make haste; go!

SALOME. Mother, I am dull in the upper chambers. May I not stay near thee?

HERODIAS (*looking toward the door*). Go, instantly!

[*SALOME slowly climbs the stairs with her companions.*]



CHRIST AND THE DISCIPLES

From the Painting by Edward von Gebhardt

ABI. She hath this man, and I kissed it.

HERODIAS. What dost thou say of him?

MIRIAM. That last night I sat at his feet praying.

SALOME (*coming forward*). Thou? Thou?

MAECHA. Pardon! A moment ago he was standing close to the Palace.

HERODIAS. Show him to me.

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HERODIAS. Why not?

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HERODIAS. Art thou still such a child? (*To MIRIAM.*) Go!

SALOME (*angrily*). Miriam! [*Exit MIRIAM.*]

HERODIAS. Such a child, and already hast the tooth of a serpent in thy mouth!

SALOME (*kneels on the couch before her mother and encircles her knees with her arms*). Forgive me, mother. We, thou and I, are not like others. We sting those we love.

HERODIAS (*in a low voice*). And those we hate?

SALOME (*likewise*). We kiss!

HERODIAS (*laughing*). Child! [*She kisses her.*]

SALOME (*laughing*). Thou kissest me!

Enter the Palace Captain.

PALACE CAPTAIN. My master, the Tetrarch Herod, would see thee, mistress.

HERODIAS (*in growing anxiety covers SALOME's face with her veil*). Go, make haste; go!

SALOME. Mother, I am dull in the upper chambers. May

From the Painting by Eduard von Gebhardt

HERODIAS (*looking toward the door*). Go, instantly!

[SALOME slowly climbs the stairs with her companions.]



FRANZ HANFSTÄDEL, „DER POKAL“

HERODIAS. Thou art Captain in the Palace?

[*The PALACE CAPTAIN bows.*]

HERODIAS. Go, set watches at every door. Who entereth goes not out again. . . . And be silent.

PALACE CAPTAIN. One has but to see thee to know that thou art the mistress. . . . How should I not be silent?

[*Goes to the door.*]

Enter HEROD, GABALOS, MEROKLES, JABAD. Exit the Palace Captain when the others enter.

HEROD. Princess, after waiting even the space of a moment, a man will enjoy his favors to the full. . . . Therefore . . . [*Kisses her on brow and mouth.*] Pardon!

HERODIAS. Thou hast rested; art refreshed?

HEROD. That question thou oughtst not to ask me. My father was one of those men who never knew what weariness was. So his son, likewise, parts company with his pillow betimes, and—

[*He observes SALOME who, with her veil slightly lifted, looks down from the balcony, and after she sees that he has noticed her, vanishes.*]

HERODIAS. Thou art silent.

HEROD. Thy daughter is not with thee?

HERODIAS (*dryly*). No.

HEROD (*bows his head, smiling*). Allow me, Princess . . . to present these friends. . . . I will not call them servants, for such they are not.

MEROKLES. Oh, mistress, they are servants whom thou mayest safely make thy friends.

JABAD. And they are friends in order that they may serve thee.

GABALOS. And are amply rewarded for both, great mistress.

HEROD (*smiling*). This rascal, whose Syrian dialect thou art now acquainted with for the first time, is Gabalos from Antioch. Thou seest, I tolerate his jesting.

GABALOS. For Herod the Great also kept a fool.

HERODIAS. And people say that he acquired a second fool before he let the first drown.

[GABALOS bows, smiling, then turns aside with a grimace.]

HEROD. This is Merokles, the rhetorician. His voice carries far. It is heard in Rome, when folks there would be deaf to my own.

MEROKLES. But I shall take no satisfaction in that voice till it may greet thee, mistress, with the cry "Hail to thee, O Queen!"

[HERODIAS starts and smiles, then exchanges a glance with HEROD.]

MEROKLES (*in a low voice, joining GABALOS*). Thou madest a good hit; I a better.

HEROD. And in contrast to this cool flatterer, here is Jabad the Levite, my guide and my conscience ever since I set foot on Jewish soil. For, by Bacchus, he knows exactly what I have to do, every moment, in order to be pious, after the manner of my pious people.

GABALOS (*aside*). He acts as if he had forgotten the way.

MEROKLES (*aside*). For by so doing he thinks he will the more resemble his father.

HEROD. As an example, what ought I to be doing at this sacred moment?

JABAD. The sun is sinking, O master. Thy Passover lamb, one year old and flawless, hath been slaughtered in the Temple. It is now in the courtyard to be blessed. Thou, as the lord and master of this house—

HEROD. Must do it myself?

JABAD. Thine illustrious father did not, and there was, on that account, grumbling amongst the people.

HEROD. Blessing is cleaner work than slaughter. I will do it. See, ye wise Greeks, that we must serve the gods in order to rule over men! And in the end we serve to no purpose. [*He motions them away. To JABAD.*] Go and make ready, and I will follow thee.

[*Exeunt GABALOS, MEROKLES, and JABAD.*]

SCENE II

HEROD, HERODIAS, *later* SALOME with MAECHA, *on the balcony.* HEROD and HERODIAS stand together a few moments in silence.

HERODIAS. Art thou content?

HEROD. Thy kindness oppresses me. Whether thou art content seemeth to me of more importance.

HERODIAS (*feeling his tone of contempt*). I have had no roof over my head for three nights. Like a tramp I have wandered in the dust of the roads. My serving-women one by one deserted me. Only Salome hath not forsaken me. I have robbed her of her father; the father I have robbed of his child. And what I have robbed my husband of thou canst estimate better than it beseemeth me. See, all this I have done for thee!

HEROD. I have abandoned my wife, who also said she loved me. She flew to her father. He now maketh ready for war to avenge his child's wrong. Only a trifle is lacking: I have no army. In Rome I am threatened with disgrace; my brother curses me; Judea points the finger of scorn at me. . . . So little have I done for thee—

HERODIAS. And thou repentest this little already?

HEROD. No! only forgive me if I blame thy coming too soon.

HERODIAS. Too soon! Was warmer welcome ever heard than this "too soon"?

HEROD. Take not my words amiss, I entreat thee!

HERODIAS. I dare not say that longing drove me here.

HEROD (*with an embarrassed smile*). Say it . . . by all means!

HERODIAS. Then thou hast not forgotten the days—of eloquent looks and silent vows—when every breath was a longing desire and every word a feast?

HEROD. How should I forget? Love, how should I—?

HERODIAS. And thou rememberest no more the nights when wandering footsteps stole to the fragrant gardens,

where, in the feverish blossoming around them, two sleepless ones mingled their sighs?

HEROD. How could I not remember; Love, how could I not?

HERODIAS. I have clothed myself in Indian draperies; I have put pomegranate blossoms in my bosom, and gold dust in my hair . . . but thou seest nothing! . . . My converse is bridal, but thou hearest it not.

[SALOME has appeared on the balcony with MAECHA.

HEROD notices her.]

SALOME. Wait; let me see whether he has already come.

[She looks over, and after her eyes have met HEROD'S she vanishes.]

HERODIAS (*observing his absence of mind, with an exclamation*). No! thou hearest nothing.

HEROD (*quickly recovering himself*). Well; what if it is so? The language of our soul, which thou art kind enough to call bridal, was fitting to the delight of those fragrant gardens. Today, methinks, we have another task before us!

HERODIAS. Thinkest thou that I have been idle? Am I a woman who cometh to beg of thee a nightly dole of caresses? Look at me. . . . Not thy beloved. . . . She exists no longer. . . . See in me thy ruling mistress!

HEROD. I am looking, and I see a woman who raves.

HERODIAS. As real as the ambition of thy mistress, as real as the secret resentment which gnaws beneath thy own; despite thy ever-ready smiles.

HEROD (*horrified*). Who told thee . . . whence . . . ?

HERODIAS. So real and positive is my hold over thee. Just now, when thou didst say I raved, thou wast reflecting how thou couldst best get rid of me. . . . Thou fool; then get rid of thy wakeful nights and all that which thou thinkest great in thyself, the inheritance of that greater than thou, whom thou wilt never equal. . . .

HEROD. Woman . . . what . . .

[His words choke in his throat.]

HERODIAS (*laughing*). Speak out what thou hast to say.
If thou no longer needest me for love, thou mayest still require me as a listener and adviser.

HEROD (*after he has walked up and down several times in great excitement*). Never resemble. . . . What is the man who smiles amiably in wrath? A coward? . . . What is the man, who has two faces? Insincere? . . . Who fawns on those in power? Servile? No; because the great Herod also did these things. But sometimes, when the blood throbbed to bursting in his veins, he snatched his sword from the sheath and slashed at friend and enemy alike who stood in his way . . . till the blood of his victim washed him calm and cool again . . . till the mighty at Rome experienced a thrill at such a display of strength. . . . I, too, feel the blood hammering in my veins. . . . I, too, would . . . but I have no sword . . . and so I must continue to smile amiably . . . continue showing two faces, and licking the sandals of the priests. . . . I, the son of Herod; I, his ape!

HERODIAS. And suppose that the priests of the Temple adopted the attitude of shield and barrier betwixt thee and the fury of the people, wouldst thou doubt thyself less?

HEROD. I doubt myself not. And what thou sayest can never happen.

[HERODIAS goes to the middle door and opens it.
A Porteress enters.]

HERODIAS. What tidings hast thou?

THE PORTERESS. The two messengers to the Temple, mistress, have come back with word from the High Priest.

HERODIAS. Show them into the outer hall. . . . They shall wait there. [Exit the Porteress.]

HEROD (*with a laugh of rage and fear*). Are their trumpets already sounding on the road? Hath the great curse already reached the door?

HERODIAS. Thou art wrong, my friend. Only a little blessing scratches at the door. . . . If it pleaseth thee, let it come in.

HEROD. Thou dreamest.

HERODIAS. Listen to me! Why did I come before thee in haste to inhabit this empty house? . . . Because every hour since I came I have been negotiating with the priests—

HEROD. Thou?

HERODIAS. What if instead of hiding the sinful woman from the people, thou, with head held aloft, repairest with her to the Temple? Would it not be a merry jest if the High Priest, with the same air of patriarchal servility with which he greeted the virtuous Mariamne, also smiled a welcome to thy brother's runaway wife?

HEROD. With what sum hast thou purchased this?

HERODIAS. When it is given, it will be a present, not a purchase.

HEROD. Only one who knows not these butchers of the High Altar could believe you.

HERODIAS. Well, these are the terms (*in a low voice*). If we were to promise never again to aspire in Rome to the sceptre of Judea (*scoffingly*), then they might consider—

HEROD. And what answer didst thou make to such insolent, such—

HERODIAS. I promised. . . . What else should I do? . . . for thee, as well as myself.

HEROD (*pointing to himself*). Even before this booty was thine, thou hast betrayed it?

HERODIAS. I fancied that I heard thee crying out just now for a sword. (*Smiling.*) When thou art king, thou wilt, of course, kill all whom thou hast promised not to be king! That is the same thing as if thou hadst never promised it.

HEROD (*staring at her*). Woman!

HERODIAS. Believest thou still that I hurried here only for the sake of a kiss?

HEROD. I shudder at thee. But even if the priests be won over, there remains the people, the hydra-headed; thou knowest not the people. They once, it is said, hurled sacrificial victims at the head of their king, they slew Barachia's son between the Temple and the altar. And besides, dost thou not know that John the Baptist is in the town?

HERODIAS. The Baptist! Leave the Baptist to me.

HEROD. I warn thee, approach him only with a weapon in thy hand! [HERODIAS laughs.]

Enter JABAD and several servants.

JABAD. Pardon, O master, the lamb is ready.

HEROD. First, we will hear what the priests have to say if your mistress, *our* mistress, so pleaseth.

[HERODIAS assents, smiling.]

[*Exeunt. all.*]

JOHN and MIRIAM come through the lower door to right.

MIRIAM. Await her here, Rabbi. . . . What are thy commands to thy handmaiden? [JOHN shakes his head.]

[MIRIAM kisses the hem of his garment and goes out.]

JOHN left alone for a brief space. *Enter SALOME, and two of her damsels.*

SALOME (*steps softly to the balustrade and gazes down on JOHN, seeks in her breast for a flower, and not finding one turns back to MAECHA*). Give me those thou wear-est in thy girdle. [*She takes the roses which MAECHA hands to her and throws them down.*] He doth not see them. Bring more flowers, and thy harp. Stay, Maecha, or I shall be afraid. [*Exeunt the maids, except MAECHA.*] Thou fair savage, out of the wilderness of Judah! The fire of hate that flashes from thy eye

shall not devour me! I will kindle another fire in it, lovely and languid like my dreams, when at night the perfume of the narcissi is wafted to my pillow. [*The maids come back.*] Give them here. . . . Roses . . . two arms' full. [*Hides her face in the flowers.*] Now if I had narcissi, too! Nay, but tarry and sing the song which I taught you yesterday, the song which the dancers sang at Antioch. But sing softly, so that he be not shy of us. Where is Miriam?

ABI. She refuseth to come.

SALOME (*between her teeth*). She refuseth! He saw the rose. He is picking it up . . . as if he had never— There are more . . . and more . . . and more. [*She scatters the roses down on him.*]

SONG OF THE MAIDENS

[*The following is accompanied by the harp, which, after playing a finale alone, dies away.*]

I have entertained thee with myrrh and honey.
 I bound sweet sandals on my feet.
 From my waist I have loosened the girdle,
 I have sung with the harp, thee to greet.
 Now come, let us quench
 The fire that consumes me . . . Come!
 Or thou from fear shalt blench.
 For my soul will hate thee . . . Come!

JOHN (*has looked up astonished. The hail of flowers strikes him in the face. He shrinks back*). Who playeth with me?

SALOME (*who has slowly descended the steps*). Master, I—

JOHN. Who art thou?

SALOME (*coyly trifling*). I am a rose of Sharon and a lily of the valley.

JOHN. Then play with thy mates . . . Leave me in peace . . . or go and call her who summoned me.

SALOME. My mother?

JOHN. Thou art Salome the—

SALOME. Yes; I am she.

JOHN. Let me look into thy eyes, maiden.

SALOME. Look, master . . . No, but not like that. . . .
If thou compellest me to put my hands before my face,
I shall spread my fingers apart and laugh between
them; yes, I shall laugh.

JOHN. Maiden, knowst thou not how abhorred this house
is? Keepest thou thy soul innocent among the guilty?

SALOME. Look at me again, master. . . . Am I not young
among the daughters of Israel? And I have heard
say that youth knoweth nothing of the guilty and of
guilt. See, they keep me confined to the upper
chambers. I drew back the bolts and crept out here,
because I knew thou wast here, master.

JOHN. How can I say to the storm wind: "Pass by,"
and to the floods, "Swallow her not?"

SALOME. Speak on, master, even if I understand nothing
thou sayest. And knowest thou that we are now sin-
ning according to the Jewish law? Both of us—
yea, it is true. My companions are gone; and is it
not forbidden for a Jewish man to be alone with a
virgin?

JOHN. I am not alone with thee. Behind us standeth the
shadow of those who have dragged thee with them
through the foul refuse of their pleasures.

SALOME. I have my own pleasures, master. How shall the
pleasures of others concern me? I read once a saying
that stolen fruits are sweet, and my nurse used to tell
me that undiscovered treasure was only found by those
who did not seek for it. . . . Is it not true thou hast
not sought me?

JOHN. Thy converse is confused.

SALOME. No matter. Chide me not. Think, are not our
dreams confused too? When I flew hither with my
mother, we came at night to a field of poppies. And

the dew shone on their petals. . . . They looked gray, and were all closed up because it was night. . . . But now they are wide open, and I think my cheeks must glow red in their reflection.

JOHN. Thou art lovely among the daughters of Jerusalem. They will weep for thee.

SALOME. Why will they weep? Am I to be sacrificed? Not I, master. Protect me! I have heard of a king, master, who made a compact with the sun. Hast thou heard of him? [JOHN bows his head.]

SALOME. Well, I will make a compact with thee. Shall I be the sun, and thou my king? Or wilt thou be the sun, and I thy queen?

JOHN. Maiden, I cannot be either sun or king.

SALOME. Why not? It is only a game.

JOHN. A King cometh after me, but I wander in the wilderness and seek a path among thorns.

SALOME. And hast not found it?

JOHN. Not for myself.

SALOME. But for others?

JOHN (*in torture, half to himself*). Who knoweth?

SALOME. Master, what harm shall wrath do one, who is a jubilation and a feast day? And if thou camest to me in flames of fire, I would not mourn my youth for the length of two moons. . . . I would stretch out my arms and cry, "Destroy me, flame; take me up!"

JOHN (*after a pause*). Go!

SALOME. I am going. [*She rushes into the arms of HERODIAS, who enters.*] Mother!

Enter HERODIAS and her women.

SALOME. Forgive me, mother, and let me stay with thee.

HERODIAS. Thou who lookest at me so imperiously, art thou the man who stirreth up the people against me?

JOHN. I am he whom thou hast summoned.

HERODIAS (*seating herself*). Come hither to me!

JOHN. Send thy women away, and this child, so that she be not corrupted ere she is ripe.

HERODIAS. The women shall go. [*Exeunt the women.*] But this child, companion of my fate, shall hear what thou hast to say to me.

JOHN. She should be guarded from what I have to say to thee.

HERODIAS. Take care, prophet! At that door stand armed men, two deep. Consider thy danger, so that thou court not death!

JOHN. I am a servant of life, and danger never standeth in my way.

HERODIAS. I respect thy faith, prophet, and so would speak to thee in a friendly spirit. . . . People have told me of a man who keeps far away from human dwellings, and only descends now and then to the banks of fresh waters to bless, so it is said. That pleased me well. . . . The great willingly bow to greatness . . . and so I bow to thee.

[*SALOME, after covering at her feet, springs up, and throws herself on her neck.*]

HERODIAS. I will not reproach thee for denouncing me in the market-place of Jerusalem, for thou dost not know me. . . . Yet I was *not* well pleased that thou didst chew the cud of wormwood, which hath embittered these Judean cattle against me. I should have thought thou wast too proud, thy solitary nature too noble!

JOHN. I have not come here for thy praise or thy blame. I have but a simple question to ask. Art thou going on the first day of the Passover to the Temple, at the Tetrarch's side?

HERODIAS (*mastering her scorn with difficulty*). I perceive, thou great prophet, that thy wrath strains at its chain. . . . Before thou lettest it loose, permit me also to ask a question; for see, I am endeavoring to approach thee, and would gladly win thee. Wert thou not a

riddle to me, I should not ask it. Yet truly no man is so curiously fashioned as not to cherish secret wishes in his heart. Every one hath said to himself: "This were my delight, and that my desire."

JOHN. I understand thee not.

HERODIAS, Look round thee. Doth not the gleaming snow of marble attract thy eyes, nor the yellow glitter of gold? [JOHN *is silent.*]

HERODIAS. Or . . . hast thou never dreamed of the power and splendor and riches of this world? [JOHN *still silent.*]

HERODIAS. Or (*pointing to SALOME, who again covers at her feet*) has thy heart not trembled at the sight of this sweet, unveiled youth?

JOHN (*after further silence*). Thou wouldst buy me? Dost thou know thy own price? A few measures of barley would be too dear . . . for thy name is courtesan, and adulteress is written on thy brow.

HERODIAS (*infuriated*). Thou — thou —

SALOME (*falling into her arms*). Mother!

HERODIAS (*controlling herself, haughtily and contemptuously*). I should have thee seized on the instant, only thou makest sport for me. And if not quite drunken with thy own folly, listen to me once more. He who thinketh himself designed to be a judge over men should take part in the life of men, should be human among human beings.

JOHN (*impressed*). What . . . didst thou say?

HERODIAS. But thou seemest to me so isolated from thy fellow-men that the throb of a human heart itself is nothing to thee. . . . Thou hast avoided, coward-like, all contact with sin and guilt in thy waste places, and now creepest forth to condemn others as guilty. The scorching winds of thy desert may perhaps have taught thee hate . . . but what knowest thou of love? of those who live and die for the sake of their love?

JOHN. Thou too speakest of love . . . thou too?

HERODIAS. See! I am laughing at thee, great prophet.

[*She laughs.*]

SALOME. Mother, look at him . . . be silent!

JOHN. Thy poisoned arrows are well aimed, and hit their mark! But . . . (*pointing to the window*) see there, the Lord's people . . . they gnash their teeth against thee, for thou hast taken their bitter bread out of their mouths and dissipated their miserable joys. . . . Thou sayest that I know them not. . . . Yet I know their heart's desire . . . for I have created it; I have put my life at the service of that desire, and I cry to thee, "Woe! thou that hast contaminated it for them. . . . Thou dost sap the strength of their young men, and expose the shame of their young women. Thou sowest scoffings where I thought to reap faith. . . . And if thou bendest the high and mighty to be the footstool of thy lusts, I will fling the poor and humble in thy path, that they may trample thee beneath their feet. . . . Woe to thee, and woe to him who shareth thy adulterous couch! . . . Woe, too, to this youthful body that cringes under the scourge of thy blood! Woe! Woe!"

HERODIAS (*springing up and going to the door on right*). The guards shall seize him. . . . Guards! . . . [*She wrenches the door open.*]

Enter two guards.

HERODIAS. Lead this man. . . . [*She hesitates as she meets JOHN's eyes.*]

JOHN (*smiling*). Look to it, what thou dost with me!

HERODIAS. Lead this man . . . out . . . into the street. . . . [*She staggers to the divan.*]

SALOME. Thou camest in flames of fire . . . !

[*JOHN walks to the door.*]

ACT III

SCENE I

A room in JOSAPHAT'S house. In the background a door, which leads into the street. Near it a barred window. On the left side is a door to another living room. A door also on the right. In the foreground to left a cobbler's tools. Toward centre, a table and two or three benches. To the right, a couch, a small table, and chair beside it. The room is poor, but not bare; lighted by two clay lamps.

JAEI with a child at her breast. Two other children and several women standing near door on left listening to a psalm sung by men's voices, which is heard in subdued strains coming through the door.

BOY. What are they singing now, mother?

JAEI (*pale and troubled*). They sing the great Hallelujah, my child.

BOY. Is the prophet singing with them, mother?

JAEI. That I cannot hear, my child.

[*Two more women come through middle door.*]

FIRST WOMAN. Jael, we have heard that the Great Prophet eateth the Passover in thy house. Wilt thou permit us to see him?

JAEI. Come in!

ONE OF THE OTHER WOMEN. That is he, the last there on the left.

FIRST WOMAN. He that sitteth there looking so heavy of spirit?

SECOND WOMAN. I should be frightened of him.

[*The singing has meanwhile ceased.*]

FIRST WOMAN. They say that he hath come into the town to judge Herodias. Is that so, Jael?

JAEI. I know not.

BOY. Mother, see, they are now drinking the fourth goblet. They will be here directly.

FIRST WOMAN. Hath he spoken a blessing over the fourth goblet?

SECOND WOMAN. No; Josaphat spake it.

FIRST WOMAN. See, they are standing up!

ANOTHER. Are they coming hither, Jael?

JAEL. That is the couch on which he will rest.

SEVERAL. Then farewell, Jael.

JAEL. Farewell! [*They hurry out.*]

JAEL *with her children.* JOHN, JOSAPHAT, AMARIAH.

JOSAPHAT. Here thou wilt be alone, Rabbi. The others remain outside.

JOHN. Accept my thanks, Josaphat.

AMARIAH. Mine, too, Josaphat.

JOSAPHAT. Thank him, Amariah, for eating with us.
[*While JOHN seats himself, he says, sotto voce, to AMARIAH.*] Come! [*Observes JAEL, who has been standing at the door unnoticed.*] Jael, thou here, and the children?

JOHN. Is that thy wife, Josaphat?

JOSAPHAT. Yes, Rabbi.

JOHN. And thy children?

JOSAPHAT. Yes, Rabbi.

JOHN. Thou hast never told me of these. . . . Is thy name Jael? He called thee so.

JAEL. Yes, Rabbi.

JOHN. Why comest thou not nearer?

BOY. We are afraid of thee, Rabbi.

JOHN (*smiling*). Why are ye afraid?

BOY. I do not know.

JOSAPHAT. Forgive him, Rabbi . . . he . . .

JOHN. Josaphat, wilt thou intrust them to me for a few minutes?

[*JOSAPHAT bows his head, signs to AMARIAH, and goes away with him to the right.*]

JOHN. Thy eyes have a sad look, Jael. Is thy heart troubled?

JAEL. Kneel down, Baruch, my son. Kneel down, both.

BOY (*half crying*). Mother!

JOHN. What is it, Jael?

JAEL (*to the children*). Say: Prithee, Rabbi!

CHILDREN. Prithee, Rabbi.

JAEEL. And this little one prayeth, too, though not old enough to pray. . . .

JOHN. For what?

JAEEL. That thou wouldst give them back their father; for see, they have no bread.

JOHN (*lifting the children from their knees*). Just now we ate of the lamb in thy house, and thou sayest "we have no bread?"

JAEEL. I do not speak of today; today the poorest have something to eat. Thou art truly a great prophet, Rabbi, and thou givest much to the people; but from us—from me and these little children—thou takest away all that we have.

JOHN. How could I do that, Jael?

JAEEL. See; for a long time my husband goeth out every night to thee in the wilderness, and then the tools lie there idle, and we starve. But willingly would we starve and die of hunger for him, if thou hadst not estranged his heart from us, and stolen his love for thyself.

JOHN. Art thou, too, one of those who say, Greater than the law and sacrifice is love?

JAEEL (*anxiously*). I did not say that, Rabbi. . . . Thou wouldst not get me into trouble with the priests?

JOHN. But thou thinkest so in thy heart!

JAEEL. Rabbi!

JOHN. Hadst thou come to me in my wilderness, I would have shown thee the way to One who shall bring food to the hungry. Here, I am powerless. Go; I have nothing to do with thee!

[JAEEL goes with the children to the door.]

[JOHN makes a movement as if he would call her back.]

JAEEL. Rabbi!

[JOHN shakes his head.]

[Exit JAEEL, with the children.]

Enter JOSAPHAT, AMARIAH.

JOHN. Josaphat, how long have I known thee?

JOSAPHAT. It is two years since I came to thy baptism.

JOHN. And since, thou hast been often?

JOSAPHAT. Have I not always been with thee, Rabbi?

JOHN. I never knew that thou wast a cobbler . . . and that thy children cried for bread! It seems to me that I do not know thee even yet, Josaphat.

JOSAPHAT. Thou knowest what is best in me, for thou hast given it to me!

JOHN. So, then, I know myself alone. And of thee, too, Amariah, I know no more. . . . Only this I know. [*Gazing into vacancy.*] I am sent— [*Breaks off.*]

JOSAPHAT. Rabbi!

JOHN. Some one hath said to me that I knew you not; one of those who have the word "love" on their tongues. . . . And I am inclined to believe her. . . . But even if I have known you, I have not desired to love you, but rather to judge you in the name of— In whose name? Know ye the rest?

JOSAPHAT. In the name of Him who shall come. So thou hast taught us, master.

JOHN. Sooner would I talk to these black walls, that they might perhaps fall; sooner to thy hungry children, that my words might fill them. But the belief that looketh up to me, transfigured because it believeth. . . . That hurts me.

AMARIAH (*low to JOSAPHAT*). It is now the second hour. Wilt thou not mention Herod to him?

JOHN (*as JOSAPHAT comes nearer to him*). I sent the youngest of you to search for the Galilean. Where is he?

JOSAPHAT. He has not yet come back, master.

JOHN. May be he hast lost the way.

JOSAPHAT. I told him where to come, master.

JOHN. I want the Galilean. . . . Ye shall procure me the Galilean. . . . See ye not that my strength rests in my King? . . . Even if I serve Him like an un-

worthy vessel . . . I serve Him according to my measure. . . . I have borne witness to Him. . . . Is that not true?

JOSAPHAT. Thou hast borne witness, indeed, Rabbi.

JOHN. But the testimony hath grown up in my soul. When He comes, will He bear it out?

JOSAPHAT. He will, master; for God sendeth Him.

JOHN. Else my soul hath not known Him, even as it hath not known you. Have ye no news of Manassa? Go and keep watch outside, that he doth not miss the house.

JOSAPHAT. That will be he! [*Goes to open the door.*]

Enter MATTHIAS.

JOSAPHAT. Thou, Matthias? Hast thou not seen Manassa?

MATTHIAS. No. Rabbi, I come to thee in the night because of Herod.

JOHN. Because of Herod? [*Seats himself with head turned away.*]

MATTHIAS. I sent spies to the Palace up till the time of the Passover Feast. The priests were coming to and fro. What their business was no one knows. And if he come now to the morning sacrifice at eight of the clock, as is his custom on high festivals . . . and come with that woman . . . flaunting his sin in the face of the people. . . . Rabbi, speak! What then?
[*JOHN does not answer.*]

AMARIAH. He hears thee not.

JOSAPHAT. He is thinking of the Galilean.

JOHN. I heard some one here speak of sin. Know ye in what raiment sin clothes itself gorgeously when it goeth abroad among the people? Say courtliness, say hate, say what ye will, and I shall laugh at you. Hear, and mark well. They call it love. Everything that is small, and stoops because it is small, that throws crumbs from its table in order not to throw bread; that covers up graves that they may stink secretly;

that hews off the thumb of the left hand that it may have nothing to say to the thumb of the right; take care; all that is called love. And they call it love when in spring the ass brays and the dogs whine; when a woman herself gathers together the stones whereon to rest with her lover in the evening, stones which in the morning the people will hurl at her, and the woman speaketh: "See, beloved, how sweet is our couch."
 . . . They call this love.

MATTHIAS (*after exchanging a look with JOSAPHAT*). Rabbi, forgive us, but the people are waiting for thee. The many who desert their beds, expectant of the morrow, think only of one thing—judgment! The judgment of Herod.

JOHN. Judgment of Herod—well.

JOSAPHAT. And thou shalt judge him. No one else but thou.

JOHN. I will judge him.

MATTHIAS. Him and the woman?

JOHN. Him and the woman. Did ye doubt?

MATTHIAS. If we did, forgive.

AMARIAH. But suppose he comes without the woman. What would happen then?

JOHN. Ye ask so much. Ye and your questions become wearisome. Hark! There is Manassa. [*JOSAPHAT opens the door.*]

Enter MIRIAM.

JOHN. Miriam, thou? What desirest thou of me?

MIRIAM (*breathless*). I flew from the Palace. . . . The guards have chased me. . . . Perhaps what I know . . . may be of use to thee.

JOSAPHAT. Speak, Miriam!

MIRIAM. If the master will hear. With you others I have nothing to do.

JOHN. I will listen, Miriam.

MIRIAM. A rumor has reached the Tetrarch that the people are plotting evil against him. He would on that account hide the woman, but she will not be hid. She will defy the master, because he hath offended her. An order is gone forth for all the servants of the house to arm themselves and line the road. Even during the night, so that the procession shall pass to the Temple ere the great crowd assembleth. Thus they think to escape the people's wrath and thine, master.

THE DISCIPLES. That shall not come to pass; verily it shall not.

JOSAPHAT. Hast thou learned, Miriam, by which of the outer gates they go to the Temple?

MIRIAM. By the Shushan Gate. I heard the servants say, as I crept by.

JOSAPHAT. And will the Roman soldiers be amongst them?

MIRIAM. That I did not hear.

JOSAPHAT. For if the Romans accompany them, we must wait behind the second gate; there where no heathen may penetrate at the cost of his head.

MATTHIAS. On the other hand, they can there be saved by the priests.

JOSAPHAT. Certainly, there the priests — Master, what is thy counsel?

JOHN. I counsel you to go forth into the streets, and to seek right and left. I would learn from that Galilean what counsel I ought to give you.

MATTHIAS. Canst thou understand him?

JOSAPHAT. I would liefer not understand him.

[*Exeunt* JOSAPHAT, MATTHIAS, and AMARIAH.]

MIRIAM *shrinks against the wall near the door and looks shyly across at* JOHN, *who broods with his back turned to her.*

JOHN (*suddenly noticing her*). Thou, Miriam, art still here?

MIRIAM. Forgive me, master. I am a little afraid; for if I go homeward the guards at the gate will seize me.

JOHN. But thou camest to me in the wilderness at night?



From the Painting by Edward von Gebhardt

MIRIAM. A rabble has gathered 'round the Temple, but the people are plotting with cunning craft, to slay on that occasion him who teaches, and therefore will be hark! Who will defy the people, because he will afflict her. An order is given forth to get the servants of the house to run before, and follow the road. Even during the night, and that the possession shall pass to the Temple ere the great crowd assemble. Thus they think to escape the people's wrath and thine, master.

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MIRIAM. Then no one knew with whom I associated, master.

JOHN. Who art thou? Tell me about thyself. Who is thy father?

MIRIAM. I have no father — and no mother. The country is full of orphans like me. There are far too many. I have never asked any one why.

JOHN. And why didst thou go to the Palace as serving maid?

MIRIAM. They say that I once sat and played with pebbles on the threshold. And when evening came, they took me in. Since then I have belonged to the Palace, and know no better.

JOHN. Thou servest me with zeal, Miriam. Why dost thou serve me?

MIRIAM. I know not why.

JOHN. And thou servest me to no purpose — knowest thou that? [MIRIAM bows her head.]

JOHN. Will they not punish thee?

MIRIAM (*with a shudder*). They will . . . I . . .

JOHN. Speak!

MIRIAM. Master, what does it matter?

JOHN. Miriam, is it also He who shall come that thou servest?

MIRIAM. I cannot tell, master. When I see thee, I feel a longing for Him. . . . But if thou speakest to me of Him, I see only thee.

JOHN. Ye children of men . . . there is a rushing as of many waters in your souls. . . . Clear and muddy . . . I shall gather all together in one great river, and I feel as if I should drown therein.

MIRIAM. Master, now I must go. Whether or no I have served thee to no purpose, be gracious. Praise me, master.

JOHN. I see thee sitting on the threshold again . . . playing with thy life, and thou stirrest my pity. . . . Go, maid! Go, child! and — [*He listens.*]

MIRIAM. Master!

Enter JOSAPHAT, MATTHIAS, AMARIAH, MANASSA.

JOHN (*going forward to them*). Where is the Galilean?

MANASSA. I have sought Him, master, from the hour thou sentest me till past midnight. I have not rested nor tasted a crumb.

JOHN. The Galilean? Hast thou found him?

MANASSA. I found him. He lay stretched out on the stones in charge of the soldiers, and near him, in chains, was his murderer.

AMARIAH. Who, on the holy eve of the Passover—?

MANASSA. They called him David the Zealot. The Galileans blaspheme God, he hath said, and therefore must this one die.

JOSAPHAT. It is true; he did blaspheme God.

MATTHIAS. He blasphemed God!

JOHN. But I say unto you . . . To him it was not blasphemy. To him it was worship. Methinks more such men will come out of Galilee. For there is an uprising there. . . . Tell me, Josaphat, do not many pilgrims sleep on the stones at night, nigh the doors of the Temple?

JOSAPHAT. Yes, Rabbi. On starry nights, like these, many a one wraps himself in his blanket and tarries by the House of the Lord.

JOHN (*in sudden decision*). It is well. [*Exit.*]

MATTHIAS. Rabbi!

AMARIAH. Hath he deserted us?

JOSAPHAT. Be not troubled! Thou, Amariah, wake our friends. Thou, Manassa, bring us tidings from the Palace. We two will follow the master. Meet us at the Shushan Gate, at the place where the old beggar-woman sits. Come!

[*Exeunt the men. MIRIAM, who has stood unheeded, goes out with bowed head.*]

SCENE II

A stone square before the open gate of the Temple called the Shushan Gate. The front of the stage is inclosed by the circuit of the outer wall. In the centre more than half the breadth of the stage is taken up by the massive doors of the gate, to which steps lead. It is night. The fire of the great sacrificial altar is reflected from the background on the walls, and fills the foreground with red, uncertain flickering glow.

Pilgrims (men and women) lie in their blankets, scattered about the steps and on the stones which fill the space on left side. Among them the FIRST GALILEAN and SECOND GALILEAN. To the right of the path which leads outside the wall of the Temple, across the stage, lies MESULEMETH. In a little while JOHN enters from the left.

JOHN (*looks round searchingly, and pauses before a pilgrim who is sleeping on the steps*). Pilgrim, awake!

PILGRIM. It is not yet day. Why dost thou wake me?

JOHN. Whence comest thou? Art thou a Galilean?

PILGRIM. I come from Gaza on the southeast coast. Let me sleep.

SECOND GALILEAN (*to first*). Didst hear? Some one there is talking of Galileans.

FIRST GALILEAN. Sleep, and let them talk.

JOHN (*walks on, and then pauses in front of MESULEMETH*).
Thou who liest here by the way, be thou man or woman, awake!

MESULEMETH. Why dost thou not step over me, as every one does in Jerusalem?

JOHN. Dost thou lie here always in the road?

MESULEMETH. I lie here always. For I must be at the Temple. Day and night I must be at the Temple.

JOHN. Art thou not greedy for alms?

MESULEMETH (*shaking her head*). The little I want, the pilgrims give me. But hast thou never heard of Han-nah, the prophetess?

JOHN. I have heard speak of her, when I was a child.

MESULEMETH. Well, this is her place. Here she sat and waited for the Messiah, forty years long. When she died she left the place to me . . . And now I sit and wait till He comes again.

JOHN. Comes again? Hath He then been already?

MESULEMETH. Certainly He hath.

JOHN (*in deep emotion*). He came? Came even to thee?

MESULEMETH. To me? No. If He had come to me, I should have been at rest long ago. But Hannah . . . She saw Him when He came.

JOHN. Woman! I implore thee . . . Speak, tell me, how did He come?

MESULEMETH. Then sit down here beside me, so that I may speak low. . . . Once a little lad was brought to the Temple by his mother, to be circumcised. And there was one called Simeon who, when he saw this boy-babe, was filled with the Holy Ghost, and said, "Lord, now lettest thou Thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared for all nations." . . . And Hannah heard this, and she came up to them and recognized Him.

JOHN. How did she recognize Him?

MESULEMETH. Did I not tell thee that she was a prophetess? Otherwise she might not have recognized Him. But as it was, she praised the Lord, and laid herself down and died. So now I sit where she sat, and wait for Him to come again.

JOHN. Verily, He must come again; and dost thou know, woman, *how* He will come? As the Lord of Hosts, arrayed in golden armor, with His sword drawn above His head, so He will come to save His people Israel. He will trample His enemies under His horse's hoofs, but the youth of Israel shall greet Him with hosannas and jubilation. See, woman, that is how He will come!

MESULEMETH (*anxiously*). Who art thou, stranger? Dost thou imagine thyself to be the prophet of any one?

JOHN. It matters not who I am, if thou art prepared for my message.

MESULEMETH. Thou canst take thy message further. I will not have it.

JOHN. What! Thou wilt not have the Messiah?

MESULEMETH. Not that one. I will not have that one. For many have come in golden armor, and have drawn their sword, and then Israel hath bled after, like a sacrificial ox. *He shall be no king! No! When kings come, they come to kings! No one hath come, as yet to us, the poor — Go away, stranger, lest thou snatch from me my crumb of hope. Begone, thou art a false prophet! . . . Go, let me lie on the road!*

[*She sinks back.*]

JOHN (*to himself*). False prophet!

Enter JOSAPHAT and MATTHIAS from the left.

MATTHIAS. See, he is there!

JOSAPHAT. Rabbi, forgive us for following thee hither —

JOHN. It is not yet dawn. . . . At this hour ye have nothing to claim from me —

MATTHIAS. But, remember Herod —

JOHN. Why stir ye up so much dust? This puny Herod, who runs after women, is not my business.

[*JOSAPHAT and MATTHIAS exchange dismayed glances.*]

JOHN. Go, find me Galileans! Wake those who sleep on the steps, ransack the houses if necessary. Only bring me Galileans, that I may question them.

SECOND GALILEAN. Hearest thou? Some one standeth there, clamoring for Galileans!

FIRST GALILEAN. I thought I dreamt it. Thou, who wilt not let us sleep, what dost thou want with us Galileans?

JOHN. Stand up and come to me!

SECOND GALILEAN. Goest thou?

FIRST GALILEAN. He must be great in Israel, otherwise he would not command.

SECOND GALILEAN. Yes, yes; thou art right.

[*They both stand up.*]

JOSAPHAT. Rabbi —

[*JOHN signs to him with his hand to be silent.*]

FIRST GALILEAN. Now, here we are.

JOHN. Who are ye? Whence do ye come?

FIRST GALILEAN. We are fishermen from the Sea of Galilee. My name is Ram, and that is my brother-in-law, and he is called Abia. And we both fish with the same net. Is it not so?

SECOND GALILEAN. Yes; we both fish with the same net.

JOHN. And tell me, ye two men, have ye ever heard of a prophet that teacheth in Galilee?

FIRST GALILEAN. A prophet! Hast thou heard of a prophet, Abia?

SECOND GALILEAN. I have heard of no prophet.

JOHN. Not . . . of one who saith . . . He is the Son of God?

FIRST GALILEAN. Ah, thou meanest Jesus of Nazareth?

JOHN (*in great agitation, scarcely audible*). Jesus of Nazareth!

JOSAPHAT AND MATTHIAS (*awed*). Jesus of Nazareth!

JOHN. Thou spakest His name first. Fear sealed my lips. But now thou hast said it. Yes, I mean Him.

FIRST GALILEAN. Yes . . . I know His father well. He is an honest carpenter, and very pious too. He well deserves that his son should be a joy to him.

JOHN. Tell me more of Him.

FIRST GALILEAN. He put up a bedstead for a friend of mine.

JOHN. Tell me of the son.

FIRST GALILEAN. Ah, the son. Well, Abia, what shall we say of the son?

SECOND GALILEAN. Aye, what shall we say of the son?

JOHN. Hast thou ever seen Him?

FIRST GALILEAN. Oh, yes.

JOHN. Thou hast seen Him?

FIRST GALILEAN. Many a time . . . from my ship. For He carries on His work on the shore. And there is always a great gathering along the banks, is there not, Abia?

SECOND GALILEAN. Yes, the banks are always quite black with people. And the fish take notice of it. That is not good for our trade.

FIRST GALILEAN. They say that He works miracles. I once met a man myself who had been blind till his — I forget what year — and he maintained that he was made to see again by spittle from His mouth . . . It may be possible — but — *[Laughs stupidly.]*

JOHN (*to JOSAPHAT*). Have not many said of me, that I worked miracles?

JOSAPHAT. Many say it, but we know it, Rabbi.

JOHN. Indeed? I have seen no miracle but power . . . and no one to whom it hath happened, save the weak. But speak on, man.

FIRST GALILEAN. It may be all very well for Him to heal the sick, but the worst of it is He doeth it on the Sabbath. That is bad, bad! And then, His friends are not well chosen. Circumspect people, naturally, are not disposed to mix with Him. For how can one trust a man who sitteth at meat with publicans and sinners? And, then, He is always at weddings and feasts. Ah! No, no.

JOHN. At feasts?

JOSAPHAT. Master, these are little people. They understand not the wisdom of any lips.

JOHN. The great should carry the little with them, the wise should master these simple intellects. That He hath not done. . . . And what is it He teacheth?

FIRST GALILEAN. Ah, what does He teach? All sorts of folly. For instance, that we should love our enemies.

JOHN. Love our enemies?

FIRST GALILEAN. And bless them that curse us . . . and pray for them that persecute us.

JOHN. Pray for them that persecute us?

FIRST GALILEAN. Yes; and more nonsense of the kind. Also that —

CALL (*from the roof of the Temple*). It groweth light toward Hebron.

JOHN (*eagerly*). Why dost thou not proceed?

FIRST GALILEAN (*rising*). It is now time for morning prayer.

CALL (*more distant*). It groweth light toward Hebron.

[*All stand up and begin to pray, their faces turned toward the Temple.*]

CALL (*quite distant*). It groweth light toward Hebron.

JOHN (*baffled and tormented*). Toward Hebron it groweth light.

SCENE III

The great gates are slowly opened, displaying marble walls, mounting in terraces, behind which are two more gates. The Temple-building itself is almost completely hidden by smoke from the great lighted sacrificial altar, which bounds the perspective. From the mountains behind the Temple are heard the long-drawn notes of the silver trumpets. People begin to stream up.

MATTHIAS (*has gone to JOSAPHAT'S side and speaks to him privately, then turns to JOHN, who stands alone on the left*). Master, the people are flocking to the Temple. . . . In a few moments the Tetrarch will certainly be there too, with the woman. Wilt thou not step among them, that they may know their leader?

JOHN. The image of my King shining in the radiance of the cherubim—where is it? Where is the rainbow of seven colors that was round His head? Seven torches burned by His throne. I see them no more!

Enter MANASSA.

MANASSA (*hurrying up from left*). Matthias, Josaphat, where is the master?

JOSAPHAT. Herod has come forth from his door?

[*MANASSA assents.*]

JOSAPHAT. With the woman?

MANASSA. With the woman.

JOSAPHAT. Master—(*as he heeds not*), Master—

JOHN. What is it?

JOSAPHAT. Herod is on the way.

JOHN. Who is Herod?

[JOSAPHAT buries his face in his hands.]

MATTHIAS (to MANASSA). Had he the Roman soldiers with him?

MANASSA. Only his servants are with him.

MATTHIAS. Hearest thou, master? He is delivered into our hands.

Enter AMARIAH; with a fresh crowd of people.

AMARIAH (*calling*). John, where is John?

JOSAPHAT (*with resolution*). Here is John.

THE PEOPLE (*hear and murmur, joyously*). See, there is John!

JOSAPHAT. Hear all of you! Go not past; and thou over there mayest speak. The master will listen unto thee.

AMARIAH. Herod is coming to the Temple, wearing princely robes. At his side, sparkling with precious stones, walks the courtesan.

[*The people break out into cries of anger.*]

JOSAPHAT. Master, thy hour is come; mount the steps and speak to them!

THE PEOPLE (*pressing round*). John, speak—Rabbi, speak—What shall we do?

JOSAPHAT. Keep back! He will speak to you. (*Aside.*) Mount the steps!

[*JOHN walks as if in a dream toward the steps.*]

THE PEOPLE (*murmuring*). See! He sways. What aileth him?

JOSAPHAT. Make haste. Speak!

CALL. Here is Herod. Here cometh Herod!

THE PEOPLE. Stone him! Stone the courtesan!

OTHERS. Look at John! Do what John does, else are ye lost.

Enter HEROD, HERODIAS, with train from right. JOHN has mounted the steps and stands in the middle of the threshold.

HEROD (*pale, but smiling*). Hearest thou what they cry?

HERODIAS. Have him seized, else it means death to thee
and to me.

[*The people are silent and tense in expectation.
Most of them have picked up stones.*]

JOSAPHAT (*who stands to the left of JOHN on a lower step,
hands him a stone, and says in a low voice*). Take this
stone! (*More urgently.*) Take this stone!

[*JOHN takes the stone.*]

HEROD. Thou on the steps — knowest thou me not?

JOSAPHAT (*whispers*). Hurl the stone!

JOHN (*firmly*). In the name of Him (*he is about to throw
the stone, then pauses, half-questioning, half-swoon-
ing*) . . . Who . . . commands me . . . to love thee —

[*A low moaning runs through the people. Two
servants have approached JOHN. They seize him
and push him down from the Temple steps. HEROD
and HERODIAS walk up.*]

PEOPLE. Woe to us! He too hath forsaken us. Woe, woe!

JOSAPHAT (*to JOHN, who is pinioned by the servants*).

Master, what hast thou done to us?

PEOPLE. Woe! Woe!

ACT IV

*A town in Galilee. The stage represents a grassgrown prison yard which,
on the right side, is adjacent to the gardens of HEROD'S Palace, divided
from them by a low wall, which continues in a right-hand direction to
the centre of background. On the left side of background a higher wall,
and entrance with heavy doors. To the left, the clumsy pile of the
prison buildings and a door. In the garden wall is a gate, over which
hangs the green foliage of the garden beyond, which bounds the right
side of background. On the right is a semi-circular marble seat with
back; on left, stones covered with moss.*

Enter GAOLER, ABI.

ABI (*with head thrust over the garden wall*). Master
Gaoler, dost thou not hear?

GAOLER. What wilt thou?

ABI. A ball went over the wall. Hast thou seen it?

GAOLER. No.

ABI. I pray thee look for it, and throw it back.

GAOLER. Look for it thyself.

ABI. How can I, unless thou openest the gate?

GAOLER. I may not open it. Let me be.

ABI. Listen, Gaoler. The ball belongs to Salome, our young Princess. If thou art not obliging, beware!

GAOLER. Oh, if it belongs to the young Princess—

[*Opens the gate.*]

Enter MAECHA, and later, SALOME.

ABI (*calls back, laughing*). Mistress, the door is open.

GAOLER. Is that the young Princess, who is daughter of his new wife?

[*ABI nods. SALOME appears in the gateway.*]

GAOLER. Princess, if ever thou comest through again, be sure to laugh, as today. For this gate is full of danger for Herod's children.

SALOME. What doth it to Herod's children, thy gate?

GAOLER. The two sons of Herod the Great came through this gate before they were sentenced, and through this gate—

MAECHA. Stop! . . .

SALOME. Let him alone, Maecha! His wisdom has taken a holiday. Hast thou no livelier stories, old man?

GAOLER. What sort dost thou mean, young Princess?

SALOME. Stories of yesterday. Stories that have not yet come to an end—stories that are as young [*stretches herself*] as we are.

GAOLER. Ah, I knew; but—

SALOME. But? Tell me, hast thou a new prisoner?

GAOLER. Yes.

SALOME. What has he done?

GAOLER (*maliciously*). He stole hens, young Princess.

SALOME. See to it that thou dost not steal my time!

ABI (*softly to him*). With her there is no jesting.

GAOLER. Princess, forgive. . . . I did not know. . . . Thou meanest, perhaps, John?

SALOME. Which John?

GAOLER. The one they call the Baptist — the Prophet from Judea, who —

SALOME. So he is here?

GAOLER. Yes; he has been here the last three days, Princess. They brought him at the end of the same cavalcade which brought thee. He lieth now safe with the salamanders and scorpions. They say he stirred up rebellion in Jerusalem, and therefore —

SALOME. I wish to see John. Bring him here!

GAOLER (*horrified*). Princess, that cannot be.

SALOME. I wish it! Hast thou not heard? I wish it!

GAOLER. Princess, I opened this gate for thee because thou hadst lost a plaything. Shall I now, instead of thy plaything, lose this old head?

MAECHA. Mistress, the Tetrarch is coming.

SALOME (*veiling herself*). Hide yourselves!

[*She stoops behind the seat; the maidens slip into the bushes. In the gateway HEROD and his attendants.*]

Enter HEROD, MEROKLES, JABAD, GABALOS.

HEROD. Gaoler!

GAOLER. Sire!

HEROD. Who are the three men who linger about the door? They look morose, and did not salute me.

GAOLER. Sire, those are the remnant of the crew which followed John, they say, from Jerusalem. For eight days and eight nights they followed him.

HEROD. The remnant, sayest thou? Where are the rest?

GAOLER. They lie somewhere by the wayside, Sire, and die of thirst, unless the ravens give them to drink.

HEROD. Drive them away!

GAOLER. Sire, we have hunted them off several times; but they always come back.

HEROD. So, let them be.

MEROKLES. See, how mild is our ruler! He doth not order them to be cut in pieces.

JABAD. Hail to our Ruler! [*The two others join in.*]

HEROD. To say truth, friends, I do not lay hands on sages and fools willingly; for one can never know whether the executioner holds up the head of a sage or a fool.

GABALOS. Thou canst do no wrong, Sire; for thou art wise, all-wise!

HEROD. When I order thee to be beheaded, I shall not be wrong; for thou art a fool, a complete fool. [*Nearing the seat.*] Bring me— [*Observes SALOME, who, listening, has raised her head a little above the edge of the seat, then quickly dives down again.*] I beg you to retire, and await me without the gate.

[*Exeunt GABALOS, MEROKLES, JABAD.*]

HEROD. Tell me, thou veiled one, art thou not Salome, my wife's daughter?

SALOME. Sire, so true as 'tis that thou art my protector, I am Salome.

HEROD. How camest thou into this prison-yard?

SALOME. Ask me not, Sire. My soul else will blush before thee. It was curiosity, because I heard thee coming.

HEROD. And where are thy playmates?

SALOME. They are afraid of thee, so they have crept away. Abi, Maecha, come forth; our master commands it.

[*ABI and MAECHA come out hesitatingly, and curtesy profoundly.*]

HEROD. Thy eyes plead for them, therefore they shall not be scolded.

SALOME. And my lips thank thee on their behalf.

HEROD. They thank like conquerors. There is music in them. How is it, Salome, that I have never heard thy voice?

SALOME. Thou shouldst ask my mother, Sire.

HEROD (*fiercely*). Thy mother! Still, I know that thou are well disposed toward me. Thou didst deliver into my hand that maid who carried on treason at night outside the Palace.

SALOME. Could I do less, Sire? And him to whom she betrayed thy secrets, wilt thou not punish him too?

HEROD. I do not know. But how?

SALOME. Sire, it seemeth to me that he hath a great following among the people. If thou sparest him, the people will like thee.

HEROD. Words of wisdom fall from thy lips, Salome.

SALOME. See how his disciples tarry at the entrance. If thou treatest him well, they will carry praises of thee to Jerusalem.

HEROD. How unlike thou art to thy mother, Salome!

SALOME. And how like, too!

HEROD. I would rather think that thou wert unlike. My sweet, unveil thyself.

SALOME. Sire, if thou wert my father! But thou art not. Directly thou comest near, my mother herself draweth my veil down deep over my breast.

HEROD. Unveil to me.

SALOME. Sire, not when I am alone with thee.

HEROD. Then if I was with others, thou wouldst?

SALOME. Perhaps. Ask my mother.

HEROD. A little now. Just a finger's length.

SALOME. No, really . . . it is not seemly, Sire.

HEROD. But if I were sitting with other men . . . at meat . . . or over wine . . . and thou camest and didst unveil thyself, that would be more seemly?

SALOME. Maybe! . . . I can dance, Sire.

HEROD. Wouldst thou dance for me?

SALOME. And what wouldst thou do for me?

HEROD. Salome!

SALOME (*rising*). No, but thou must indeed ask my mother, Sire. I am still far too ignorant; I know not what a maiden ought to do. Only what I would like to do. I know that well enough.

HEROD. What wouldst thou like to do?

SALOME. Thy pleasure, Sire. Nothing else, nothing. Seest thou, if thou treatest this prisoner humanely, they will sing thy praises, and I shall be so proud, I shall say in my heart, He acted on my advice.

HEROD (*to the GAOLER*). Bring the Baptist here. . . . I will consider it, Salome. [*Exit GAOLER.*]

SALOME (*from the gate, with a slight fluttering of her veil*). And I will thank thee, Sire.

HEROD. Salome!

[SALOME *vanishes, with a burst of laughter*. ABI and MAECHA *have preceded her*. HEROD *looks after her, and then sits down on the seat.*]

Enter JOHN, the GAOLER and a Guard.

HEROD. Tell me, how should one address thee when one would show thee respect? Thou thinkest that I mock thee? But knowest thou that in reality I am indebted to thee? The people's meditated attack was not hidden from me, and yet I came without the escort of warriors which Rome sent for my protection. Thou heldest me in the hollow of thy hand, as thou heldest the stone. Say, why didst thou let it fall? Why hast thou spared me?

JOHN. Sire, even if I spoke thou wouldst not understand me.

HEROD. That is defiance, which I cannot praise. In chains it is easy to be defiant. Take off his chains and go. [*The GAOLER obeys. Exit with the guard.*] Now, as a free man, revile me. Art thou a preacher of repentance? If so, preach to me!

JOHN. Sire, thou wouldst not understand me.

HEROD. So thou saidst before. Think of something new. Here in Galilee I am inclined to be mild and tolerant of goodness. I am told that thou hatest the Pharisees. I hate them too. I am told that thou hatest the priests. I love them not. I am told that thou hatest the Romans. I— Say, why didst thou spare me?

JOHN. Sire, my heart failed me.

HEROD. Failed thee! Before me, whom thou callest "the little!" Art thou flattering me because I have loosened thee from thy chains?

JOHN. Thou hast not laid me in chains, and canst not loosen me from them.

HEROD. What . . . and yet I made thee falter?

JOHN. It was Another who threw thee in my way . . . And so my heart failed me.

HEROD. Tell me, Baptist—I call thee by the name I have heard people use in speaking of thee, and I hope thou wilt not be angry—tell me, Who is that King of the Jews whose image thou danglest before the people? . . . See, the guards are gone, and thy confidence shall be rewarded. Tell me, who is it—

JOHN. Sire, I know not.

HEROD. And so thou deniest thy own creature?

JOHN. What is my own I deny.

HEROD. Ha, ha, ha! I have half a mind to summon my little Greek that he may go to school under thee. Listen (*in a low voice*), I too have heard of a King of the Jews who will come with a sword drawn above his head, and he will spare no one who doth not serve him at the right moment.

JOHN (*eagerly*). Who is it of whom thou speakest?

HEROD. Master, I do not know. Thou seest thus that I too have a burden of secret anxiety oppressing me, and await the sunrise. . . . But let me speak with thee seriously, Baptist. Thou hurlest thy arrows of reproach at me on account of the woman I stole. . . . I could almost pity thee for that. Thou, a great man, mightst have chosen a greater subject than a woman. And knowest thou every day she sharpens those arrows herself for me? . . . But enough of that. The smiths say that good metal rings true even when it is cracked, and thou ringest true. How dost thou manage it? . . . I pray thee teach me the Way. . . . What, silent again?

JOHN. Methinks I know you now, ye smiling scoffers. Ye grow fat on the wit of the market-places; but hunger seizes you, and ye then lift your eyes to the earnest ones, walking on the mountain-tops.

HEROD. By Bacchus, there lurks some truth in that. But it is not good walking on the mountain-tops. We wait to see you fall; then we shall not smile, but laugh.

JOHN. But I say unto thee, Sire, thou wilt not laugh. He who cometh requireth me not. That is why He cast me down. . . . Gaze into His eyes when He comes, and thou wilt not laugh, even at me.

HEROD. It seems to me thy reasoning is poor, and revolves in a circle. . . . And yet there is something that attracts me to thee. Baptist, thou hast so long been my enemy, couldst thou not possibly be my friend?

JOHN. Sire, meseemeth that to be nobody's enemy and nobody's friend is the right of the lonely. It is their all. Let me keep it.

HEROD. Yet I do not give thee up as lost. If thou wert so minded we might pursue the same paths for awhile.

JOHN. Whither, Sire?

HEROD. Whither? Upward!

JOHN. For thee there is no upward. Thou bearest the times that are and were before thee, like an ulcerous evil, on thy body. Burnest thou not from all their poisonous lusts? Art thou not weighted by their unholy desires? And thou wouldst mount to the heights. Stay in the market-place and smile.

HEROD. Baptist, take care. Thy chains lie not far off.

JOHN. Let me be chained, Sire; I ask for nothing better.

HEROD (*gnashing his teeth*). Truly thou art ruled by a broken spirit. [*After a little reflection.*] Yet tell me, Baptist, when that other cometh, that other— Say, was it in His Name that thou didst not throw the stone at me?

JOHN (*confused*). Sire, what dost thou ask?

HEROD. Was it in His Name? For if so, thy Jewish king shall not rob my nights of sleep. Ha! ha! Here, Gaoler! [*The GAOLER comes.*] The prisoner shall go in and out as he pleaseth, for he is not dangerous.

GAOLER (*dumbfounded, then in a low voice*). Sire, how shall I answer with my life, if—

HEROD. And his disciples, who loiter about the gates. Let them in and out as often as he wishes. . . . Now, did God's people ever know a more clement lord than I?

[*Laughing, walks away.*]

GAOLER. Well, thou art now thy own master. What are thy commands?

JOHN. The Tetrarch spoke of my disciples—

MAECHA (*appearing in the gateway to left*). He is alone.

[SALOME signs to the GAOLER. *Exeunt MAECHA and GAOLER.*]

JOHN. What wilt thou?

SALOME. Master, seest thou the sun sinking yonder between the pomegranate boughs?

JOHN. I see it.

SALOME. Knowest thou whose doing it is that thou art able to see it ere it goeth down, and ere thou goest down? Mine!

JOHN. May be. What dost thou want?

SALOME. Thou shalt not go down. Not thou. For my soul is thirsty. Teach me, master.

JOHN. What shall I teach thee?

SALOME. See, I am pious by nature, and I have a longing for salvation. . . . What thou givest to the humblest by the highway, give also to me. Let me sit at thy feet. I will be pious. Yea, I will. And if I touch thy hairy shirt, then be not frightened. I mean thee no harm.

JOHN. Why shouldst thou mean me harm, young virgin?

SALOME. Who can say . . . if thou shouldst reject me! No one knows how powerful I am today. When I stretch my limbs (*she spreads out her arms*) it seems to me as if I carried the whole world like this . . . only to hug it to my heart.

JOHN. Maiden, thou hast a playmate.

SALOME (*attentively*). Which playmate?

JOHN. Her name is Miriam.

SALOME. I *had* her. Now she is dead.

[JOHN bows his head, his suspicions realized.]

SALOME. I had her slain because she went to thee. No one shall go to thee except me. Seest thou now how pious I am? Seest thou? My soul feels thy strength, and feels it with joy; for I have never seen any one so strong as thou art. I have made thank-offerings and secret vows like those the Psalms sing of. Then I have been forth in the gloaming to seek thy countenance and the light of thy eyes. And I have decked my bed with beautiful, many-colored rugs from Egypt, and I have sprinkled my pillows with myrtle, aloes, and cinnamon. I will give thee my fair young body, thou barbarian among the sons of Israel! Come, let us make love till morning. And my playmates shall keep watch on the threshold, and greet the dawn with their harps.

JOHN. Verily, thou art powerful; thou carriest the world in thy arms . . . for thou art sin itself.

SALOME. Yes. Sweet as sin. . . . That am I.

JOHN. Go!

SALOME. Thou spurnest me! Spurnest me?

[*She rushes through the gate.*]

JOHN goes to the door, where the GAOLER is waiting.

GAOLER. Wouldst thou see thy disciples now?

JOHN. Bring them to me.

[MANASSA, AMARIAH hasten to him and kiss his garment. JOSAPHAT hangs back.]

JOHN. Matthias is not with you?

JOSAPHAT. No.

JOHN. What, Josaphat, thou who wast ever the nearest to me, hast thou no greeting to give?

[JOSAPHAT turns away.]

JOHN. Well, then, what is it?

JOSAPHAT. Rabbi, it is written . . . One knife sharpens another, and one man another . . . but thou hast made us blunt.

JOHN. And thou hast come this long way to tell me that?

JOSAPHAT. Rabbi, thou wast to be the way that all the erring should follow. Thou wast to strengthen weak knees and mold trembling hands to the sword's hilt. Thy work was wrath, Rabbi, but thou hast made of it a snare and a weakness.

JOHN. Thou knowest not what my work was. Had I known myself, I should not be here. Truly the time of my fall is come, when enemies sing my praises and friends speak ill of me. What would ye have me do? My end must be in solitude and silence.

JOSAPHAT. Thy end, Rabbi, is no concern of ours. It is for Israel's end that I fear. Thou tookest the law from us. What hast thou given us instead?

JOHN. Who art thou, that like a kenneled hound, thou bitest at my shanks? I took the law from you? My soul hath wrestled with the law till it is weary; my forehead beat against its walls till it bled! But now ye have opened your mouths wide that salvation should slip down them like sweet crumbs. Ye gazed up at me so long as I stood erect, and now shrink away like cowards from my fall. I have not fallen for myself, I fell for you. To you it was a compulsion and a matter of watching. To me it was voluntary, and a combat at the sword's point. . . . Look at me! Twice today I have been face to face with the world's sin. But it seemed to me almost fair, for I have yet to meet the worst. Thou art a renegade! Thou hast ever been a renegade, and renegades will ye be to all eternity, ye men of universal utility, who manure your acres with the blood of those who have died for you! Go! I am weary of you!

JOSAPHAT. I am going, Rabbi, whither Matthias hath gone before me, to Jesus of Nazareth.

JOHN (*startled and moved*). To Jesus of Nazareth?

[JOSAPHAT *turns silently to go out. Exit.*]



From the Painting by Edward von Gebhardt

JOHN. And what hast thou done long time, to tell me that?

JOSAPHAT. Rabbi, thou wast in the way that all the erring should follow. Thou wast to strengthen weak knees and mold stumbling heads to the sword's hilt. Thy work was worth Rabbi, but thou hast made of it a snare and a weakness.

JOHN. Thou knowest not what my work was. Had I known myself, I should not be here. Truly the time of my fall is come, when enemies sing my praises and friends speak ill of me. What would ye have me do? My end must be in solitude and silence.

JOSAPHAT. Thy end, Rabbi, is no concern of ours. It is for Israel's end that I fear. Thou tookest the law from us. What hast thou given us instead?

JOHN. Who art thou, that like a kenneled hound, thou bitest at my shanks? I took the law from you? My soul hath wrestled with the law till it is weary; my forehead beat against its walls till it bled! But now ye have opened your mouths wide that salvation should slip down them like sweet crumbs. Ye gazed up at me so long as I stood erect, and now shrink away like cowards from my fall. I have not fallen for myself, I fell for you. To you it was a compulsion and a matter of watching. To me it was voluntary, and a combat at the sword's point. . . . Look at me! Twice today I have been face to face with the world's sin. But it seemed to me almost fair, for I have yet to meet the worst. Thou art a renegade! Thou hast ever been a renegade, and renegades will ye be to all eternity, ye men of universal utility, who manure your acres with the blood of those who have died for you! Go! I am weary of you!

JOSAPHAT. I am going, Rabbi, whither Matthias hath gone before me, to Jesus of Nazareth.

From the Painting by Eduard von Gebhardt

JOHN (*startled and moved*). To Jesus of Nazareth?

[JOSAPHAT turns silently to go out. *Exit.*]



FORNICATION. FRANCE. MARTELAIN, NEW YORK.

JOHN. How, Amariah, and how, Manassa? Those whom I trusted the most have forsaken me, and ye are still here!

AMARIAH. Rabbi, I was at all times the least among thy disciples. What should I be worth if I were not faithful.

MANASSA. And to me, Rabbi, thou hast given a hope.

JOHN. Yet he is gone to Jesus of Nazareth. Be ye not fools. Go with him.

MANASSA. Let us be fools, Rabbi.

JOHN (*sitting down on a stone*). So seat yourselves with me. Night draweth nigh, and I am weary. Hearken! It was even as if I heard a beating of wings above me. Did ye hear nothing?

AMARIAH. Nothing, Rabbi.

JOHN. My inmost soul lies open. I am ready for the blessing from on high. Is there not a whispering roundabout? Heard ye nothing?

MANASSA. Nothing, Rabbi.

JOHN. There is a light shining over yonder mountains. Lovely is that light, and within me dawns the meaning of this riddle. Who alone can deliver the world? He who will bestow upon it the unattainable. We are in Galilee. Know ye not where He now teacheth, this Jesus of Nazareth?

AMARIAH. We heard in the streets that He was not far off. He tarries on the sea-coast.

MANASSA. And they say He may perhaps come into the town.

JOHN. Mayhap. Yet only mayhap! And my time is over. I must make haste, lest I die. Will ye do me a service?

AMARIAH, MANASSA. Rabbi, command us!

JOHN. Rise and go unto Him.

AMARIAH, MANASSA. To Him?

JOHN (*nods*). And wheresoever ye find Him, speak to Him. Ask: "Art Thou He Who cometh, or shall we wait for another?" So ask Him, and when He hath

answered, come back—quickly—for my longing for Him is very great. I believe I could not die ere ye returned.

AMARIAH. Master, we will not pause or rest.

JOHN. And ye will not forget my darkness in His radiance?

MANASSA. Master, why makest thou us ashamed?

JOHN. Then, farewell.

MANASSA, AMARIAH. Farewell, Rabbi. [*They turn to go.*]

JOHN. Go not thus; not yet. Let me clasp your hands, ye that are the least among my disciples. For (*in great emotion*) methinks I—I—love you.

ACT V

SCENE I

Hall in HEROD'S Palace. A row of pillars, raised by two steps, in the background, which lead to an open balcony with balustrade. This can be shut off by curtains, which at first are thrown back. A street is supposed to run at the foot of the next story. In the middle of the stage, raised on a dais, is a table, with couches ranged round it; flowers and ornaments. Doors to right and left.

Servants moving about, arranging pictures and flowers, GABALOS superintending them; afterward, HEROD.

A SERVANT (*announces from door on left*). Our governor!

HEROD (*following him*). Now, Gabalos, thou who hast been washed in many waters, what has thy art provided? Thou knowest our guests are spoiled children.

GABALOS. Sire, thou needest have no anxiety about food and drink. Something customary is best for jaded palates. Therefore I chartered the cook of Vitellius. But for the other part of the entertainment the prospect is bad.

HEROD (*smiling*). Is that thy opinion?

GABALOS. Noble Merokles will declaim a new ode, I warrant. Our Libyan flute-players will have washed their brown legs in honor of the occasion. Sire, mistrust those legs even when washed. As I tell thee every day, we are sick of Judean morality. Judean morality is devouring us like the plague.

HEROD. Say, Gabalos, dost thou think that our Legate from Syria, before whom all the gaiety and color of life doth shimmer, hath ever seen a young daughter of princes dance at table?

GABALOS. That would be grand, because it is something new.

HERODIAS *enters from right.*

HEROD (*noticing her*). Get thee gone!

[GABALOS *and the servants withdraw to the background, where they let down the curtains which now shut in the hall.*]

HEROD. What hast thou decided? Will it come to pass?

HERODIAS. Thy countenance beams. Thy eyes betray a badly concealed desire.

HEROD (*bewildered*). Of what desire dost thou speak?

HERODIAS. Do not prevaricate. I know thee, my friend. The poisonous weed which thou cultivatest with little sighs, and coverest up with thy crooked smiles, I know it!

HEROD. I vow, love, that I ask this only for the sake of the Roman. And how should I ever have conceived the idea had it not been for thy half-promises and suggestion of its possibilities? Thou knowest as well as I that we must offer the Roman something immense, something that may not have faded from his tired memory when he enters Cæsar's presence.

HERODIAS. That is it. And thou thyself gainest thereby a dainty tit-bit for thy lonely night-dreams! It will be nothing more than that—I shall see to it.

HEROD. I am simple of understanding. I cannot follow thee.

HERODIAS. Oh, yes; very simple is thy understanding. I know.

HEROD. Then it seems thou refusest?

HERODIAS. How could I refuse, when youth smiled and consented?

HEROD. Ah! And what reward wilt thou claim?

HERODIAS. Nothing.

HEROD. Thou art like those priests, dear. What didst thou ever do for nothing? Hasten then, I pray, to name the price!

HERODIAS. Farewell!

[HEROD *looks after her, shaking his head.*]

HERODIAS (*turning round*). Before I forget it, tell me, my friend, what wilt thou do with that Baptist?

HEROD. My Baptist is nothing to thee.

HERODIAS. The maids tell me he wanders about loose in the gardens.

HEROD. Let him; he will not hurt thee.

HERODIAS. I only asked, because I wish to know how I am to avoid him.

HEROD. I will take care, love, that he doth not meet thee. But enough of the Baptist. Once more thy price, Herodias?

HERODIAS. Look at me! Here is a woman that no longer adorns her own body because thou now scornest it; she therefore adorns instead the body that came from hers. Here is a woman whose breasts have withered because her eyes have shed tears of blood. Therefore she will let the budding bosom, from which the veil has never yet fallen, be exposed to thine and thy guests' lustful gaze. And for this sacrifice of unspeakable bitterness I ask nothing, for I am without wishes. One who can still hope shall ask. Salome shall ask.

HEROD. Salome . . . I would rather it were so.

HERODIAS. And thou wilt grant what she asks?

HEROD. I know not. I will see. I will let myself be driven. For in combat with the strong that is the last resource of the weak. But take care whither I am driven . . . mistress!

[*Exit.*]

Enter HERODIAS and SALOME.

SALOME (*putting her head through the door*). Mother, am I to dance here?

HERODIAS (*softly*). Come. Art thou trembling, my dove? Art thou afraid of thy own will?

SALOME. Take my hand, mother. I am not trembling, because I know that thou art my will.

HERODIAS. Not I! thou must will.

SALOME. For that only the one who willeth exerciseth power? [*As HERODIAS regards her suspiciously, she adds quickly.*] I read that in the Scriptures, mother. I did not understand what it meant.

HERODIAS. Listen to me, thou sharpwit. A carpet of Indian wool will be spread here, there the Prince will sit with the foreign guests. . . . Let not thy foot touch the stone, raise not thy eyes. . . . Dance thy dance modestly, and when thou hast finished, wipe signs of shame from thy face; hearken narrowly what the Tetrarch saith to thee. And if he should say, "Now ask of me," then—

SALOME. What then, mother?

HERODIAS. Ask nothing. . . . Then look at him for the first time a long, smiling look, and . . . ask nothing. After that thou mayest demand.

SALOME (*attentive*). What shall I demand, mother? A gold hair-ornament, or shoes of velvet? No; I know what I will ask—a mirror.

HERODIAS (*passing her hand through SALOME'S hair*). Verily thou hast never felt hate to boil in thy breast, like love on a night in May?

SALOME (*feigning innocence*). No, mother. How should I?

HERODIAS. Thou hast never felt an insult coursing through thee, like burning, liquid fire?

SALOME (*in the same tone*). No, mother; in truth I have not.

HERODIAS. Thou shalt demand no mirror, no hair-ornament, and no velvet shoes. But that the head of him they call John the Baptist shall be brought to thee on a dish.

SALOME (*setting her teeth, and controlling herself with difficulty*). On a golden dish?

HERODIAS. What dost thou say? Understandest thou me not or— who—

SALOME. There is something else. One thing more I want to be sure of! Will *he* know — that . . . that Baptist — from whom the request cometh?

HERODIAS (*breaking out*). Certainly, he shall know! I will stand behind thy bloody trophy as thy will.

SALOME (*half to herself*). As the will of my will . . .

HERODIAS. I will grow over him, as the sword groweth forth from the sleeve of the executioner . . . [*Trumpets sound.*] Come!

SALOME. And I will grow over him like a sweet grapevine.
[*Exeunt both, to right.*]

SCENE II

HEROD, VITELLIUS, MARCELLUS (*and other Romans of the Legate's suite*),
MEROKLES, GABALOS, JABAD.

HEROD. Welcome to my table, exalted Vitellius, who bringest on the soles of thy feet the sacred soil of Rome into my poor dwelling. Welcome to you also, ye who follow him, according to Rome's command. She, our august mother, but ordereth what my soul desireth.

VITELLIUS. Thou hast my thanks, excellent prince.

HEROD. Repose now at thy pleasure, exalted one. [*They lie on the couches.*]

GABALOS (*low*). Say, my brave Marcellus, how dost thou like this Jewish ear-wig?

MARCELLUS. It doth not find its way to our ears.

HEROD. And if thou wilt consent to crown thy brow with this wreath, as our Lord and Master, I shall be able to persuade myself that I am thy guest, instead of thou being mine.

VITELLIUS. Thou *art* Rome's guest, Highness. Thus I will accept what befiteth me. [*Puts on the wreath which a servant hands to him.*]

GABALOS. There was a sting in that speech.

HEROD (*quickly collecting himself*). My good Merokles, begin.

MEROKLES (*stands up and reads from a roll of parchment*).

“Cooled by Hebron’s far-gleaming snow,
The fiery soul, concealed in ice,
Favors with its flickering smile
Us the worshippers.

“So thou sendest forth twofold beams of silent light,
So flames for us shoot forth from thy coldness,
So we prize as sacred thy flickering smile, mighty
Vitellius—
Till we —”

VITELLIUS. My dear friend, what is this man talking about?

HEROD. Doth it displease thee, exalted one?

VITELLIUS. It seemed to me that he called my name. In the case of his desiring a favor, it shall be immediately granted if he promises to keep silent for the future!

GABALOS. Oh, friends, what a success!

VITELLIUS. Nevertheless, thy peacock’s liver is good, very good, my dear Herod.

HEROD. Thou rejoicest me, exalted Highness. Wilt thou not now command thy Libyan flute-players to come and charm thy ear?

VITELLIUS. My ear is obedient. Let them come.

SALOME (*thickly veiled*) led in by HERODIAS while the harps are tuned.
A murmur of astonishment runs round the table.

VITELLIUS. Are these thy Libyan—

HEROD (*who has risen*). This is my wife, exalted Highness.

VITELLIUS (*also rising*). Mistress, if thou wilt grace this feast with thy smiles, I bid thee welcome.

HERODIAS. Pardon, noble Vitellius. The custom of the East, over which thou reignest so gloriously, doth not permit of my sitting beside thee at table. Yet we know how to entertain even when we are not merry. My lord and consort, zealous to please thee, hath commanded me to adorn myself and my little daughter to enter

thy presence, though trembling, that after the manner of a maiden she may delight thy eyes with maidenly art.

VITELLIUS. Hail to thee, Prince, and to thy noble wife! Rome will not be grudging where thou art so lavish. Hearest thou not?

HEROD (*with his eyes fixed on SALOME*). Exalted, look!

VITELLIUS. Truly, he is right; let us look, Romans. Open your eyes wide, for what is coming is the art of all arts. And if thou tremblest, maiden, remember that thou rulest because thou tremblest.

MARCELLUS. It must be owned, Gabalos, that ye do the thing handsomely.

GABALOS. Ah, my brave Marcellus, see to it—is it fast on its shoulders?

MARCELLUS. Who? What?

GABALOS. The head! the head! Look at Herodias. That will cost some one his head! Only *whose* is not yet known.

MARCELLUS (*pointing to SALOME*). Silence! . . . See! . . .

[*SALOME has extricated herself from the arms of HERODIAS and, accompanied by exclamations of admiration and delight, has begun to dance. Her dance becomes wilder and more abandoned; she gradually loosens her veil, then covers herself with it again in voluptuous playfulness, till at last, quite unveiled, she stands with the upper part of her body apparently unclothed. She sinks on her knees half exhausted, half in homage, before HEROD, who stands on the right side of the table. All break into ecstasies of applause. HEROD rushes forward to raise her. HERODIAS, who has retreated as far as the procenium on right, and has watched everything intently with a harassed expression playing on her face, now intervenes to prevent him. She and HEROD exchange hostile glances.*]

HEROD (*hoarsely*). Salome!

SALOME. Sire!

HEROD. Stand up and speak.

SALOME (*slowly rising*). What shall I say, Sire?

HEROD. I am a poor man. Rome—who gave Herod's son, as if in mockery, the name of Herod—Rome has not left him much of his father's heritage. Yet enough is still his wherewith to thank thee. Speak, what wilt thou have? And by that God and Lord before whom we kneel in the dust, barefoot, at Jerusalem, I swear it shall be thine.

SALOME. I beg and desire that thou wilt give me, on a dish, the head of John the Baptist.

HEROD. Herodias—thou!

VITELLIUS. Dear friend, whose head doth she want?

HEROD. The head of a man, great legate, who lies in my prison, whom I have there learnt to respect, I had almost said, to love.

VITELLIUS. Oh, oh! . . . And is he on view, this man for whose head daughters of princes dance before thee?

HEROD. Fetch him. [*Exit servant.*] Damsel, thy mother hath led thee into this. Thou knowest not what thou askest. . . . Take back thy request.

SALOME. I beg and desire that thou wilt give me the head of John the Baptist on a *golden* dish. [*Silence.*]

HEROD. And if I refuse?

HERODIAS (*drawing herself up*). Thou hast sworn, Sire.

VITELLIUS (*laughing*). Of course, my friend, thou hast sworn. We are all witnesses of that. Ah! What sylvan god are they bringing in there?

JOHN is led in by two armed men.

HEROD. I have summoned thee, Baptist. I am sorry for thee. Prepare thyself, for the evening of thy days is come.

JOHN. I am ready, Sire.

HEROD. Understand me. I am truly sorry. But thou must meet death. Now, on the spot.

JOHN (*after looking searchingly toward the door*). Sire, grant me a respite.

VITELLIUS. Thy hero appears not all too ready. A little more and he would whimper.

HEROD. Baptist, wherefore dost thou ask this respite?

JOHN. I have sent out messengers and await their return.

HEROD. To whom hast thou sent these messengers? . . .

Thou art silent. . . . As I said before, I am from my heart sorry. So much might have been made of thee. . . . Still . . . [*He shrugs his shoulders.*]

JOHN (*holding out his arms distressed*). I beseech thee, Sire!

VITELLIUS. Did not I tell you? All kinds of people struggle to live, only the Roman understands how to die.

HEROD. Thou must ask the maiden, Baptist. Know that in her hands rests what chance thou hast of the thing called life.

SALOME. Master, now seest thou how powerful I am? Now ask me! Ask me!

HERODIAS (*prompting her, behind*). If he does ask, laugh at him.

SALOME. Perhaps, but who knoweth what my heart desireth? . . . Now, master, why dost thou not beg?

JOHN. Maiden . . . I . . .

SALOME. There is the stone floor, see! The stone longs for the touch of thy knees. [*Pause.*]

Enter the GAOLER.

HEROD. What brings thee here?

GAOLER. Forgive, Sire. Had I not known that thou wast friendly toward the prisoner . . .

HEROD. What dost thou want with him?

GAOLER. Two of his friends who were with him yesterday, the same thou sawest outside the gate, have come back, and learning that his life is now in jeopardy—thy servant hath told me, and I have got everything ready—they became like creatures possessed, and implored me to lead them to him wheresoever he might be.

HEROD. Dost thou approve, mighty legate?

VITELLIUS. Dear friend, this is the most enjoyable entertainment that has ever been provided for me at meat. Let them come! Let them come!

[HEROD signs.]

[GAOLER retires behind curtain of door and beckons.]

Enter MANASSA and AMARIAH. They seem at first as if they would rush to JOHN, but, overcome by shyness, stand still.

JOHN. What have ye to tell me?

MANASSA. Master!

HEROD. Speak louder, my good men! Unless ye let us participate in the news, I will have you carried off through separate doors.

MANASSA. May we, Master?

JOHN. Speak freely, for methinks we are alone together.

MANASSA. We took the road in all haste to Bethesda, and at break of day we found Him there.

JOHN. Ye found Him there?

MANASSA. And many people were gathered about Him resting in the olive gardens, and praised the Lord for the miracle which had been done to them at that hour. And behold there was a light in every eye, and in every mouth the music of thanksgiving.

JOHN. And He? How looked His countenance? What were His gestures?

MANASSA. Master, I know not.

JOHN. But ye saw Him?

AMARIAH. Rabbi, thou mightest as well ask, What is the face of the sun, and what the gestures of light? . . . As we beheld His smile we sank to the ground, and in our souls was a great peace.

JOHN. And when ye had questioned Him, and He began to speak, tell me what was His manner of speech? Say on; I stand here awaiting His wrath.

AMARIAH. Rabbi. . . . He spoke to us like a brother. His speech was simple.

MANASSA. And it was beautiful . . . like the voice of the wind which blows from the sea toward evening.

AMARIAH. And this is what He spake. "Go and tell John what ye have seen and heard. The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead rise, and the poor have the gospel preached to them."

JOHN. The poor—He said the poor?

MANASSA. And when He prepared to come hither to this town with the people who were gathered about Him, we accompanied Him as far as the gate, and then hurried on before, according to thy wish.

JOHN. And said He nothing else to you? Reflect well.

AMARIAH. Yes; yet one more thing. He said, "Blessed is he who hath not been offended at me." But this we could not understand.

JOHN. But I understand it well and to whom He spoke. I have been offended, for I have not recognized Him. And my anger filled the world, for I knew Him not. Ye yourselves are my witnesses that I have said, "I am not the Christ, but one sent to prepare the way for Him that cometh." A man can take nothing to himself that is not given him by Heaven. And unto me nothing was given. The key of death . . . I held it not . . . the scales of sin were not confided to me. For out of no man's mouth may the name of sin sound, save out of the mouth of the one that loveth. But I would have scourged you with iron rods. Therefore is my kingdom come to shame, and my lips are sealed. I hear roundabout a rushing noise, as of many waters, and the divine radiance is near me. . . . A throne hath descended out of heaven amidst darts of fire. The King of Peace sitteth thereon in white robes. And His sword is called Love, and His watchword is mercy. . . . Behold He hath the bride, He is the bridegroom. But the friend of the bridegroom standeth and listeneth, and rejoiceth over the voice that is coming. The

same is my joy. Now is it fulfilled. [*He stands with his arms outspread and his eyes turned toward heaven. MANASSA and AMARIAH sink at his feet.*]

VITELLIUS. Dear friend, it seems to me that we have had enough of this maniac.

HEROD (*between emotion and scorn*). John, I am truly grieved on thy account. And when He cometh of whom thou dreamest, I will greet Him as I have greeted thee. Ha! ha! ha! Lead him to execution.

SALOME. Now, ask me! [*As JOHN smilingly looks beyond her.*] Mother, will he not ask?

SCENE III

VITELLIUS, *his suite*, HEROD, HERODIAS, SALOME, MEROKLES, GABALOS, JABAD.

VITELLIUS. My friend, thy banquet has been somewhat disturbed. [*As HEROD stares at the door through which JOHN has disappeared.*] No matter what I say, he does not hear me.

HEROD. Exalted highness, pardon!

[*SALOME has crossed over the stage and goes stealthily to the door on left. In great curiosity she draws back the curtain, and after gazing eagerly through it, reels backward into the arms of HERODIAS. Outside, behind the middle curtain, an ever-increasing tumult and murmur of many voices has arisen.*]

VITELLIUS. Bid the women to sit down. Thou hast an ill-conducted people. They brawl in the street while we dine.

HEROD. Are they already muttering about the Baptist? Gabalos, look to it, and tell them to be quiet.

GABALOS It shall be done, Sire. [*Exit.*]

SALOME (*pointing to the door, the curtains of which are open*). Mother, see what they are bringing. See!

[*She rushes out.*]

HEROD (*descending the steps of the dais*). What does she want there?

HERODIAS. Sire, thou art of simple understanding. I advise thee to look the other way.

HEROD. What is she doing?

HERODIAS. She is dancing! She holds the charger with the Prophet's head high in her arms, and dances.

JABAD. See, she dances!

HEROD. So thou hast corrupted thy own flesh and blood. So thou wilt corrupt us all.

[HERODIAS *smiling, shrugs her shoulders.*]

MEROKLES. She sways. She will fall!

[HERODIAS *goes out composedly.*]

MEROKLES. The head is rolling on the floor!

MARCELLUS. Oh, horror!

[HERODIAS *comes back supporting SALOME in her arms.*]

SALOME. Mother, where is the dish? Where is the head?

HERODIAS. Make obeisance. Speak thy thanks.

SALOME (*before HEROD*). Sire, I am a rose of Sharon—a lily of the valley. . . . Who would thank me should pluck me. . . . Oh, look at the head!

HEROD. Take the women away!

[HERODIAS *curtsies, and leads, smiling, the half-swooning SALOME off to right.*]

Without HERODIAS and SALOME. GABALOS has reëntered from left.

HEROD. Well, what is the matter?

GABALOS. Sire, the people will not be restrained. Men and women in holiday raiment fill the streets and crowd on the roofs. They carry palms in their hands, and sing and shout for joy.

HEROD. What are they singing?

GABALOS. Thou knowest, Sire, I am not servile, but I scarcely like to say.

HEROD. Speak!

GABALOS. Hosanna to Him Who shall come! Hosanna to the King of the Jews. So they sing.

HEROD (*grinding his teeth*). I have had John beheaded.
Who may this one be?

GABALOS. If thou wouldst see Him, Sire, they say He is
coming this way.

HEROD. I will see Him. I will greet Him as I promised.
Ha! ha! ha! Open!

The curtains are drawn aside. One sees the roofs crowded with women waving palms. Others, with palms in their hands, climb the hilly street below. The shouting swells in volume and becomes an orderly, harmonious song.

VITELLIUS (*who has continued sitting, turns round indignantly*). What is going on there again?

HEROD (*has grasped a goblet, and springs on the topmost step*). Greeting to thee, my King—of the—

[*He looks, stops short . . . the goblet slips from his hand, he turns away and hides his face in his mantle.*]

[*The others also stand, looking down in silent amazement. The Hosannas rise from the street.*]

GUSTAV FRENSSEN

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USTAV FRENSSEN was born on the 19th of October, 1863, in the little village of Barlt, which lies on the western coast of Schleswig-Holstein and belongs to the district of Ditmarschen, where also Hebbel, Storm, and Klaus Groth had their early homes. His father, a joiner, managed to send the boy to the Latin school of a neighboring town, in order to have him prepared for the study of theology and the ministry of the Lutheran church. In due course of time young Frenssen went for his professional training to the universities of Tübingen and Berlin, passed his state examination in Kiel and, at the age of twenty-seven, became pastor at Hemme, about thirty miles to the north of his birthplace. In 1902, however, after his first great success as a writer of fiction, he gave up the ministry and removed to Blankenese, a suburb of Hamburg and Altona. There, on a beautiful wooded bluff which overlooks the busy traffic of the largest German port, he has since lived, devoted to the study and description of the customs, manners, and morals of his more immediate countrymen, the descendants of the old Frisians and Saxons.

Frenssen's first novel, *The Sand Countess*, appeared in 1896, when he was thirty-three years of age. This was followed, in 1898, by another novel, *The Three Faithful Ones*. In the next year, 1899, Frenssen published a volume of his sermons under the title of *Village Sermons*. Then came, in 1901, his *Jörn Uhl*, the novel which made his reputation and which sold within eight years to the number of 216,000 copies—an almost unprecedented success in the German book market. In 1903, Frenssen put forth a play,

The Home Festival, and, in 1906, a new novel, *Holy Land*, which again had an enormous sale and which contained as one of its chapters the author's conception of the life and mission of Jesus, issued subsequently in a special volume as *The Life of Jesus*, and appearing in this volume. The year 1907 brought a book of a somewhat different kind from Frenssen's pen, namely, *Peter Moor's Trip to Southwest Africa*. It is a graphic and interesting account of a young soldier's trip to the German colony in southwest Africa, of the hardships endured and the battles fought under a tropical sun, and of his return home after illness has unfitted him for further service. Similar in many respects to *Peter Moor* is the next book, *Klaus Hinrich Baas*, published in 1909; for although the author calls it a novel, it is rather a biographical account of the struggles of a poor peasant boy from his early childhood to his forty-fifth year, when, as a successful Hamburg merchant, he takes ship for China — the narrative closing abruptly with the hero going down the Elbe, and the reader involuntarily looking for a sequel. What followed, however, in 1912 — the author's latest book — was not a continuation of *Klaus Hinrich Baas*, but a story of the sea, *The Wreck of the Anna Hollmann*. This, too, is biographical in character, sketching the career of a Blankenese sailor, from the forecastle to the captain's bridge, and ending with his pathetic failure to rekindle the dying embers of a youthful love affair. But one of the most significant features of the book is Frenssen's arraignment of certain Hamburg shipowners for their traffic in slaves, their cruelty to sailors, and their unscrupulous greed of wealth.

A fair estimate of Frenssen's work as a whole, which is all that can be attempted here, is out of the question if we allow our judgment to be unduly influenced by the excessive laudation or the excessive detraction which this author has received. From both, Frenssen has suffered enough to make his experience serve as a new illustration of the old truth that an author's popularity delays justice, since,

according to the bias of the critic, it argues mediocrity as easily as superiority. And yet an analysis of obviously symptomatic popularity, such as Frenssen's, is not only a convenient but also a fair and profitable starting-point for criticism. In some way or other it is bound to reveal much concerning the state of contemporary literature, and of contemporary criticism as well; something, at least, in respect to the prevailing standards of the reading public; and not a little in regard to the aspirations and ideals of the nation at large. What, then, are some of the revelations in the case before us, and how far do they aid us in arriving at an adequate, if not a final, estimate of our author's work?

Critics with a bent toward the historical method and its inevitable tracing of influences have pointed out—if favorably impressed and enthusiastically inclined—that Frenssen's novels signalize the triumph of the new *Heimatkunst*, or Local Art, that is, art of indigenous or autochthonous growth, art of the soil or of the vicinage. They say that Frenssen has vindicated the claims of this latter-day mood or movement by putting into practice what most of its advocates had only preached—namely, the passing of the novelist from the crowded city to the open country; from the cosmopolitan salon or café to the provincial inn or the village green of the tribal community; from men and women under the stress of a complex civilization to primitive folk still swayed by the instincts and passions of simple nature. But—if unfavorably impressed, and inclined to be captious—this type of critic has not failed to detect in Frenssen's features a veritable kaleidoscope of resemblances to literary ancestors, from nameless epic writers of a remote past down to novelists like Scheffel, Raabe, Keller, Sudermann, and the sensational bluestocking Marlitt. The discoveries of both these factions within the historical camp shed more light on the present state of criticism than upon Frenssen's present or future place in German literature, though the view that he meets some of the expectations of the *Heimatkunst* comes nearer to the

truth, and accounts better for his popularity, than do the nugatory speculations concerning his literary pedigree.

Again, critics and reviewers given to emphasizing the importance of style, diction, and structure, or of literary art in general, are likewise divided in their opinions—but less, it would seem, according to prejudice in favor of or against Frenssen than by reason of their own conflicting notions as to what this art really consists in. Says one of them: “Gustav Frenssen is not a mechanic in literature, he is a great artist;” and another: Amid the confused mass of Frenssen’s details, “the work of art goes by the board.” But if a small number of learned critics can disagree to such an extent among themselves, is it likely that the presence or absence of art in Frenssen’s novels has been an important element in determining his popularity with the immense number of ignorant, or at least unsophisticated, readers?

More light than from any other quarter is thrown on Frenssen’s popularity—again with interesting side-lights on certain critics—by the judgments that have been passed upon his writings from the ethical or religious point of view. For in the domain of ethics and religion we deal with the most vital concerns of life; and just here the writer whose theme puts him into touch with his readers is sure of being forgiven for more offenses in matters of form and treatment than may seem fair to the critic who is out of touch with the reader, and with the writer as well. Indeed, there has always existed a very human relationship, a kind of tacit *entente cordiale*, between erring authors and forgiving readers; and if the austere, academic critic would only rate this factor a trifle higher, he would also make less of such adventitious aids to popularity as the fancies of the day, the applause of the clique, and the hand-bills of the publisher, because these factors, far from being potent enough in themselves to inoculate the public with a sort of mental or psychic obsession, depend for their results on something much more elemental: they are like tares of

the parasitic species which do not flourish except among grain that grows on fairly good soil.

Let us assume, therefore, that we are no longer listening to the professional critic or reviewer, but to an ordinary, intelligent reader, to whom the perusal of a novel is an experience telling in, and on, his life, rather than an occasion to exercise his judgment in the literary appraisal of a book. How is such a one likely to be impressed by the stories of Frenssen?

To begin with questions of style, diction, and phraseology—Frenssen is not infrequently diffuse, especially when he lets his characters soliloquize. He is sometimes obscure on account of loose sentence-structure, or because of his ambiguous use of the pronoun "he," which again and again is meant to refer to the hero when, grammatically, it can or must refer to some one else. Occasionally, mannerisms, such as injecting question and answer for the purpose of motivating what has just been told, stop the flow of the narrative and deflect the reader's attention; and so do certain curious anticipations of, or allusions to, what is yet to be told—a knack that seems to have been taken over from biography, but should have no place in novel-writing. Again, it is sometimes wellnigh impossible to tell where the account of actual happenings ends and that of visions or imaginings incident thereto begins, so that the reader does not know whether he is still in the real world or has already passed into the realm of dreams. A striking instance of this blending or overlapping is the shipwreck scene in *The Wreck of the Anna Hollmann*. It must also be admitted that some of the author's stories are overloaded with episodes more or less irrelevant, and more or less awkwardly fitted in. But in spite of all these faults, Frenssen is never dull or tedious, unless he be so to readers who will have none but the telegraphic style of the ultra-naturalistic school. And may it not be, therefore, that just by comparison with the nervous conciseness of this school, his leisurely, broad, and epic handling of matters has found



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favor again among the many and, where it is overdone, has been passed by or pardoned?

There is another fault observable in Frenssen's style, or rather in his tone, one that grows out of his intensely personal attitude toward his readers as well as toward his characters; it is his tendency to preach. This, too, distinguishes him from the class of writers just referred to, and yet not so fundamentally as it would seem at first glance; for only too often do their own supposedly impersonal and impressionistic stories contain a very personal homily between the lines, and only too easily can the appropriate text be supplied by any one that knows the A B C of novelistic art. The real difference is rather, that Frenssen announces his text by chapter and verse, so to speak, and thereby probably draws larger audiences from among all those who are not so much averse to preaching as they are tired of perfunctory preachers within the church, and suspicious of disguised ones without. Provided, then, that a novelist does his preaching aboveboard and on a live issue of the day, or on an eternal issue, he may at times become rhetorical, even sophomoric, and still not offend so many hearers by his frank fervor as some other exhorter by his feigned indifference. It may well be doubted, however, whether this homiletic feature of Frenssen's stories would have been made so prominent, had not critic and reviewer known that he was once a preacher by profession.

So much for the reader's impression of Frenssen's success, or the lack of it, in matters pertaining mainly to the use of his tools. What about the materials on which he uses these tools; the setting or framework of his stories, their characters, plots, and problems?

As far as time is concerned, Frenssen's stories are set within our actual and, may we not say, exacting present, but not without some glimpses backward into an idealized, inspiring past and, occasionally also, forward into an alluring future. Their palpableness and reality thus exceed their ideality—a feature which cannot but strengthen their

appeal to the living generation of Germans whose grip upon the world that is, and the world as it is, or should be, grows firmer from day to day.

A corresponding advantage accrues to Frenssen's stories from their local framework. Generally speaking, the scene of action is that portion of the German empire which, ever since its restoration, has encouraged and realized some of the people's fondest hopes for a larger life, for a closer touch with the rest of the modern world, and for a freer play of its reserved and expansive power. It is a region where even the peasant is stirred to send his thoughts beyond the visible horizon when his low-roofed hut is shaken by the west wind coming from the ocean, or when the screaming sea gull follows his plow in the freshly drawn furrow. And more, it is a region whose people have just now a special claim upon the patriot's regard, for not only are they descended from former pioneers of German civilization, but they also retain most of the qualities that will insure success in such service again, more particularly old Saxon hardihood, aggressiveness, and shrewdness.

Now of these and other advantages inherent in the natural setting of his stories, Frenssen has made capital use. And it is out of such elements that his insight into human nature, his love of home and country, and his optimism, aided by genuine poetic feeling and by literary enthusiasm, rather than by literary subtleness, have enabled him to create a general atmosphere which it is both pleasant and wholesome to breathe.

In respect to his characters, Frenssen is likewise fortunate. Their most prominent traits are, on the whole, simple and few; minor traits and peculiarities provide for differentiation and variety; and the author's success in drawing them is almost guaranteed by his thorough familiarity with high and low. There are great brutes among them, but the reader finds many more to love, admire, pity, or laugh at, than to detest or mourn as utterly lost, since the good pastor will go far to save even the black sheep of his flock. And here again we have a significant feature of

Frenssen's stories—let us call it their humane, or volitional, undercurrent—which, in so far as it sets them off against the unrelenting modern novel of fate, may have contributed much toward their popularity. For it is evident that conservatives still doubt whether even the evolutionary novelist has followed the channel of fatalism far enough to be absolutely sure that it has not a by-pass somewhere. It is true, however, that Frenssen, though he shows considerable skill in delineating his characters by their actions and by what he tells the reader about them, is far less successful in marking or stamping them by their own talk, which, as a rule, lacks individuality of expression, and where it does not lack this, is apt to be either too bookish, or too facetious, or too jejune.

Still less skilful is Frenssen in the invention of plots and situations that will bear a critical examination as to their probability. His weakness in this respect must be admitted by every unprejudiced reader. And yet, considering the fact that his most popular books contain some of the least probable plots and situations, one is again forced to the conclusion that this and other easily defined faults of Frenssen are fully offset by less easily defined, because more general, merits, chiefly by the seriousness and candor with which he handles the deeper questions of life, and, above all, by his intuitive grasp of the people's attitude toward such questions. And writing, as he does, mainly from the people's point of view and within their comprehension, it is also more or less futile to criticise him, or to account for his popularity, from other points of view.

We cannot enter into the problems and questions which Frenssen deals with or touches upon, nor can we say much about the manner in which he does it; but in justice to those among Frenssen's critics who are as serious and candid as he, and respect the public no less, it is necessary to advert to a certain grave charge against him which, be it wholly fair or not, shows that, in one point at least, he has tried the patience of his friends to the utmost.

Let us first, however, realize fully that on almost all questions which can be said to have any bearing upon public welfare, Frenssen takes independent and high moral ground. His attitude toward nation and state is one of ardent patriotism, without being in the least chauvinistic; in fact, he does not hesitate to defend the peace movement against the jingoes who dare to quote so formidable an authority as Moltke on their side. In social matters, his sympathies, though not socialistic in a narrow partisan sense, are with the lower classes in every earnest and rational endeavor to better their lot. The beneficent changes wrought in whole communities by the Good Templars are acknowledged with unstinted praise, and the cry of the disinherited for land to live and work upon is heard repeatedly in his books, even if the *Bodenreform* or Single Tax movement, and kindred questions are not discussed as such. Frenssen's respect for learning and his admiration for the achievements of science are, like his love of art, great indeed; nevertheless, they are bounded by his philosophic and moral insight, which tells him that man cannot live by science and art alone. His criticism of the church as an institution is severe, and deservedly so. His religious views are such as a liberal public is fast absorbing through every pore, but a conservative consistory cannot square with its dogma and, therefore, cannot tolerate in the pulpit. His specifically ethical teachings are based on brotherly love and faith in God, as best exemplified in the life of Jesus when stripped of its miraculous glitter and unveiled in all its human, and hence truly divine, glory.

In view of all this, it is regrettable, to say the least, that Frenssen should have dealt differently, that is, inconsistently, with the one subject which, in some form or other, is regarded as part and parcel of all novel-writing—love between man and woman. An imperative demand which modern readers make upon the novel-writer—for reasons good, bad, and indifferent—is, that he shall handle the purely sexual aspect of this theme without gloves. Frenssen has done this; indeed he could not have done otherwise

and have given a true picture of peasant life in Ditmarschen or elsewhere. He has done it, moreover, without too frequently, or unnecessarily, shocking the reader's sense of decency, and always without gloating over the mortification produced by the shock, which cannot be said of every writer. But—and this is the charge against Frenssen—he has twice come close to traducing the reader's moral sense by appearing as an abetter of free love. For the first offense, in the thirteenth chapter of *Holy Land*, he was sharply and justly criticised by his friend Friedrich Paulsen, but this did not keep him from offending again, in the nineteenth chapter of *Klaus Hinrich Baas*, thus insisting, as it were, on a fatuous and ominous concession to a class of writers whose names should not be mentioned with his own. What Paulsen said of the objectionable episode in *Holy Land* applies with equal force to the one in *Klaus Hinrich Baas*; both should, and easily might, have been omitted as matter utterly foreign and extrinsic to the context, and their excision would even now be an improvement from every point of view. Their insertion or retention, however, is to be condemned, chiefly, on moral grounds, for a writer's privilege of introducing in his stories whatever evil is known to exist in actual life involves the duty of bringing the evil-doer face to face with, at least, the most immediate and most obvious consequences of his deed. But Frenssen has laid himself open to the suspicion of having evaded this duty. In both novels he lets the tempted yield to their sexual passions, and then, instead of showing that they view the act in its relation to the rights of their fellows—as would have been consistent with their previous conduct—he makes them blink the real question in a series of specious reflections which are unworthy of himself, of his readers, and also of his characters as representatives of a genuine, though not over-fastidious or over-conventional, folk.

The reason why such lapses give pause to the thoughtful reader is not that he becomes concerned about Frenssen's popularity, which, in so far as it was a mere vogue, has

already begun to decline, but rather that, when all is said and done, the reader still cares to see Frenssen's good name and influence outlast all popular acclaim. The author's good name, however, has been that of a man who, primarily and avowedly, started out on a mission to his countrymen, not merely to entertain them; and his influence has been strong enough to make people listen to his message even after they found it to be a very old and familiar one, namely, the assurance that Christianity is in perfect harmony with the truest and best instincts of the German national character. If Frenssen, therefore, finds his interpretation of the message watched with something like jealousy on the part of the public, and scrutinized much more closely than the mere form in which he delivers it, he has not the least ground of complaint; for submission to such watchfulness and scrutiny is but the fair price that any mentor should be prepared to pay for the privilege of being listened to, and for the opportunity of shaping the collective social conscience of a nation no longer under the tutelage of priest or despot.

In conclusion, a word or two may be added here concerning the choice of Frenssen's *Life of Jesus* as fitly representing his writings in general. It is not for our author's liberal religious views that this chapter of *Holy Land* has been selected, nor for his chiaroscuro portrait of the historical Jesus, considered merely as portrait; but rather because no other selection coming within the compass of this series exhibits so fully the essential characteristics of Frenssen's style, insight, devotion, and enthusiasm; and also because nowhere else can the reader feel so deeply the strong undercurrent of seriousness which now and then rises to the surface of even the lightest kind of German literature and, for a while at least, swallows up all the driftwood and wreckage. If read with these considerations in mind, *The Life of Jesus* cannot but aid in revealing the secret of Frenssen's successful appeal to national longings and instincts, which he rightly divined to be but dormant, while other writers thought them to be dead.

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THE LIFE OF JESUS* (1906)

TRANSLATED BY MARY AGNES HAMILTON



ANKIND has risen painfully out of the darkness of night. Its rise has taken many hundred thousand years. For hundreds of thousands of years men lived like foxes in a land without trees or forests. Crouching fearfully in caves in wakeful slumber, in cunning ambush or in wild attack, their existence was that of the animals, and they had no consciousness of any difference between them. Gradually in the course of thousands of centuries their peculiar qualities, and especially the shape of their hands, raised men above the other animals. Gradually, with many doubts, this recognition came first to one and then another, the most intelligent and bravest of the race.

It took thousands of centuries before it was recognized by all that there is a difference between men and animals. And man is the master. But the darkness and confusion of the souls of animals endured for long ages in their souls, their terrors were the terrors of animals; they feared the wind, the reflections of water, the darkness of the wood, thunder and lightning. Everything around them seemed possessed by unknown spirits; they had no knowledge of good and evil; the differentiation of being afraid from not being afraid, of strength from weakness, of victory from defeat, exhausted their categories.

Wandering in hordes and tribes from the centre of Asia, moving and propagating themselves like sparrows, grow-

* From *Holy Land*. Permission of Dana Estes & Co., Boston.

ing continually, one horde constantly displacing another, they gradually spread over the whole face of the earth, and thus came to different lands and different climates. Some tribes came beneath the exhausting heat of the burning sun; others to desolate regions; others to ice-bound chill, where they lost their vitality, succumbed, or were frozen out of existence. Many of these tribes and peoples perished centuries before our epoch; others are gradually being exterminated in our own times in Australia, America, and Africa; others, more fortunate, came to regions where strength and progress were forced upon them by the pressure of vigorous neighbors, by sun and wind and sea, by barley and wine. They raised their heads higher and higher, the eyes grew brighter, their foreheads more lofty. Slowly and painfully their fear of Nature died away. The bravest among them went boldly into the darkness; it is the bravest child of a company of terrified children alone in the house that ventures into the dark corner. For long they continued in fear of ghosts and tried to placate them by prayers and offerings; very gradually, with the growth of man's power over Nature, these spirits lost their terrors. Evil spirits shrank back, and their powers dwindled, with the slow and gradual growth of a faint belief in good spirits. There arose a dim, uncertain apprehension that right was not with the strong, but with the good. The inner light of conscience burned up, and as its rays penetrated the mist the path of mankind was clearer; they had a guide, they could not wholly lose their way, they might come further than our dreams may know.

But it was not the whole people, not the masses, that made a universal step in advance; the light only shone in individuals. In a smooth sea the waves come gently swelling on, gray-blue, one after another, far out to sea, till lo, all of a sudden one wave rises higher than the others, leaps up, and comes on splendid in its silver crown until it falls over its own feet. These men, the solitary crowned among mankind, rise like that wave and fall even so, over their own feet.

On the morning of the race the steps forward were slow and tentative—we do not know the earliest names. The art of writing was still unknown, and it is only after its discovery that we are acquainted with the names of those holy heroes. Persia produced Zarathustra; China Confucius; India Buddha; Palestine Moses, Elias, Isaiah, Jeremiah; Greece Æschylus and Plato. All these men stood alone among their people, and had to suffer for having advanced beyond their age. Even in them there still was much that was hard and dark, wild and almost childishly confused, and yet in their hours of illumination they rose to a high and gracious insight which the human spirit can never outgrow. “I came not to hate but to love.” “If I have thee, O God, earth and heaven to me are naught.”

After the passing of these men there came a time of calm. The universe rises and falls in waves; the exhausted vital force produced no more heroes. Each nation stood in rigid silence, holding its inheritance in its closed hand, and while mediocrity grew the grip closed fast so that the inheritance, closed in, began to putrefy. This inert silence lasted for centuries; on the ocean of national life no wind blew, no waves rose; putrefaction seemed likely to spread all over human life.

Then the sword descended on the peoples living round the central sea. The Romans, a people vexed by no subtleties, troubled by no search for truth, no brooding over problems, but devoted to the practical side of life, the calculation of material advantages, subdued all other nations to their sway; everywhere they rent and disturbed, tearing asunder the old nations of sensitive dreamers, Egyptians, Hebrews, Greeks, Persians, Germans.

And in this wild confusion of dismembered nations there arose a horrible conflict of opinion. There was a seething turmoil of beliefs like the turbulent confluence of seven waters in the stream; men went and asked the philosophers for their opinion; others abandoned themselves to the unrestrained transports of the Greek mystics, crying, “Nature!

Nature! O man, thou art no more!" to kneel next day before the image of an Egyptian goddess. Some raised their eyes in worship to the marble statue of a Roman Emperor, seeking in vain for the holiness of human goodness in those harsh imperial traits; the men who went on Friday to hear from the German soldiery how they worshipped Baldur and Freya under the beech-trees of their native land, stood on Saturday with covered heads in the Jewish Synagogue, hearing the teacher read from the ancient book, "Keep my commandments. So shall it be well with thee."

This confusion raged all round the Mediterranean; from the streets of Gibraltar to Persia there was nothing but questioning and murmuring, "What is the meaning of human life? What is the meaning of God? What is truth? Do you know what makes a human heart holy and joyous?" Thus at a time of long drought country folk stand in groups talking and arguing together. "The rain must come . . . look at that cloud! . . . no, it is nothing;" then suddenly in the night, when their thoughts are far away, a rustling begins to sound among the tree tops in front of their windows. Thus men waited and talked and strained their eyes. Man cannot help searching for the meaning of life, searching for happiness.

At last Nature's time of rest came to an end. Its rising and falling is like the rising and falling of the waves, and now once more a man arose, a hero in the mold of the holy heroes of old, and from the east the rustling sound spread over the withered nations, till it became a mighty roar.

In one corner of the huge, motley Empire there lay a country very much like Schleswig-Holstein, of the same size and narrow length and the same extended coastline; in the north the silent expanse of heather-covered hills, in the south a great and brilliant town just as in our country. As in our country, also, there dwelt there in the villages a population of farmers, a mixed race sprung from

two excellent stocks. It was an unhappy people, suffering under the cruel and inefficient government of a corrupt princeling in the north, and an imperial legate in the south. Foreign capital devoured the land as a wolf the sheep; the people were drained dry with direct and indirect taxation, customs dues, and monopolies; officials stole and peculated in all directions; all the money, and money is power, was taken out of the country.

Then there was the Church, with its extravagant claims. In the great capital in the south a huge temple arose, with vast halls and courts, lofty, ornate consistories, thousands of priests, high and low, and many teachers attached to it, who spread its tenets through the land; all to be maintained at the popular expense.

The crowning misfortune was that the people was divided against itself; there was a seething confusion in politics and in religion. One party was composed of the quiet people, dwelling scattered all over the country, especially in the villages and on the moors. They were men occupied in laborious manual labor, which leaves the mind free to wander off into strange dreams and brooding abstractions; men occupied in toil for daily bread that left the soul free to raise itself to God. The Church was too cold, stiff, and respectable for them; they sought out some eternal truth to comfort them for themselves, burying themselves after the day's work was done in ancient records and prayer-books, and reading there in joyful amazement how, in times of like necessity, centuries ago, their parents had not lost courage, but had held fast to the belief that the eternal did not cherish the proud and rich, but rather the lowly and humble, and to them would one day send a "Saviour." Only the few rose to such heights of faith; the piety of the majority was a dull, uncomprehending acceptance.

The second party was the Liberals, and they fell into two well-defined camps. There was a small, highly respectable Liberal party in the capital composed of rich men who, superficially educated, enjoyed the present and were hand

and glove with Church and State, caring little for abstract principles; the other was composed of men of an inferior social grade, minor officials of the Empire in the customs and police departments, and the more frivolous, adventurous sections of the working classes, the energetic men of aspiring disposition.

The third party was the Nationalists, by far the most powerful, the party of narrow, orthodox patriotism. Their programme was "Maintenance of national religion and customs in opposition to everything foreign." "Pray seven times a day, wash seven times a day, give alms seven times; go to church daily; alter nothing, improve nothing; this is the way to please the Almighty. To reward us He will send us a hero, a 'Saviour,' who will free us from the accursed foreign beliefs." Clad in its rotten armor this mighty party, full of petty and malign suspiciousness, stood guard over what it considered "purity" and "holiness," inspected all the prayer meetings and schools in the country, ruling the people with tyrannical might. The Liberals resisted, saying, "Live and let live; away with dead formulæ and commandments;" and the quiet country folk resisted, saying, "You are too proud, too narrow, too rigid for us; we seek God after our own fashion, reading in our old, sacred books, and pondering in the night-time. We have no time to spend all day in praying and washing and going to church; we have our bread to earn." The Nationalists invented a nickname to express their contempt for these unpatriotic people, a biting gibe that hit both parties: "They are publicans and sinners."

Over and above these three great parties there were swarms of homeless beggars, tramps, and sick folk. There were no physicians, no asylums, no hospitals, no social sympathy of any kind. All the crime, misery, and vagabondage of the country skulked up and down the high roads or the village lanes, in front of the very doors of the rich. The Nationalists cast out alms as the creed bade them, and bred more beggars.

Such was the condition of this nation by the sea, a people miserable and torn by opposing factions, tyrannized over by a harsh and grasping Government whose faith was not theirs.

Forty years later the great Nationalist party, summoning together its forces for a mighty outbreak, roused the whole people to an ill-fated insurrection which ended in bloody annihilation. The people survived, indeed, but, as their hero said, like a flock standing in the night without a shepherd, round which the wild beasts are already sharpening their teeth as they cower in the darkness. Restless, it cried aloud, "Help must come . . . what is coming? It is the end of the world! Is it the hero who has been promised us? Laugh! Let us eat, drink, and be merry, for tomorrow we die. . . . Count up your resources. . . . Will he come from Heaven? Will he come from the people? . . . Listen! do you hear a rustling in the trees? God, our Father, Eternal Power! help. . . . My soul thirsts for Thee, my body faints for Thee in the scorched and parching land."

In the north, on the moors between lake and sea, there dwelt a man and his wife, Joseph the son of Jacob, and Mary, both of ancient and noble though mixed descent. The man seems either to have died rather young or married somewhat late in life. His wife lived to see her children grow up. This brought her no distinction, for it is a remarkable fact that this mother of a hero seems to have had no comprehension of the inward greatness of her son.

The couple had five children, who grew up in the fair village, seeing and learning all that village life among an intelligent and vigorous race can afford. The first child of the marriage, Jesus by name, had a pair of deep, clear eyes, which saw and understood all the peaceful pictures presented to them, a tender and sympathetic soul whose inner light, burning clearer as his childhood advanced, translated what it saw into something of sweet and precious significance.

The child went out with the laborer to plough; saw his mother's sadness when she was expecting her youngest child, and her sudden joy when she held the new-born babe in her arms. With his companions he went up into the hills when the first flowers appeared in the fields; they stood with the flowers they had picked in their hands, gazing far across the land to the blue sea in the west. . . . In the evening he told his mother that the neighbor's son had left home in anger and gone out into strange lands, trouble following in his wanton footsteps. He saw the cornfield on the hillside as it lay, white, ready for harvesting; he stood at the door with the other children to watch the wedding of a village maid. In the morning he told his mother how the bridesmaids had gone through the village at night with blazing candles in their hands. . . . He helped to bind the sheaves, and the thistles that were bound up in them pricked his hands; in the evening of the same day, as he returned home with his father, they heard in the street that the richest farmer in the village had died, and the people declared that he and his brothers were bad men, and misers to boot. . . . He saw the shepherd coming through the village with his flocks, and as the sheep went slowly on the shepherd stopped to relate how he spent all night in searching for a sheep, and found it in the morning, and his weather-beaten face beamed with joy. . . . Late in the evening of the same day a neighbor ran in to tell them that the farmer's wanton son, who three years ago had left his father's house and the village with proud words and headstrong anger, had returned home. He had stood for hours in the street in the darkness, looking at the lights in his father's house, clad in rags. "In such rags! And now, what *do* you think . . . just listen!" And they heard the sound of singing and jubilation in the village, so great was the parents' joy at his recovery. The child got up and went out to the door to listen to the singing.

The town child? what does the town child know of the world, of Nature, of human life? Only a wretched, ugly

little corner. The village child sees in miniature the whole world and all that in it is.

He was a shy, thoughtful child; he stood aside and looked on at life with quiet, wondering eyes. He played with the other children, but it often happened that almost involuntarily he would step aside from the gay throng as if some invisible voice had said earnestly to him, "Stand aside a little."

The child's eyes became quieter and quieter; veil after veil sank down over them; but in his soul there was no darkness; the more the outer world faded away there burned up in his soul a still, bright light that filled it wondrously with its glowing purity and gracious warmth. Happy, sad, the childish soul stood in the holy hall, before the lofty doors that soon would open, and "now—now—soon I shall see the radiance of Heaven." Then the children came and waked him, saying to one another, "Jesus is dreaming again; look, he is lost in dreams." He came back to the others, his eyes still misty with the sweet remembrance, his face bearing the traces of a gentle sadness.

Every Sabbath as boy and youth he stood among the other villagers in the village school and meeting-room, to listen to an earnest teacher, who read with slow solemnity from the old chronicles and psalms; a Nationalist and clerical, he read out God's many commandments with brows sternly knit, "Thou shalt . . . Thou shalt . . . If thou dost so-and-so, thou shalt please God. . . ."

The boy listened in shy bewilderment. . . . Then the teacher laid aside the book and took up another, and the voice of the gloomy, serious man warmed and his eyes burned as he read of the heroes who had arisen of old among the people as the birds rise out of the heather; how they brooded alone, searching for an answer to the weary riddle of human life, the riddle of birth and death, God and conscience, guilt and justice, seeking a way by which a tender human soul might win its way through life without sorrow or punishment. Some of these brooding heroes

did force a way through night and terror, but not by their own unaided strength. Children run fearfully through the darkness, terrified, with such beating hearts, till at last they find themselves in their mother's outstretched arms, where for a while they sob stormily, terrified by their own daring, till, their terror subsiding, they laugh again. Like them, these heroes rushed in blind and eager confidence on their adventurous search for truth and faith to the feet of the Eternal Reality, and there cried, "Eternal Reality, we believe that Thou art goodness." From this glorious citadel they speak to their people with a glowing courage shining in their eyes, tell them of the misery of godlessness, of the great goodness of God, of the glorious hope of wondrous help from God, and of the Saviour who was to come to purify and bless the land.

As the boy listened to these stories of the holy heroes his pure young heart swelled with a secret and lofty joy. "Thou shalt . . ." was forgotten; fear was fled; far into the night he beheld in dreams the brave and holy heroes, with their passionate belief in the goodness of God, their passionate love for their unhappy people, and the Saviour to come, the bravest and purest of them all: till he fell asleep, his cheeks glowing with happiness.

There were in the village a number of upright, unlettered families who belonged to the quiet country party, and probably his parents were among them. His tender spirit drank in the ancient beliefs, the ancient dreams that he heard his parents and their neighbors discussing. They spoke of God, who dwelt above in the blue realms of Heaven surrounded by good angels; of the devil, banished to the remotest corner behind the heavy gray clouds on the northern verge of the sky, with his company of bad angels. Mortal destiny depends on the fortune of the war raging day and night between God and His satellites and the devil and his; all sickness and madness comes from the evil spirits; how they plague the sick people in the village! Seven spirits or angels sent by the devil lodge within the

maniac living at the far end of the village with his parents; it is they who make him utter the shrieks that resound through the streets. A time will come when all this shall be changed; some day there will be an end of all sorrow and trouble caused by strangers and by evil spirits. The Saviour will come—the greatest of all the holy heroes. Some say he is to be an angel and fall down from Heaven; others he is to be a man descended from some ancient, impoverished royal house. With the help of God he will set up the rule of God upon earth all over the land, from the moor villages of the north to the capital in the south. Then the people will be free and holy and happy.

Thus the boy heard all the beliefs held by the Church and among the people in this time of trouble and disquiet. And he criticised them all, yet, till the day of his death, he never despised or cast away a single belief or superstition. Like his people and his times, he lived in a world of wonders. For him, too, angels descended from Heaven all his life long. He saw the devil fall like a flash of lightning; he believed that Satanic emissaries possessed the insane and the diseased. He believed that with the help of God or of the devil, man could perform superhuman actions; the dead could rise from the earth and walk.

But there was a trait of greatness in this growing son of man, a gift that marked him out, and this it was. He comprehended in the music of his nature all the notes sounded by the words of people and by the ancient books, but one supreme note rose in him, sounding clearer, stronger year by year, sounding pure and strong and penetrating above all other notes, dominating and subduing all other notes—the note that had ceased to sound among his people in his time, the note that had not yet been struck by other nations, the note which the holy heroes of old had comprehended and to which they had responded, “Let me rejoice in Thy grace that Thou hast seen my tribulation and hast troubled Thyself for the need of my soul.”

His real heroism lay in this, that in a time of dull acquiescence, of sordid ideals, and confused aims, he had held up a high and lofty belief in the goodness of God, and died for this belief in the freshness of his youth. . . .

As yet, however, he is only a boy, a youth, uncertain of himself, cherishing in wondering doubt and bewilderment his profound and marvelous thoughts.

Then came early youth. He learned a craft in the village. He became a carpenter and left the village. Wandering through the valley, down the dry river-bed, he saw the ruins of the house which had been torn up by the last earthquake; then, reaching the sea-beach, he saw the pearl-fishers' boats dancing on the surge, while the merchant stood on the bank with his purse to see what they had caught. He passed through the poverty-stricken moorland villages to the inland lake; standing before the castle that the evil princeling had built, he heard the complaints of the unhappy people of his cruelty and of his ruling vice; he saw the countless numbers of the homeless poor, the sick and the insane lying in the streets, crowds of soldiers and officials railing against them at the street corners. He took a three days' journey with some of the villagers down to the huge temple in the capital. There, in the midst of the hungry misery of the people, he saw respectable Liberals, princes of the Church, going in their silken raiment to a rich banquet given by the foreign governor. At the street corners stood the Nationalists in grave mourning garments. The people followed blindly, filling the synagogues, gabbling the prayers, giving the rich priests their poor savings.

On their way home the peasants discussed whether the Nationalists were right in saying that the stipulated gifts must be made to the priests, even though one's own aged parents perished of starvation, for God and His commandments come before filial love; whether it were really God's will that one should not move a finger on the Sabbath, even to help man or beast in trouble. Could God be so petty and so jealous? They pondered deeply over this as they went

their way, till suddenly one of the quietists struck up an old song in a quivering voice, "To Thee I raise my eyes, Thou throned in Heaven; behold, as the eyes of a servant are directed to the hand of the Master, our eyes look up to God, till such time as He has mercy upon us."

He returned to the village in silence. In the home of his parents he dwelt quietly, busy with his craft, building and repairing houses in the village. His eager eyes regarded his craft and all that Nature and life presented to him, but they did not stay, caught like fish in a net, but, penetrating like the rays of the sun through all appearances, reached their inner cause, the secret and eternal power behind them. He found joy in the waving field of wheat, in the lily blossoming on the pond, in the young girl standing at the door; but he left them, with no thought of touching or gathering them. All phenomena were to him merely a symbol of the eternal power that lay behind them, dark and obscure. "Thou art all goodness and love. If only all men could share my belief, my happiness! Eternal Power, what am I? what are my thoughts? Send soon the holy Saviour. Great is the need of my people."

The people in the village said, "He is a strange man, full of profound wisdom, of holy earnestness, as innocent as a babe at the breast." They saw and knew no more. They did not guess that behind those pure and limpid eyes lay a soul that grew every day in depth and insight. He himself knew it not. He was a poor, restless son of man, now thrilling with joy, again with unspeakable fears, shaken by godlike thoughts, a genius in being.

Time passed on . . . he reached his thirtieth year. People in the village would ask his advice in difficult matters, but he only cast his eyes down, deep in thought; answering came hardly to him. A few wise, patient men in the village think and say, "What will become of him? Let him be! only wait; some day he will soar aloft like the eagle." Others shake their heads and say, "What is he? A queer creature, that's all."

His hour is not yet come; soul and spirit are not yet clear. God is still forging and hammering. Of the old heroes it was said, "I make thee to be a pillar of iron and a wall of brass against the whole land, against its Government, against its Church, against the whole population"; for he must be hard, must indeed be of iron, who is to stand alone against the whole people.

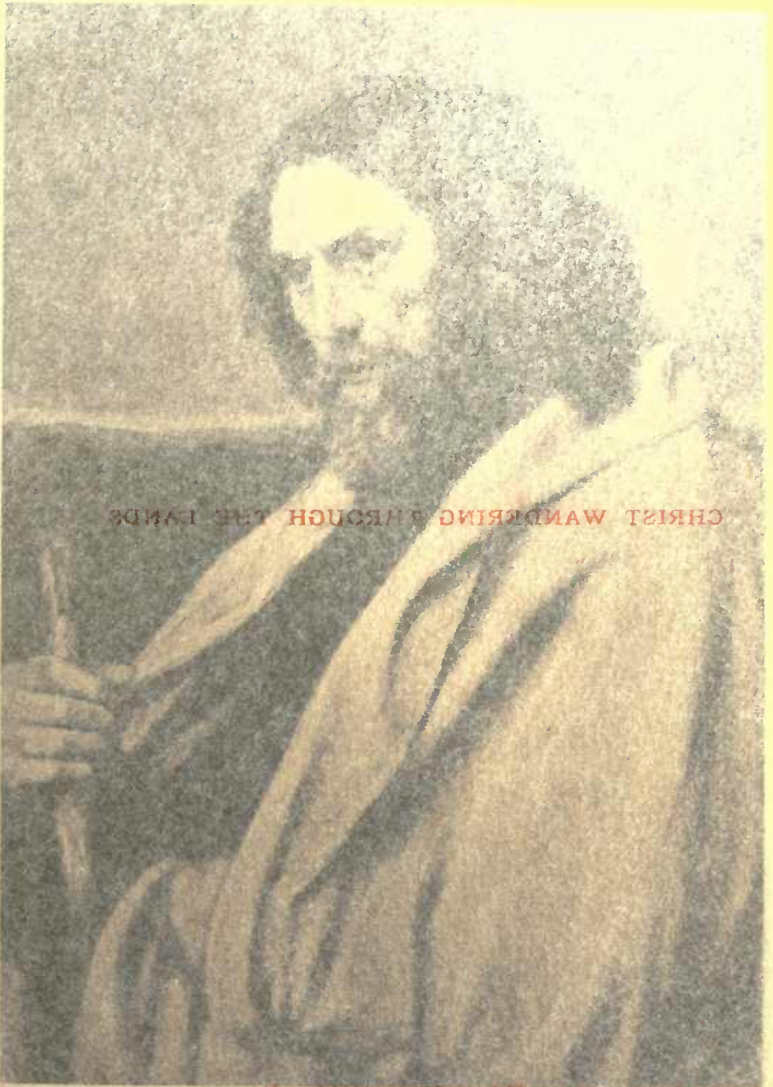
The whole land was oppressed and restless, a heavy burden lay upon their souls, they were bound down to poverty and madness. Leaden clouds stretched from the sea to the lake, from the heather hills of the north to the great town of the south. Once, twice, the flame sprang high in the woods or on the moors. Some eager, desperate spirit appeared. "I . . . I am the Saviour! Arise, my people, arise!" The Government stamped the fire out with fierce imprecations, then drew their breath hard. "When will help come to the parching land? Now, or never. Go out, child, see whether the storm is rising."

"There is nothing, father."

Then the first peal of heavy thunder broke over the land.

In the south, not far from the capital, a man arose, a man like one of the old, holy heroes sprung from the despairing people. He stood and spoke. What he spoke was half-despair, half-laughing gladness.

"People! people! hear what I say. Have we reached the end of life and of every hope? Does our need reach up to our throats? Then—you know how the old books run, 'From an old decaying royal stem shall shoot out a young branch.' Come he must . . . he comes! Look! He is quite near. He comes! a man of wondrous powers, the power of God within him! the angels of God on his right hand and on his left. He will harry and slay the oppressors and carry terror among the people. The Nationalists, with their self-satisfied piety; the Liberals, smooth and silky, who sit in church and at the court; all the lying hypocrites who live in luxury and care nothing for the wretchedness



CHRIST WANDERING THROUGH THE LANDS

From the Painting of Edward von Gebhardt

© 1910 BY EDWARD VON GEBHARDT

The poor people were weary and weak and could not bear the heat. They were all hungry and thirsty. The land was dry and the crops were withered. The people were all suffering and the king stood alone against the people.

The word came to the king and he was a heavy burden lay upon his shoulders. He was led down to poverty and madness. He then went from the sea to the lake, from the leather hills to the north to the great town of the south. One, twice, the flame sprang high in the woods or on the moors. Some saint, desperate spirit appeared. "I am the Saviour! Arise, my people, arise!" The Government stamped the fire out with fierce imprecations, then drew their breath hard. "When will help come to the parching land? Now, or never. Go out, child, see whether the storm is rising."

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of the people, who lay heavy burdens on the people as if such were the commandments of God, while they themselves do not stir a finger; they load their country's land with debt, devour its houses, and pray all the time without ceasing; all these people are an abomination to the Lord and to His Messenger. He will destroy them all. And when He has done all this, when He has driven forth the enemy and slain those who ruin the people, then the others, the oppressed, the quiet people of the country, shall dwell in peace and happiness in a land purified and free, He their glorious King, they His free and gladsome people. . . . Where are ye, ye poor and pure in heart? How few ye are, my people! Hark! He comes! Purify your souls! Away with all evil from heart and life! Hark! the steps of the Son of God!"

So he spoke in broken words, spoke to a despairing people. So the alarms ring out before the break of day over the army lying in uneasy sleep on the battlefield opposite the foe. The whole people heard his voice.

The Liberals laughed. "Live and let live!" The proud Church party stared. "What? the Saviour is to come as our enemy? What a fool the man is!" All the quiet, unhappy people in the land leapt up. "What a note is that! What does he say? Misery at an end?" and they went to him in crowds. And the clear note penetrated to the silent depths of that divinely quickened soul dwelling in the quiet northern village, to Jesus the carpenter. "What does he say? The piety which the Church teaches is false? God wants pure, holy men. . . . Yes, these are they whom He wants."

At night in autumn a storm rises in the western sea, comes over to land with a roar, expends its first headlong onset in vain against the high, thick beeches round the woodland pond. Foiled, it pauses for a moment, to dash with concentrated force against the stubborn resistance of the trees; as they crash to the ground it throws itself upon the pool, lashing and torturing it. Such a storm now arose

in the depths of his silent soul. "What does he say? the long-promised Saviour is coming now? now? now the great wonder is to be? the people is to be free and happy! now? yes, now! Our need is at our throats. Yes, he is coming now. I will go and see the man."

And so the quiet young master laid aside hammer and measure. As he went the Eternal Power glowed and worked within him. "The Saviour is coming. . . . What does he look like? What will he be like? God and the spirit of goodwill work powerfully within him."

When he reached his destination on the evening of the second day he found crowds gathered together from all directions, from west and east, from the great town in the south and the moors in the north. An ill treated, confused, and despairing people, betrayed and cheated by King and Church. They looked up to the one strong man who spoke to them of the downfall of the King and of the rich and of the pious Church party, and foretold the time of bliss at hand for all who were free from sin. "The Saviour, the Messenger from God is at hand; in one hand he holds death, in the other a happy life in a free land." Thousands came to him, and, kneeling down in the stream that flowed in its bed of white sand down into the valley, vowed, with his hands upon their heads, "Our souls shall be as pure as the water, as clean as the white sand, so that we may dwell in a pure and happy land under the holy hero, we who now are meek, lowly, and oppressed."

This sight, this supreme moment, made a deep impression on the northern peasant; his soul, freed from the dangers which has beset it among the silent moors, of distraction by visionary dreaming or restless wandering from its true course, was roused at once to insight and to action. "What does he say? . . . Pure men are to live in a pure land? How can a man become pure? He does not know. No one knows. Do I know? . . . Do I know? . . . The pure life? Yes. I can point the way . . . have I not borne that knowledge in my soul since I was a child? Have

I not always seen Thee, holy and everlasting power, as Fatherly love? I have been Thy child since I could think at all; Thy child, loving, pure, beloved. In communion with Thee all sin is wiped away. The kingdom of Heaven is at hand. Happiness is at hand for my poor people. Yes, it is at hand . . . now it must come. Help, O Father, that Thy Kingdom come! Bring all Thy people to Thy knees pure and happy as I am! Father, what am I to do? where is the Saviour? Father, who is he? Father, show him to me. . . . Father, *who* is he?

Overcome by the waves of thought and feeling that surged through his soul, he knelt down in the white sand among the others, seeming in that action utterly to abrogate his will and to hand over his whole being in passionate self-surrender into the hands of the sacred and everlasting Power above him. "I am Thine, my will is Thine; my Father, who art goodness and truth. . . ." and in a moment of wrapt and wholly blissful ecstasy he seemed to feel and to hear that the Eternal Power, his "Father in Heaven," accepted this passionate surrender of his pure will. "Thou art my beloved son, in whom I am well pleased."

He arose and stepped back. That night he stayed in the district; in the new and rapturous illumination of joyous thoughts and sublime presentiments he understood clearly the vague misery, the singing joy of his childhood. "I am a prophet, a herald of eternal truth like the holy heroes of old! A messenger from God. Happiness is coming to my poor people: the Kingdom of Heaven! it is at hand. I announce it, I His messenger! the last of His messengers, the Saviour!

Next morning he set out northward. For two, three hours he walked till his homeward way brought him into a lonely and desolate region. Here the lofty feelings that had surged up in him sank, and as he wandered over the barren moor his heart became heavier and heavier at every step. At last he stood still, brooding. "When I reach

home tomorrow evening, I, who have always been so shy and silent, must stand up and say: 'Purify your hearts, purify your lives; the kingdom of Heaven is at hand.' . . . They are all expecting a holy hero who shall free us with sword and word from the foreign yoke. 'Out with your swords!' That I cannot do. God's voice has never said that to me. Or can I? I am the wisest in the land; I have power over men; shall I announce what will please them? Shall I alter a little what God says within me? What I have to say to them is too lofty, too sacred. . . . The quiet, yes; but my mother; my brothers; all the rich men of the village! The Nationalists and the Prince! The first will be suspicious; the second will threaten; and the Prince will have me put in prison. . . . So I must alter it a little; I *must* alter it. I will clothe myself in gorgeous raiment, miracles, and splendid deeds, and then say, 'I am the Saviour! Sword in hand!' and then the people will rally round me. . . . No, no, you spirits of evil . . . avaunt, messengers of Satan. . . . I will listen to God alone."

The day passed and night descended; he cowered at the edge of the cliff, a poor, lonely man, tortured by hideous doubt, a man in the bitterest extremity of need.

He prays, and strength comes to him for a moment; but again his courage sinks; he prays again, begging his "Father in Heaven" to give him strength and light. He begs, "Show me the truth. Tell me, shall I help my people with Thy sword and Thy word, or with Thy word alone?" All night his soul sought for a way of escape like a caged wild beast that ramps restlessly up and down, glaring in vain at the bars through which he cannot pass.

Later he told his friends, and they believed what had become a part of the popular faith that Satan, the ruler of the evil spirits, appearing from the darkest quarter of Heaven, stood by his side and said to him, "Add something of earth to the pure work of God."

His fear of others, his vanity, all his sensual desires

fought with a strong man's strength against that stronger part of him that was pure and holy. All day the struggle lasted. At times he turned to go northward, and then, shrinking back, he turned again on to the moor. Often he was in great danger of betraying his Father in Heaven and returning home the same quiet craftsman that he had left it, save that his soul was rent asunder and his inner life desolated by the reproachful voice of conscience. Often he came near to adding something of earth, "Out with your swords! I am the holy leader whom God has promised you." The whole future of humanity depended on the purity of soul, the courage, and the truth of a single man.

But he was very brave. He was so stainless, so pure. He thought of the rapture of the momentary communion of his soul with God. In passionate prayer he clung to the knees of his Father in Heaven; and He helped him. Certainly the Eternal was by his side. Yet the work was his own; it is him we must thank. Jesus, the northern carpenter; it is He who helped mankind. At last he arose victorious. "I will do Thy work and Thine alone, without the sword, without any earthly help. I will believe and not doubt; Thy blessed kingdom is at hand, and I must raise it without the help of the sword. I leave it to Thee to show me in Thy own good time whether I am indeed the Saviour. Help me, O Father in Heaven."

Then, he said, he was made strong. Angels from Heaven stood round him, and fear was gone from him. Drawing a long, deep breath, he went northward with no more doubt in his heart. His will was now at rest, desiring only to do the pure and gracious will of God. "I will do Thy will, announce the coming of Thy kingdom and Thy rule in my country, troubling myself not at all about other men." He went north.

The report followed him, "The Baptist has been put in prison by the duke; he is to die at the hangman's hand." But all fear was gone from him. He stands there pure and free, in his hands the purest task in the world, close to the Eternal Power, close to his "Father in Heaven."

In two days he reached his native district. Avoiding his own village he made his first appearance as a preacher in a village that lay to the east of it. He rose without any doubt or any fear, his eyes shining with joy and the authority of the Eternal, which said to him, "Arise! speak! Thou art My dear son. Speak! It is My will that thou sayest what thou sayest and doest what thou doest."

The eagle now began to fly. He arose, and for the first time went up to the desk and opened the ancient chronicle; and as they looked at him they saw this was no dry teacher, but a man whose deepest soul was stirred and possessed by the spirit of God. He read the place where it is written: "The spirit of the Lord is upon me. Because he anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor; He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."

Laying the book down he drew a deep breath, and said, "The ancient scripture is being fulfilled now, now. Poor, oppressed people, the promised time of happiness is come; the kingdom of Heaven is beginning among us. Give yourselves to Him and be His children, and all the shadows that weigh on human life will disappear, all of them; evil conscience, sorrow, death itself. In the light of happiness human life will be as resplendent as the halls of God. Give yourselves to Him! be His children! The kingdom of Heaven is at hand, the blessed time of which the prophets spake is at hand. Listen, believe my words, and rejoice."

So he spake, and the poor, the trembling, the oppressed, marveled and rejoiced. He went on his way from place to place, avoiding his native village, and his long years of silent, lonely pondering had taught him to understand the ground tones of human life. All day his heart ached with a passion of pity for the misery and need where all might have been sweetness, and found no rest for the anguish of his compassion. "I must cleanse my people so that they may find that bliss in the nearness of God which has been

mine since my childhood." The whole day he was filled with the immovable courage that inspired the early heroes. "I will make it come to pass. I will conquer my brethren and make them approach God in the joyful spirit which is mine. The soul is made for goodness, its nature is divine; it must succeed in casting forth Satan and his friends. A storm shall blow through the land and set the people free from evil; the good shall conquer and convince the evil; the eager shall carry the sluggish with them; the quiet overcome the cold-hearted pietists. God and His angels shall rule over the people; under His protection they shall be pure and happy, freed from sin and sorrow, each man under his own roof tree."

Such was his faith, his love, his hope: and he announced it in words like morning dew or the water of a deep and sparkling spring, to a people of quick understanding, deep piety, and ancient race, who looked back from the desperate misery of the present to the glory of the past and yearned for freedom and happiness. It was natural that he roused them. Excitement spread all through the northern district, his passage from village to village was like a bridal train. Downcast eyes looked up: they began to sing and hum in voices that had lost their music through long disuse. Once more men talked of great questions at their doors and by the fireside: these were great times when they talked of their God, of their souls, of their country. Stir and excitement took the place of the old lassitude.

The quiet men were well pleased with him: "He doesn't count off on his fingers what one has to do, and what one is allowed to do. Seven times seven: and you may eat this and you may not do that, and on the Sabbath, so and so. Who can attend to all these commandments? He speaks the one simple truth, 'Give thy soul to thy Father in Heaven and to thy fellow-men . . . then, thou art blessed.'"

And in the evening the fishers were sitting and standing on the shore beside their boats: they had listened to him and seen him. "Simon . . . why have you sat all day

without saying a word, staring, you who are the most lively of all as a rule? What do you say to the man?" Simon got up from the edge of the boat, his lips trembling, and his eyes fixed on the ground. "Brother, look after my boat and my nets. . . . To give one's soul to God; to have one's life filled with love and truth. . . . Blessed is the man who goes with him. . . . I will follow him and be always by his side."

The small officials surrounded him: he was their man. The Nationalists said to them: "Pray seven times, wash, and lay down your office. If you don't do this and that you are sinners, outcasts, foredoomed to Hell." He did not so. He did not rebuke: he did not curse. He showed them the happiness of a soul relying in love on the goodness of God. "It is a light yoke and a soft burden indeed. How heavy in comparison are the commandments of the Synagogue, the misdeeds, the evil conscience, the anxiety, the struggle for existence. The burden of a life far from God is too heavy for mortal shoulders to bear: but we can bear it with a brave and innocent heart if one rests like a child against the knees of God. And afterward comes the kingdom of God."

When they heard this they rejoiced and said unto another: "What can one say to that? It's the absolute truth. What do you say, Matthew, you brooder, what do you think of it?" The same evening he saw Matthew sitting at his desk in his publican's office, and, as he passed, cast a long look toward him: a look that went through and through the man, so that he rose slowly to his feet, compelled by those wonderful eyes and the force of that spotless goodness, and, taking up his cloak, he followed him with blanched face.

All the sick who had lain in misery, often from their childhood on, in the houses of their relatives; all those who had been driven from their homes by melancholy, or ill-weaved ambition, by the visions of madness or the grip of infectious disease, and dwelt apart in deserted and ruin-

ous hovels — all these — and there were thousands of them — came in wild excitement. All believed that for some sin they had committed they were now inhabited by emissaries of Satan. To them, the possessed, he came, this gracious, gentle son of man, this child of God, with nothing but joy, joy and irresistible hope in his heart. “There is an end to all sorrow. The joyful kingdom of Heaven is at hand!” They cried aloud: “Behold, behold! He is like the holy heroes of old! God dwells within him, a spirit from God dwells within him. He must be able to help us, in whom a spirit of evil dwells.” Round him they gathered, a crowd of groaning, cursing, beseeching humanity: lost souls in crippled bodies.

It is impossible to paint the picture in sufficiently moving language. This people had, perhaps, no more sick among them than others, but all the sick lay in the street, aided by no doctor, sheltered by no roof, consoled by no compassion. Now help had come: help from God. Ten thousand sick and one physician! And he? He knew one thing — there is, there can be no sickness in the kingdom of Heaven. The demon of disease fell away like discarded rags from all who were ready to put away evil from them, to take their stand on God’s side. He could heal when heart and will came to meet him. There was on his side a holy longing to help, almost feverish in its intensity, a passionate cry to his “Father in Heaven,” “shall not Thy Kingdom come in this land.” When there met him on the other side an eager faith, an utter dependence of the diseased and weakened will on the courage shining in his stainless eyes, then he could help. “Thou art the child of God? A child of God cannot be sick. . . . Come, give me thy hand. . . . Now . . . arise . . . now . . . rejoice, be not afraid.”

They cried aloud “Behold, the Saviour! he is the Saviour!” The cry rang through him. “The Saviour? Am I he? If I am, my people are in my hand. . . . Lead me not into temptation! Evil spirits speak with their lips.”

In the evening he came to a village by the lake, and entered the dwelling of an acquaintance. Immediately the house was full of people, crowding up to door and window. In the village there was a hysterical young man, with no strength of mind or body, who had lain for years speechless and crippled in a morbid trance, supposed by himself and the villagers to be smitten by evil spirits. Now, his father and mother took up the litter in which he lay, and, coming to the house, cried, "Let us come in." It was impossible. Strong arms raised the litter, removed some of the beams of the flat-wooden roof, and lowered the sick man to Jesus' feet. There was a loud outcry on all sides, the surging crowd turned their eyes to him in passionate expectancy. "You can help: you must help the poor man." The sick man looked up at him, trembling entreaty in his eyes. He bent over, and something of his holy desire to help, something of his confident certainty passed into the sick man. "Since thou hast come in passionate entreaty, in trembling faith, thou art free from the evil power: the evil spirits have no power upon thee. Thou art the child of God: His time is come." With a cry the sick man raised himself. "Arise and walk." It was a great time.

A spring storm went through the little land. He bore the storm and the storm bore him. The kingdom of Heaven had really begun. "It is clear: the whole people will be won. Everywhere the rule, the kingdom of God shall have might! His will has hitherto only been done in Heaven, it shall now be done on earth. The land is now becoming holy, and a Holyland is free and happy. What can resist, if God and man stand together?"

The first dark clouds rose in the smiling sky. Two, three, at the same time.

It was the faith of the whole country that a Saviour was to bring about the kingdom of Heaven upon earth. Therefore, soon after his appearance, there began to be question-

ings among the people. "Is this the Saviour?" They pondered deeply over it: "Is this he? Yes, this is he. Look at his eyes: he is the blessed Son of God. Think how good he is, how blessed the work of his hands."

Then they began to doubt again. "No, this is not he. How could you say this was he? Do you not know that the Saviour shall be descended from an ancient royal house, that he shall fulfil the law, heal all the sick, destroy the oppressors, and create an empire upon earth. This is not the Saviour." The hero knew that he was the Saviour: his own holy spirit said to him: "I am he for whom ye wait, for I can bring my people to the blessed accomplishment of the kingdom of God. I am he for whom ye wait and I will declare that I am."

He saw the deep gulf that separated his faith and the faith of his people: he saw that they did not understand him, that they could not free themselves from the old, material faith: he saw that they always desired to confound his teaching with this old material faith, and now it surged perpetually round him like the surf dashing against the cliff. The people said to him, demanded with the furious hunger of a concealed desire, "Be the Saviour of our dreams!" He stood firm, pure in heart, gracious in spirit, child and man: "I will be the Saviour that my Father wills."

Then there fell a shadow over that pure and lofty spirit. The sick and the insane were importunate in their entreaties: and so it came to pass that he became a worker of miracles. Then, as now, people were never tired of propounding as a final and irrefragable doctrine, "Health is the highest good." "Make me healthy! and me! and my brother! and my child! If you can do that you are the Messiah, the Saviour." Physical suffering, physical needs, rose up like a giant and pressed him from his path.

The goal to which his path led was not the release from sickness of a hundred sick, but the emancipation of a whole people from all the ills of mind, body, and estate by bring-

ing them over to the side of God. He saw the danger rising gigantic before him, and a spirit of restlessness drove him from village to village, and roused him anew in the midst of his desire to dream alone in lonely fields.

A new trouble came from the south, from the capital. The Nationalists and clericals, dwelling in close proximity to the great temple, used to send their least important teachers, priests, and agents to the poor populations of the north. But now that there resounded from the north the clear note: "Our Father in Heaven has set up His kingdom in our land; He will make us free and blessed," they realized that the question was highly serious. And so these leaders of religion and patriotism sent to the north their most harsh and fervent agents. They regarded him with dark, knitted brows.

It was a strange intercourse, with the mass of the people indifferent to religion, actively opposed to the Church, and the publicans, the betrayers of their country. "Yes," he said, mockingly; "why should I trouble about the righteous, the strong, those who have everything? They need no physician. I love those who seek to be purified and healed, who hunger and thirst after strength." They came to him with uplifted hands, a commandment at the end of each finger. "God says, you shall fast." "Ah!" he replied; "we are forced to fast when our throats are closed by fear or famine." "God says, you shall do no work on the Sabbath." "Yes," said he, "rejoice and help one another on the Sabbath." In clear words, glowing with goodness, he opposed their distorted and senseless interpretation by his truth, which came to men like sunshine. He thought, indeed, that he might avoid a breach with these men. Carried away by the enthusiasm of the people, he thought that, in spite of their gloom, they, too, would be aroused; his brave and stainless soul still cherished the dream, "The whole people blessed and holy beneath the sceptre of God."

But a few days later, embittered by the discovery of their own impotence, they went before the people. There is

nothing in the whole world more dreadful than the professional religion of people whose hearts have no love in them. "He violates the commandments of God, do not ye do so. His great deeds are done by evil means." Then the Holy Helper arose, his gracious heart, as always, full of pity, standing before them, as the angel of the Lord once stood in burning wrath before Cain, he said, "Beware! He who knowingly calls that which is good evil is guilty of an immortal sin." They shrank back and made their way south, to the capital, where they reported: "This man is bringing the Church in the north into disgrace; he is a danger to God and the State." They worked in the dark, by underground means. . . . Soon afterward, on their instigation, his own mother and brothers came from his native village and appeared in front of the house where he was. "We have heard that some say he is one of the heroes of old; others even declare him to be the Saviour himself. He is a poor, demented man. Help us to take him home with us."

When they told him within that his own folk were mourning over him outside, his strong, stainless heart stood still for a moment; but he lifted up his head.

And the goodness of God permitted him at this moment to meet beaming eyes looking up into his. "I have no mother," he said, "and no brethren. My mother and my brethren are those which hear the word of God and do it."

Yet the blow rankled. "I am deserted by mine own people, by those who have known me from my childhood and know that there is in me a good spirit sent from God. I will go home and see whether they receive me."

He went from village to village, through crowds of worshippers, and curious, miserable, and sick; at every corner agents of the Church; and so reached home. They were ready for him there. They looked at him with sombre eyes. Jesus the Carpenter, old Joseph's son; is he to set himself above the learned priests of the capital? Is he to be a saint and a hero? The Saviour Himself who is to bring the kingdom of Heaven upon earth?

“If you can . . . look, there is a sick man. . . . you have known him since your childhood. Help him.”

In the sick man's eye there was no gleam of confidence, of love. His trust and courage, thus lamed, could not avail; he could not help him.

Then they mocked at him, and cried in furious anger: “The fool has made us a laughing stock in the land.” They wanted to lay hands upon him. But he went, and departed from among them.

His home was lost.

From this day onward the way of the gracious one led into the shadow; from this day his face bore the expression of intense struggle. He knew not that all could not be children of God; there must be a parting. The Baptist had spoken of it. Well, then, let the parting come. “Think ye that I am come to give peace on the earth? Not peace, but a sword.”

There was no fear. His burning eyes sought out his opponents. He knew his path and feared it not. The craftsman took up the contest against the history of his people, against the great men of his people, against all the powers of the world. He knows the power of evil is at an end. God is with him. God gives him the victory. “I am come to cast fire upon the earth, and would it were ablaze already.”

Through the land there rang a clear and piercing trumpet call; like a signal to the regiment standing drawn up in the morning gray to charge upon the foe, it penetrated to the marrow of those that heard. No man had hitherto struck so deep into those sacred springs where the divine dwells in secret in the hearts of men. No one had spoken with such power to thrill and change.

“Is it keeping a thousand commandments, my brethren, a load that is laid like a sack of sand upon the back of an ass, that makes men righteous? Is it praying, fasting, going to church, or washing? Purify your hearts, my

brethren; hold your hands always ready to do what is right and true. Only those who do the will of God can hope to live in a free and happy land. Purify your lives, purify your souls! Be holy; the kingdom of Heaven is at hand, which shall set men asunder. Ye have heard that it was said to them of old time: "Thou shalt not kill." But I say unto you, Away with all anger and all hatred, let your soul glow in forgetting and forgiving. Ye have heard that it was said, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," but I say unto you, If thou look after another woman with desire in thy heart, pluck out thy right eye and cast it from thee; be pure with the one eye that thou hast. Again, ye have heard it said, "Thou shalt not forswear." I say unto you, A lie is an unthinkable thing to the children of God. Let your speech be yes and no . . . that is enough. You have heard it said, "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth." I say unto you, Resist not him that is evil. Let them strike you. You will overcome them by your gentleness. . . . Be all goodness and compassion. Put away everything: clothing and family. Have no other thoughts but "Father in Heaven, Thy kingdom come." What are possessions, what is right and wrong in the kingdom of God? But if the power of evil tries to drag you away from God, call on Him and pray, pray fervently. Ye shall be heard, most assuredly ye shall be heard. Would a father, when his children ask him for bread, give them stones? . . . What things are ye to pray for? Trifles? Clothes and shoes, a house and garden, good neighbors, and so forth? Assuredly not. A little bread for today, so that ye may live to see the kingdom come. Pray that the kingdom come! Pray that ye be ready for its coming. Pray, "Our Father, Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven. Give us bread this day; forgive us as we forgive others."

Looking into their faces, he saw reflected in their eyes the struggle between joyous belief and oppressed misery.

Bitter was his condemnation of all earthly goods.

“Accursed is money; accursed the care that lurks in the shadow of money. Wealth is guilty when it dominates all thoughts and conquers the soul itself, guilty when it lives in idle forgetfulness of the poor and sick dwelling near it in the squalor of their sunless homes. Accursed is money. If you possess it you are guilty. Expiate your guilt; give away your money to lessen the poverty of the land.”

A man rose up and came to Him, “Lord, my brother is deceiving me about my inheritance. Command him to give it to me.” He turned away in contempt. “Man, who has made me a judge of inheritance? I am no assignor of acres and oxen! I am here to say, ‘Let your wealth go. Look, the sparrows sow not, the lilies spin not, and their Father in Heaven feeds and clothes them every day. Shall He let the children of His kingdom, the care of His soul, perish of hunger and cold? Away with money! It is worthless, it hinders you. Do not collect money, collect rather the love of God and man. Care for this only; God’s land shall be our home. Soon! tomorrow! or the day after tomorrow! Care and strive only for this—to be worthy of the blessed home, the blessed time that is close at hand.’

“Be not afraid, children of God! Despair not of your own soul; God dwells within it to help it. See how small a grain of mustard seed, you can hold it between the tips of your two fingers; and yet it grows, grows into a tree. Be not afraid, children of God; will one thing only, to bring your souls close to God. Forgetting all else, care for this alone. The merchant goes down to the beach to buy what is for sale. A pearl-fisher held a pearl in the hollow of his hand, a pearl of great price; to be bought cheap. A bargain, a bargain! The man hastened away; he sold and put away from him his land, his house, and all his possessions, and returned with the money in the hollow of his hand, and bought the pearl. It was of unspeakable value. In a moment he became very rich. Brethren, purify your souls! Draw near to God! The bliss of God costs little to obtain. Look at my eyes, look at my life, look at all I

do — God's bliss dwells within my soul. God's bliss comes — yes, it comes. Look at me."

An old woman had kept her eager eyes fixed upon him; now she cried in her clear old voice, "Blessed is the womb that bare thee, and the breasts which thou didst suck."

His soul was still full of soaring hope. He forgot and despised the enmity of the clericals. The wound his home had dealt him healed, although a scar remained. There were many who doubted, but many stood before him with joyful eyes. Lofty exaltation went before him like a gleaming herald; and the faithful stood at his right hand and his left like knightly watchmen. Rejoicing sounded behind him like a waving banner.

His courage was high; he sent the disciples who had been three or four months with him now into the surrounding districts; they declared, "There is an end to all sorrow; the kingdom of Heaven, yearned for so long, is now at hand. A man like the heroes of old, a man beloved by God and men, a man of kindly strength and lofty stainlessness of soul is now among us. He announces the day of healing, he forgives sin, and reproves the spirits of evil and casts them forth. He has conquered altogether; our enchanted souls stand before him in speechless rapture. Believe us, cast all evil from you that your hearts may laugh like ours, and then God in Heaven will suddenly make an end of all our misery, and, with the help of His thousand angels, will build His kingdom in our land."

After a week they returned. "Oh, Lord, even the evil spirits within the sick and the insane did our bidding." Then his soul rejoiced mightily. "I saw Satan fall from his dark corner in Heaven like a flash of lightning on to earth, to save what he could save. He sees that his kingdom is at an end upon the earth. But I laugh and rejoice in Thee, my Father in Heaven; I laugh and rejoice that Thou, a Mysterious Being, has displayed to me Thy graciousness and made me Thy child, and now helpst me to bring to Thee many others of Thy children. I laugh and

rejoice that no one has known Thee save I alone, that all must now see from me and learn from me and attain bliss through me. I laugh and rejoice that Thou hast not opened Thy kingdom to the great and wise, but to men like me, lowly and unlearned."

And so, rejoicing, he went on his way, always kindly, always full of graciousness.

A rich Nationalist named Simon, who liked to have famous people at his table and to have a reputation for generosity, invited him to a feast. The table was set in the open hall; the guests sat round with bare feet, according to the custom of the country. There was a great press at the door; a poor girl, tortured by remorse for a life of dissipation, heard that he was there of whom it was said that the spirit of God dwelt in him in some wondrous manner. She stood there seeking for him; then, recognizing the true, gentle eyes, she fell on her knees before him. As she lay there she saw that his feet were dusty from the way, and, taking water from a vessel, she washed his feet, weeping the while, and, bending down, dried them with her long hair. A silence fell upon the hall; there was no sound save her bitter weeping. Then the hero, looking up, saw secret scorn written on the face of his host. "If you were a saint you would know that she is a prostitute." Fire burned in his eyes. "Simon; I have something to say to you." The silence was more intense. "A moneylender lent money to two men, fifty shekels to one, five hundred to the other. Neither of them could pay him back. He gave them what they owed him. Now tell me, which of the two would love the moneylender most?"

Simon smiled: "The one to whom the most was given."

Then the gracious one said angrily: "Listen, Simon. All over our country it is customary to give a guest who comes in from the dusty street water to wash his feet, and a friendly handshake. You gave me neither the one nor the other. You think you do not need to be kind; you think you need neither God nor man; you think you owe nothing

to any one, not even fifty shekels. You think. . . . Oh, this lost, ruined woman! . . . This woman, Simon! Five hundred shekels, that is a great deal to owe God and man! A great sinner! But, behold, all her sins are forgotten and forgiven; because of the love she has poured out to me, a wanderer, and to God, whom she knows within me. Love of God and man, Simon, can cover a multitude of sins. Are *you* forgiven, Simon?"

To her he spoke tenderly. "God in Heaven is thy Father, too, and He loves thee. He loves thee, just as thou art. Do thou love Him also, even if thou canst not free thyself from sin! Go now, do not weep so."

And so he went from village to village, always great and good, filled with new inspirations.

But behind him, far enough behind for the dust of daily life to have settled down and choked the excited souls; behind him there crept black enemies. They rose like crows from the roof of a church, rising up and up, flying on and on, following the wild beast as he takes his lonely way into the field, flying behind him, cawing softly; they rose from the great Temple in the south and flew north, flew north behind him, screeching, "You think you will destroy the ancient holy things; you shall yet see and marvel, you fool, how deeply rooted they are in the soul of the people." They cried passionately to the people, "Remain in the faith of your ancestors! Will you deride your fathers in their graves? Is this ignorant man, brought up in some little village far from the knowledge of the Synagogue, on the verge of the moorland, is he to lay hands on the Holy of Holies, which the learned men of God protect? Is he to lay hands on the sole and most sacred possession of our poor, unhappy country, the Synagogue? What else does it mean? Is this to be the promised Saviour? Does he fulfil a single condition of the true Saviour? He is the servant of the devil."

They stirred up misery, fear, and terror; they let confusion loose again. They talked secretly with the women and with the palsied old men. They played upon the stu-

pidity and superstition of the masses; freeing them from the terrible necessity of judging for themselves. "We are priests, and therefore know."

Many refused to listen to them. Those of a deeper tenderness of soul, many a strong, simple man, many a brave woman, many a workman said, "What is the Synagogue to us? Has it ever cared for us?"

Many looked up to him with joyful eyes, transported by his inspiration, his goodness, and his truth. But the great mass of the people, that blind and heavy beast that had lifted its head a little and begun to look about it a little when his clear voice rang in its ears, the mass of the people went back to its slumbers. "Certainly the commandments and customs of the Synagogue are sacred. How could they be so venerable else? Our fathers and our grandfathers strove to keep them faithfully. Oh, me! what an age; why has one to ponder so deeply? Sit still, my soul; my soul, the priests must know. Look how clever their eyes are, and what deep lines are in their lofty brows! Beware, my soul! I pray thee, be at peace and keep to the old order of things." So the heavy beast became calm once more: the crows flew on behind him without uttering a sound.

The sunshiny hero turned and retraced his steps; the whole district he had covered hitherto was not more than five or six days' journey. When he returned he found a change in the attitude of the people; he saw that they were falling away from him. He went on until he came to a village through which he had passed in triumph four months ago; the people stood on the thresholds, immovable. He passed through several little towns by the lake, where four and five months ago he had been surrounded by eager crowds, with madmen shrieking, sick men brought out into the street on their litters, women imploring him for aid, all eyes turned to him in passionate excitement, every one at his feet, as he declared, "Our country is now like a blessed Holyland." Now the streets were empty, one or two faces looking shyly round the doors. He came to the



From the Painting by Edward von Gebhardt

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CHRIST AND THE RICH YOUTH

From the Painting by Eduard von Gebhardt



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little town by the lake which only two months ago he had called "my town" in proud assurance, when enthusiasm had risen high in streets and houses; where the kingdom of Heaven seemed already to rule in the streets and to inspire men's hearts. The sick still came, and some of the faithful. But the mass of the people stayed nervously at home. "We can hear no trumpet blast from Heaven. The kingdom of Heaven does not come. He is good, but mistaken." The clericals threatened.

When he saw the decline of faith, this nervous shrinking away from him, he could not restrain the words of burning anger. "Woe to you, towns of the lake; ye who have seen wonders. Others would have repented in sackcloth and ashes. Woe to you, my town! Thou wast raised up to Heaven, thou shalt be cast down to Hell." All joy was gone; his heart was burdened and cast down. What could he do? His soul, pregnant with a new and glorious world, could not bring it into being. What could he do? He knows that his Heavenly Father is ever by his side, but men will not believe. What can he do? To go back is impossible, but can he abandon the cause of his joy; leave the truth with all its sweetness? What can he do? Come to an understanding with the Church party? Say, "Go on fasting and washing, keep the commandments and the Sabbath, and purify your hearts." That was impossible. One cannot cut truth in halves, keep one half and let the other go. If it meant death, he must stand by the truth, one and indivisible. Serve God whole-heartedly, and God's will be done! . . . "What is God's will? What is He doing with me?"

Then there came two events to bring the final clearness, like nightly beacons to show the further path.

Once again for the second and last time the wild, dark apparition rose before him which six months ago had awakened his dreaming soul with clarion voice: the hero of the stream, the Baptist. He was now a prisoner, and in

his prison strained like the captured deer for the fresh woodland and the keen wind. He sent two disciples to the north. "Go and ask him what he is doing. What does he seek? Do not the people exult in him, have they made him king? Why does not he arise like a lion and fill the land with his roar? Do not the old prophecies say the Herald of the Lord shall go south to the capital, and then, sitting on the throne of the ancient kings, rule forever over a free people? Why does he not go thither, sword in hand, at the head of the people that have exulted in him for six months? Go and ask him, Art thou the great Saviour, sent by God, for whom we have cried aloud for eight hundred years? Or must we wait for another?"

The question fell like lead upon the hero's heart. "He, too, has the old material hero before his eyes! He, too, does not understand." He answered brief and clear: "Tell him, the kingdom of God exists; and this it is: Sickness and sin, poverty and sorrow are declining, and the oppressed people is full of laughing joy." He raised his hand and said, shaken by this cruel separation from the brave hero, "This is a brave and true man, but he has fallen into the grave error of thinking, like the self-righteous, that the kingdom of Heaven will come to pass by means of earthly might. But I say unto you that the pure and lowly are the citizens of the kingdom of Heaven, and they will make their way thither without weapons and without armor, without forms and commandments."

When the clericals heard how he spoke of their venerable precepts they rose against him; they ventured to attack the lion, now that his strength seemed to be failing.

"Tell us plainly what do you say to all the sacred commandments issued by the Synagogue?"

He trampled their sacred customs and commandments under his feet. "You hypocrites, are these the commandments of God? No, they are the senseless invention of men, which come between the people and the will of God. Away with the Church ritual of righteousness; it is the

curse of the people. Nothing matters but the heart of a man and the life he leads."

There was an end of the so-called "sacred" precepts, an end of all pretentious self-complacent righteousness; he cast them all to the ground, the ancient holies, the ceremonial, the countless priests, the sacrifices and the sacraments, the long pilgrimages, all that had weighed on mankind for centuries he swept away; on his shoulders there now rested the whole burden of human destiny.

He was now an accursed sinner, a blasphemer of God. "Listen, listen! Have you heard? He has defiled everything holy; he is an emissary of the devil." And the masses, that blind, heavy beast, crept further away from him.

"What now? What will become of me and my work now? I feel that death and sorrow are drawing nigh. . . . What then? Farewell, young life. . . . If I only knew how to carry the duty He has laid upon my soul. Oh, dear country, how can I make you pure and holy, ready for the time when God shall come with His angels to set up His kingdom within your bounds? How can I complete my work, hated as I am by the rich and righteous, supported by the people one day, only to be deserted by them the next? How am I to begin? How can I make the people one with me in spirit, so that we can break into the kingdom of Heaven together? How does He will that I should help Him?"

And behold; as he questioned fearfully he saw as if in a mist the old sacred banner waving on his path in front of him, the banner up to which the people had looked with dazzled eyes for eight hundred years. "The Saviour will come; the son of a King." How the people gazed! "Is he coming? He is come? There is the banner swaying; look how the sword flashes!" A wild shout of joy rent the skies, the people were at their Saviour's feet.

"Shall I take the banner in my hand; shall I say I am the Saviour—I?"

“ Those possessed by evil spirits cry out, ‘ You are he ! ’ In many an hour of exaltation the people have urged me to say, ‘ I am he. ’ The hero from the river asked, ‘ Art thou he ? ’ All dream of, all long for, the cry, ‘ Out with the banner ! ’ ”

“ I know that I am he. From my childhood I have been the child of God. ”

“ If I do not raise the banner there is no hope that God will win the people. ”

“ Beware, do not touch the banner ; there is earth clinging to it. Beware ! thou knowest that the Saviour, in whom the people believe, is not he in whom thou believest ; their belief is wild, confused, it has nothing to do with thee ; it will drag thee and thy stainless mission down into the dark confusion of death. ”

He went north, across the border, to be alone in a strange place, with his little band of disciples. His soul was heavy and perturbed. “ I know that my Father in Heaven is with me . . . my faith does not tremble. . . . God rules within my soul. His kingdom will come on earth, and soon. How strangely hard it is to be one with God and yet unable to bring His will to pass. . . . And it is time . . . I must go south, I must go through the whole land, I must go to the capital and proclaim there also that the kingdom of Heaven is at hand. What am I to do ? Listen to the mysterious rustling of the old, the miraculous banner ! He who holds it has strength. The people follow him ! What do the old chronicles say of the Saviour ? ‘ A twig from the ancient royal stem ’ — and I am a craftsman sprung from the people. What do they say ? What do the people say when they sit by their doors in the evening ? ‘ He will hold in his hand the might of earthly power ; he will ride against the foe with waving banners. ’ . . . No, I will not do it — will not depart from the word that God has spoken to me. Blessed are the meek. Blessed are the pure in heart. And do the old chronicles tell no other story ? Do they not speak of the king of peace ? ‘ Behold, O land,

thy king is come, clad in peace.' Not a king ruling with the sword over a people armed with swords; a king ruling in the strength of a pure and lofty heart other people that are pure in heart. And I am he."

So he pondered over the history of his people and over his own future, and he did not depart by one hair's breadth from the truth that was the sacred possession of his soul. They turned and went south, homeward. As he drew near the familiar district the crowd that followed him grew.

The contest still raged in his soul.

"Are you the Saviour? Then seize the banner; help thy people and God will be with thee." Already there shone in his eyes the light of another world. The knees of those who saw him bent beneath them; the sick and the poor rejoiced; thousands followed his healing hands, and hearkened to his gracious words, feeling neither hunger nor thirst. He filled the souls with such joy that they forgot their bodies.

The priests alone remained unmoved; religion had long since turned to poison in their hard hearts. "You are a wonder worker, but what sort of wonders have you done? Healing the sick? There are many in the land who can do that. Come, make red fire descend from the blue sky, here on this moorland path where you stand now. Or if not that, then let an angel from God stand with his pure feet on the white sand on your left!"

In bitter anger he replied, "You want a sign from Heaven, that belief and salvation may cost you nothing! Ye have seen and heard of a holiness that has never existed in the world before, and yet ye have not believed! A sign from Heaven? Ye shall have it when ye rise from your graves before the judgment seat."

Hearing question and answer, the people were once more filled with doubt, because they had *seen* nothing. "Many people can heal the sick; ay, and work wonders; the world is full of them."

Once more he crossed the border into the loneliness of

the north, wandering over deserted moorland paths, sorely troubled by the scornful attack of the priests and the wavering of the people. "I cannot reach the goal in this way. How am I to bring the kingdom of Heaven to pass upon Earth? Father in Heaven, help me!"

"Thou art the Saviour; now thou art strong!"

He went further on his desolate way. "What is written concerning the Saviour in the ancient chronicles? They talk of the waving palm leaves and the rejoicing of children, of a joyous entry into the capital, and then of a glorious rule over a sinless, obedient people; but is that all they say? Do they not speak of the people, "the people will make deaf its ears and turn its heart to stone," and they speak of revilement and contempt, of bitter desertion, of a miserable and lonely death. They speak not only of the Saviour's victory, but of his death."

"And after death?"

"What then — what after death? What says the chronicle? 'One like a child of man arose to heaven among the clouds, and was brought before the Ancient of Days; to him were granted power and glory and kingdom upon earth, all peoples and all races were to serve him; his power was to endure unchanged forever, his kingdom was never to suffer destruction. . . .' It may be that the Saviour must first die and go to God to receive the crown . . . and then . . . after a few days . . . on the third day he returns and establishes the kingdom of Heaven."

His soul soared to the heavenly heights and expanded so as to embrace the whole of humanity; weaving visions of marvelous splendor, touching the extreme limits of human thought in lofty delirium. There was no fear in him. If the hearts of men were made of stone was it not written in the Book, "I make thy brow harder than stone, as hard as a diamond?" No; there was no fear; no. He will execute his Father's will, were it even more wonderful, even more difficult. If only men are helped! His ideal never changes; it was still the same as when he first arose

among men—the condition of humanity, its misery, sickness, madness, wretchedness and oppression, sin and guilt, cannot endure. A wonder *must* take place. The kingdom of Heaven will and *must* come. Then men, pure, rejoicing in the goodness of God, content in mind and body, will find happiness in performing His will, “Thy will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.” This holy work was his to do on earth with the help of God. That was his idea. Never for a moment did he depart by one hair’s breadth from his true and stainless self. He brooded long and painfully over the execution of his idea. He had judged the ancient customs; he now considered the hopes of the people. . . .

“I must lift up the ancient standard, it shall be pure and my course pure. I must lift up the ancient standard: only under this standard can the people be inspired by faith. It is the will of God: otherwise He would help me without the standard. I will lift up the standard. Then, then it will come with loud rejoicing from Heaven, with the help of the angels, the kingdom of Heaven upon earth.”

So he brooded. Torn by the world’s travail, torn by the very sublimity of his own nature, he went behind the heavy horses that drew the wagon of humanity through the dark valley, holding the obstinate, the slow, and the impatient on a short rein, forcing them up onto an upland path, where the sun shone and the wind blew upon them.

They went on their way across the moor toward the north for three or four days, he in front, lost in thought, the disciples behind with sinking spirits, that only rose when he turned to look at them. His eyes were at once their terror and their joy. Thus they reached the foot of the mountain. How long would he wander on, undecided? The hour of decision must come.

“Tell me, what do the people say that I am?”

It is sad that he should have to ask people’s opinion.

The disciples replied, “They say you are one of the heroes of old; one of the dead arisen, they say.”

“And what do you say?”

The hot-headed fellow among them cried out of a full heart. "You—you are the Saviour! . . . we have long known it."

"Yes, you are the Saviour."

"Only speak, and you could rule the land."

"And then, out with the sword! Down with the foreign rule and the upstart parsons!"

"You, King in your native country! . . . Your kingdom at the sword's point!"

"And we, your disciples, standing to your right and left, vassals and ministers."

It filled him with horror to see how little even these men understood him, these men, nearer to him than all others, who had been with him for half a year. He answered harshly, "Do ye know what is written? It may come to war and conquest. . . . But the old books tell a different tale: a tale of sorrow and death, and then, and not till then, the glory comes."

They shook their heads; they could not understand. The old books, the inspiration of their youth had taught them only the wild song of joyful contest—up with the banner of salvation! and God and His hosts will give the victory. The hot-headed one came close to him and whispered, "Do not talk so much of humility and purity and death! Talk more about the sword! Up to the throne! . . . Who shall sit on thy right hand, Master?"

He pushed them aside, "Get thee behind me, Satan. I hearken only to the will of God. What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? He who will follow me must put from him all wild and earthly desires, and go with me to life or death, victory or defeat."

They turned and went to their homes.

He went on alone. A man pure, good, and holy, wrapped in sublime thoughts, in wonderful visions and dreams, set apart by his love for mankind and for the eternal and mysterious power which he called Father! Never was man so utterly alone; one man against a whole people, against

the whole of humanity. But the Eternal Power spread its arms around him. He resolved to go south, and there proclaim the kingdom of Heaven in the capital, bearing in his brave, fearful soul the power to meet all that might come.

What can stand against the soul of a man sublime and stainless?

As they journeyed southward, his eyes looking their last on the green hills and vale around the lake, crowds once more gathered around the helper and friend of men to hear his wondrous words. Now there was a new astonishment: the disciples did not conceal the secret they had learned. "He himself has said he is the Saviour! The Saviour for whom we have waited for eight hundred years!"

"The Saviour!"

"Was not the Saviour to be of an ancient royal house? Was he not to come in the golden panoply of war? Was he not to wield the sword and ride upon the storm? This man is good, ay, and holy; he speaks of mercy and of purity of heart."

Questions were asked and answered in feverish excitement. There was no wild outburst of rejoicing.

The clericals went to the Duke, who held a subordinate position in the north, and was always eager to find some way of ingratiating himself with the all-powerful imperial governor in the south. They roused him by saying, "Before he was merely a harmless enthusiast, but now that he calls himself a Saviour he has become a political offender."

Faithful adherents warned the hero of a conspiracy on foot against him, but he was already on his way south. There was reason for hastening his journey. The great festival of the Synagogue was just beginning in the capital; thousands of people assembled from all parts of the country, and their compatriots scattered in all quarters of the globe came too.

He would arise in the midst of the festival and declare,

“I am the Saviour. I . . . I shall bring to pass the kingdom of Heaven upon earth.” And then the Heavenly Father would appear by his side with more than ten thousand warriors from His Heavenly host. And if not he would come again, soon after his death, with the Heavenly host behind him. He sent a message breathing contempt to the Duke, “Tell the fox that I am healing the sick and the insane, and on the third day I reach my goal.” With the courage of despair, conscious of the shadows closing round him, he said, “I must go on my way today, tomorrow, the day after tomorrow, for they must rise in the capital whom God has inspired and set in flames.” His words entered in like nails into the hearts of his friends. “I must die; but I shall return in glory, clad with the might of God, to establish His kingdom.”

And so for the last time he journeyed through his home on his way south, with folded lips, in his heart foreknowledge of death, in his soul the courage of despair, keeping his way secret as far as he could, to reserve his strength for his entry into the capital. . . . But his companions went with him, behind him and before him, in joyous array, crying aloud, “The long-expected Saviour is at hand! The great transformation is at hand! The great day is come; not as we expected, but it is come. Wonders are taking place. Come and behold them.”

The agents of the Nationalists flew ahead like crows: “Men of the south, pillars of the Church, hold high your heads. . . . He is at hand, he is at hand, and he says he is the Saviour. The Saviour!”

A wild outcry rose from the temple roof. On to the south, hour after hour, onwards, through crowds, on lonely paths; as they went their souls inspired by his vivid words to the belief that they should stand armed and ready for the break of the glorious day of the kingdom of Heaven; out of the bloody dawn of his death. He told them of the farmer’s son who had left his home in the pride of his heart and gone out into the evil world, and, after wallowing in the

mire and falling upon bitter sorrow, returned home and been lovingly received there. . . . He told them of the woman who lost a fourpenny-piece and searched for it far, far into the night, and how her heart rejoiced within her when she found it. . . . He told them of the shepherd's long, long search for the lost sheep. He had a hundred sheep, but he searched till dawn for this one that was lost. How he rejoiced when he found it! Behold, of such worth is a human soul in the eyes of God! so does He rejoice over it! Take heed of your souls, that are so cherished. Take heed that they are worthy of the kingdom of Heaven, which is now drawing near.

The train that followed them swelled as they went on. One day passed, and then another, and the capital was no longer far away. Then the pious fools stepped once more across his path. They wanted to force him to weave a net for himself to hold him in its meshes, when he raised his hand and said, "I am the Saviour—listen: in the books it is written, as you know, 'If the man please he can turn away his wife. Get thee hence, woman; I will behold thee no longer.'" He looked down upon them. "Marriage means, ye are one for life."

He was the first to put the weak woman beside the man as his equal. . . . Women of the world, ye owe him much.

They stepped back in silence. He was greater than the ancient writings.

When they halted for the night the mothers came to him with their children in their arms and holding their hands, and asked him to bless them. The disciples, like all the people of their age, wanted to turn the children coldly away.

"Children? Away with them! Creatures of no account! Beat them, drive them back!"

He said, "In the kingdom of Heaven there are none of little account; all shall sit at the feast, all shall be filled. And the children above all! The children above all. They are full of trust, and therefore they are great in the kingdom of Heaven. Be as the children are! Come hither,

mother, come hither with thy babe." He took the children on his knee and kissed them.

He was the first to bring the children into the sunshine. He was the first to put the children beside the old as their equals. Women and children of the world! ye owe him much.

They went on for the third and last day.

The crowd grew, procession after procession filling the wide road on their way to the capital. Strangers coming from the east joined them. All had heard of the holy hero, and now heard more as they ran whispering together and marveling over his mien and the lofty purity of that face, in which already burned the knowledge of death like a beacon in a stormy night. The sea surged round him.

A rich young man knelt in the dust before him, "Master, what can I do to enter into the kingdom of Heaven?"

And he bent down to him and said, "Thou knowest the commandments: 'Thou shalt not bear false witness.'" . . .

"All that I have observed . . . since I was a child . . . but there is no peace in my soul."

He bent further down to him; the young man pleased him: he thought, "Here is a soul that belongs to Thee." "One thing is wanting for thy peace of soul: give all thou hast to the poor and follow me."

Then he arose, sighing deeply, and staggered away till he was lost to sight among the crowd.

"How hard it is for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of Heaven."

The crowd swelled, procession joining procession. The decision was near.

Two of the disciples came up to him, "Lord, promise us that we shall be thy lieutenants afterward."

He looked at them in trouble. "Are ye fain to die with me?"

"Yes, Lord, we are fain."

His eyes shone into theirs. "It shall be as ye say; ye

shall die with me for my sake, and afterward ye shall rule with me. But God alone can say who shall be second after me and third. . . .” He turned to the friends nearest him, “Ye must not let yourselves be called ‘lord.’ One alone is our Lord, our Father in Heaven. In the world they say: Lord, Lord; rule, rule; but ye say: Serve, serve, as much service as possible. Help and heal. Serve as I serve, who give up my life to free thousands from the evil and meaningless service of life, and give them happiness in the kingdom of Heaven.”

The streets of the little town outside the capital surged with the excited crowd. On the branch of a tree there stood a little man, a publican, who had grown rich with the money he had extorted from a poor and oppressed people. In his eyes was reflected the trouble of his uneasy conscience. “Woe is me, if the kingdom come now and my poor soul must stand outside, though it yearns for redemption.”

The Saviour saw the eyes and knew them for such as he could use. “Who is that man?”

“He is a rogue. A traitor, an accursed tax-gatherer.”

“Come down from the tree; I will eat with thee.”

He walked by him, stumbling and tumbling over his words. “Lord . . . thou wilt be my guest . . . thou art so gracious unto me. Lord . . . therefore will I give half my goods to the poor this very day, because thou hast been so good to me! Never, never will I cheat again.”

After a brief midday rest he went on his way on the slowly rising road that led to the capital, his disciples half in terror, half in secret exaltation; in front, behind, and around him the crowd of men that knew and honored him, burning with joy and expectation, wonderful visions in their souls.

In the village just outside there dwelt a family, known to him from former feast days; there he rested for the last time. An ass with trappings was brought out, and on it he proceeded.

The capital lay hid behind great wooded hills; but now,

near the bastions, the road turned round the last hill, and there before them lay the town, great and rich, with the mighty, ancient Temple in the midst, so vast that it formed a town in itself, with its courts and cloisters and canonries. He halted and looked down upon the town; as he gazed and beheld the houses, the Temple, the castle, and heard the murmur of the great rich city rise to his ears, there was borne in upon him the certainty of a tragic end to come. The sorrow of that moment, and terror for his dear home, overcame him, and tears sprang to his eyes. But only for a moment. "It is the will of God! His will be done. If their hearts are of stone mine is of diamond." As he turned to his followers his eyes looked as they had done in the north when he drove from him the evil spirits of doubt. They saw, and a wild outburst of joy broke forth. Garments were spread upon the way and the street was full of palm branches.

"The kingdom of Heaven is at hand! Help, Lord on high!"

"This is the kingdom of Heaven."

"This is the branch of the ancient royal stem."

"A time of joy in the land! Help, O Lord on high!"

Men and women ran and cried aloud for joy; children leapt and sang; crowds poured out of the houses and from the mighty courtyards of the Temple. They had long ago heard from northern pilgrims of his coming. Marvelous was the noise everywhere. "A time of joy in the land. Help, O Lord! The kingdom is at hand! Help us!"

The clericals stood by with faces white as death. Two of them pressed their way up to him, "Forbid this mad cry!" He looked at them in lofty scorn, "Were they silent, the walls would cry out."

The whole town was in an uproar. The governor and his mercenaries looked down from the citadel in horror to this mighty stirring of the people. There were some who asked, "Who is he? Who is he?" but the masses knew. "It is the pure and holy hero from the north. He says he is the

Saviour. He says that the marvel is at hand, the kingdom of Heaven is at hand."

There stood the vast and costly temple buildings, old and new; in the courts and in the halls the gay turmoil of the market, oxen and calves in long rows, there a herd of sheep, there birds in cages, there cartloads of grapes. Imperial gold was exchanged for the currency of the land at the shining counter of the money-changer. "Give the best of your money and your goods, O people. Give the sweat of your brows! Here! There—God is content with you; you are great in His sight."

Poor people! what a God is this; thy priests lay upon thee a double poverty; they take away thy daily bread and they corrupt thy heart so that thou canst not see the truth.

The man from the north knows another God; he does not want hands full of gold, but hearts full of courage, purity, and brotherly love; not churches and feasts and crowds of priests, but right and justice in the land.

The hero, the Saviour, stood in the midst of the Temple and raised his clear voice. The table by one of the money-changers overturned; the market women began to scream, sheep ran about, cages fell over. Terrified by his lofty presence and the force of his words, the sextons fled. "I say unto you in the name of God, 'My house shall be a house of prayer.' Ye murderers, ye robbers, is this your Hell?"

The town was filled with wild excitement. The deed was monstrous. The timid flee, the heavy tramp of the soldiers already in their ears. The rest of the crowds from the north rejoice. The priests stood in impotent rage at the doors of their houses. The righteous and the just looked at him with earnest eyes and closed lips. "This means death for thee, thou brave and stainless one."

The court was now empty of all worldly traffic; the Temple was pure. The kingdom of God established. Pure hearts are in unison with God, and their hands lie in their brothers'! The crowd pressed close to him. His soul

exulted. "I shall win them all, all! The way is straight into the joyful kingdom of Heaven. I need not taste the bitterness of death. . . ."

But in a remote court the clericals were gathered together. "He must die. That is clear. But caution! the stupid people are on his side. He must die . . . that is clear."

For two days he was king of the multitude, ruling in the courts and in the halls. The Temple was purified of worldly things; the feet of bearers carrying out the sick rang out clear on the stone flags. Raised to something almost superhuman in these hours of spiritual elevation by the consciousness of seeking nothing for himself, doing all as the servant of God, he wielded a marvelous power. Children stood in crowds between the pillars, shouting out the cries by which men had summoned the Saviour of old; thousands lay at his feet; fresh crowds listened to his words, rapt by his wisdom and goodness, slaking the thirst of their famishing souls. For centuries the high places of the land had been filled by mere shadows of men, mere tools of corruption; never by a man genuine and pure of heart like this one.

"How genuine he is! how pure! how simple!"

"Yes, the Saviour must be such a man."

"A scion of the ancient kings."

"He is not descended from a royal race."

"Is he not?"

"Then he is an impostor!"

"That is not true; look at his face; listen to his words—can that be an impostor?"

Two elders of the Church appeared in the gateway, tall and dignified men, and approached him. "Make way there."

The crowd makes way.

They come up to him and say, "We ask thee with what authority art thou come?"

He looked at them in bitter scorn. "Tell me, had the hero who stood in the stream a year ago, preaching conversion, divine authority? or was he an impostor?"

They dared not say he was an impostor; the people knew him for a pure and true man; they shrugged their shoulders and went their way. Like the clang of steel there fell on their ears the parable of the evil tenants, "They killed the servants whom the householder sent, and the householder had one dear son . . . him also they killed. I say unto you, the Lord will give the vineyard unto other husbandmen."

The high priests were defeated; they were far removed from the people, immersed in the world of books; yet most of them were honorable men in the main. But now the black spies, the pious knaves, appeared again; how they rubbed their hands; what inspiration sparkled in their eyes! Inspiration, indeed.

"Master, we know that thou art true and carest not for any one, for thou regardest not the person of men. . . . Our mind is troubled, . . . tell us, may our pious people pay tribute to the Emperor? . . . you know the Emperor is a heretic?"

What now? If he said "No, no tribute," the imperial tax-collectors would seize upon him, and they would be rid of him so. If he said "Yes," the people would turn against him, for the tribute was thrice hateful, because it was heavy, because it went to a heretic, and because it went out of the country. If he had been a man of low aims! But his ideals were of a loftier sort. "Ye hypocrites, if ye carry the Emperor's money in your pockets, pay him tribute with it. . . . Pay and trouble no more about it. Think of your souls . . . see that they do the will of God."

So they, too, went their way.

In the evening some of the courtiers from the castle came to him, a strange mixture of frivolity and piety in their mien, such as is characteristic of such men. They had been discussing the events of the day at dinner and come to the conclusion "One must not treat so-called heroes too seriously." What did such men care for the condition of the

people? They came, smiling with a kind of inebriated pretense of piety. "Master, in the old chronicles it stands, if a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his widow. Now, suppose the woman married seven brothers in turn, in the resurrection whose wife shall she be?"

He answers shortly and sternly, "In the resurrection there is no marrying nor giving in marriage; they are as angels in Heaven."

Then a respectable man came up to him, desiring to know, in one word, for the comfort of his own soul and the souls of all those that stood there, what was the mysterious source from which as from a spring this pure and wondrous life should come. "Tell me, which is the first of all commandments?"

The Saviour turned to him and compressed into one word all the hundred commandments of the Church. "Thou shalt love God with all thy heart and soul, and thy neighbor as thyself; that is righteousness. Anything else is the superfluous and baneful invention of men. This is the great and first commandment."

The questioner's eyes shone. There were many, many shining eyes there.

But many indifferent, too. "My father and my grandfather were good men, and they contented themselves with the ancient precepts."

And many doubters! "It is a dangerous business; who knows what the issue will be."

"I have a house and a small field."

And here and there a mocker. "You will not enter the kingdom of Heaven." "I don't want to; it's too clean." "A strange saint, this." All these men faltered and then dropped out.

All the time the clericals were busy spying and prying. For two days he had preached; preached and conquered. What do such conquests effect? The whirligig of time brings round its revenges. The clericals were busy. "It is absurd. This the Saviour! Is he descended from a royal

race; is he not a craftsman from a corner of the country where they are all of mixed descent! and all sorts of strangers come pouring across the border."

He heard the conflict; he saw that all was lost if he could not conquer here. He told them it did not stand in the sacred books that the Saviour must be of royal race; but words were vain; this belief was fixed firmly in their minds. He had nothing to give to the animal instincts of men; there was nothing in his hands but godliness, purity, and truth, and this will not satisfy a people, not even for three days.

And the angels of the Lord came not.

They are busy compounding reason and folly, truth and misery, fear and blood; and gradually they conquer. He does not quail. More and more clearly he sees that defeat must come; he only grows firmer, more unbending; in his soul there grew, stronger and stronger, the mystic faith. "God is yet with me." He sought in the old books for all that could strengthen that proud faith in the midst of the terrors that lay round him like the terrible beasts of darkness. If death were to come, the books foretold resurrection and return; if not in three days, later; return with all the might of God! Then the kingdom of Heaven! He must believe, or he could not bear the burden. Thank Heaven for the words of the books.

That evening, as he left the Temple for the last time, his dispirited disciples looked at him with anxiety in their eyes. "Teacher, look at these mighty stone walls; they have stood for a thousand years; wilt thou, alone, attack them?"

Then he revealed to them the picture of the future outlined by his tortured soul.

"When I am dead then shall be bitter travail in the land. Again and again will the ancient foes attack the land from without, and false beliefs rend it within; children will rise against their parents; there shall be division between brother and sister. And all this shall be as a sign of the coming of the kingdom of Heaven upon earth. The son

of man shall come with might and glory from Heaven unto earth and bring to pass the kingdom of Heaven upon earth. Be not afraid! Endure! I shall return."

And they asked him, trembling, "When shall these things be?"

To that he can give no answer. "It shall be in your lifetime. Suddenly. Be on the watch. Watch and pray!"

And while he brooded and wrestled with his own soul—"Be strong! quail not—that is to betray thy Father in Heaven," strengthening his soul with wondrous dreams of the future—the clericals were busy plotting for his speedy destruction.

He had the true hero's belief in all mankind, and among the disciples there was one who was traitorous and weak. When he saw that things were going ill in the capital, the little faith and courage he had had deserted him, and "his opinions changed;" "scales seemed to fall from his eyes," and vanity reinforced the charge. He went to the men of darkness. "Give me so much," he said, "and tomorrow night I will lead you to a place where you can capture him without difficulty."

They listened to him without shame; no one leapt to his feet and said, "Away with the rascal; I cannot bear to look upon him." After a brief discussion they decided on doing the deed—today. No one came forward in his defense; no one cried out in his anxiety; not one of these shadows had the least suspicion of what they were destroying; they merely stared with the stupid eyes of fishes at the golden crown which had fallen into their pond. All were rotten to the core. Among all these ghosts the appointed victim alone had the breath of life in his frame.

Evening came. The behavior of the enemy and the disappearance of the scoundrel had warned the hero and his disciples to expect the attack that night.

For the last time he sat down to table with his disciples. It was an ancient custom to keep this day as a feast, with all the means at the householders' disposal. He passed



THE LAST SUPPER

From the Painting by Gabriel on Gabbard

of man shall come with angels and shall take the elect up into heaven and bring to punishment the wicked and the hypocrites. Be not afraid! Fear not! I shall come." "

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They listened to him without shame; no one leapt to his feet and said, "Away with the rascal; I cannot bear to look upon him." After a brief discussion they decided on doing the deed—today. No one came forward in his defense; no one cried out in his anxiety; not one of these shadows had the least suspicion of what they were destroying; they merely stared with the stupid eyes of fishes at the golden crown which had fallen into their pond. All were rotten to the core. Among all these ghosts the appointed victim alone had the breath of life in his frame.

Evening came. The behavior of the enemy and the disappearance of the crown had warned the hero and his disciples to expect the attack that night.

For the last time he sat down to table with his disciples. It was an ancient custom to keep this day as a feast, with all the means at the householders' disposal. He passed



FIG. 10
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round lamb's-flesh, broken bread, and wine in cups, while offering thanks in a short prayer, in which he recalled the gloom of past times when God had stood by them as their ally.

At first he spoke with some sadness of his pleasure in having been permitted by his enemies to enjoy the hour of peace in the celebration of this ancient custom. But when the first wine cup went round, the horror of his imminent doom rose hideous before him; looking at them he said sadly, "I shall not drink wine with you again; but when my Father's kingdom comes we will drink together thus in a pure and blessed land." Listen! is that the soldiers' feet? Murmuring a grace he broke the bread, terror in his heart. "Thus it shall be with my body; broken even thus." Once more the red wine flowed into the cup; he saw his own blood flow, and thinking of the old alliance with God, said, "I give my blood that God may make a new and stronger alliance with my people." They arose from the meal and went out into the night. Listen—is that the tramp of soldiers in the street?

He took the arm of his hot-headed disciple and said to him in a low, quick voice, "Listen; I know that the devil will try to tempt you from my side. I have prayed God earnestly that thou, the bravest of all, mayst not lose thy faith in me and my return. If thou recoverest from thy terror, strengthen thy brethren."

The hot-head boasted loudly, "I? terror? I am ready, now, this moment, to go with thee to imprisonment and death."

Then the hero said, "This very night, before cock crow, thou wilt desert me."

His soul quailed as he went on; the joy of the past stood out in bitter contrast to the sorrow of the present. "Do you remember how I sent ye forth, in the north? Did ye ever want for anything?"

They all shook their heads. "No, never."

"But now! Think; ye must be armed like soldiers."

“Two of us have swords.” But thus they turned off on that false track on which he must not stray, however, and sorely his soul longed for safety. He broke off quickly. “Enough of that.”

They came into an orchard and weariness came over most of them. They threw themselves down on the grass and slept. Three of the most faithful went on with him; but they, too, were sorrowful and weary, and sank down.

A feeling of utter desolation came over him and he begged them, “My soul is exceeding sorrowful; even unto death; abide with me.” They lay resting on their elbows, sorrowful and weary, unable to say anything. His weary, lonely soul turned from men to the Eternal Power, “Oh, my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me! nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt.”

Then turning to his friends, “I beg ye, watch with me . . . thou, my faithful one, wilt thou not watch with me?”

Again he turned from them to the Eternal, kneeling and praying. “If it be possible . . . not my will, but Thine. . . . Father, is it not possible?”

It is not possible; the unfathomable law of creation has decreed for man death and sorrow; progress is only gained by the sufferings of the best among mankind.

He knew it, and took his trembling soul in both his hands. “Not my will, but Thine.”

So he lay half the night through. And the report is true that he found consolation.

Then came the clang of arms. Amid the smoke of the torches stood the betrayer. . . . The swords flashed. The disciples fled.

They led him into the town in their midst, into the court of the high priest. And in the courtyard soldiers sat and lounged around the fire; servants came and went; all kinds of miserable wretches, dependents of the Church, had gathered together there by order. In the half darkness, at one side of the fire, a short colloquy went on, with much pointing of fingers.

“Thou wast with him.”

“I . . . what nonsense!”

“Thy speech betrayeth thee. Thou art from the north.”

“May I be accursed. . . . I have never seen him in my life.” He stood there, pale as death, with trembling hands. The high priests went by. He slunk out; reaching the gate in safety he went out into the dark street and wept bitterly.

Morning comes, and the elders of the Church assemble. The affair has been cunningly contrived; make him a political criminal and he falls into the hands of the civil power. “The State is our bailiff; its justice is speedy.” They asked him, therefore, one question only, “Are you the Saviour, the king of the people?”

The hero prisoner raised his head; in those pure eyes there burned a light that was not of this world. “I am he! and ye shall see me the Saviour, on the Almighty’s right hand, descended upon earth in a cloud from Heaven.” That was enough.

Day had broken. He was handed over to the watch and led into the imperial office.

The whole town was awake; crowds filled the streets. Many a fist was clenched; angry tears stood in many an eye; but the gate closed behind him; he was fallen into hard hands of fearful strength.

He was accused before the governor as a political offender. The governor, an elderly man, had seen strange customs in many lands, and accommodated himself readily enough to them all; like many men in high office, he had either quite forgotten, or never known, any respect for individual consciences. He looked at the accused before him and said, “You are the king of this people?”

“You are right.”

The governor looked at him again. “He seems to me a harmless creature; I shall let him go.”

But the pious rabble that stood crowded behind the pillars cried, “Crucify him, crucify him!”

This was the imperial punishment for treason. The condemned was bound or nailed hand and foot to an upright stake, and left to hang there till he died. Many thousands had perished thus.

The most important dignitary of the Church went up and spoke in low tones to the governor. He was really a traitor; he had a great following, especially in the north; if he let the man go . . . the Emperor was said to be very sensitive on the question of treason. . . . The hint was understood. The governor's advancement came before justice. The hero from the north was condemned as a revolutionary and pretender by the law of the State to be scourged and then bound to a stake until he died.

The blows of the scourge cut his flesh to the bone; he endured the extremity of physical and spiritual anguish. His strength was absolutely exhausted when the blows ceased; he could not even support the stake which he had to carry to the place of execution; a man who happened to be by had to carry it for him. Two men condemned to the same sentence for street robbery, were led with him to the place of execution.

They stripped him on the bare hillside above the town, laid him down and fastened him to the stake. Powerful hands seized him and raised him up. The soldiers offered him of their drink, but he did not take it; he was too weak. Some of the scribes and some people in the mob mocked at the dying man, and the two thieves also, "Thou art the king! help thyself, then!" No one knows what passed within him. He said no more. To the last he must have cherished a faint hope that his Father in Heaven would spare him the crowning bitterness. But no ten thousand angels came. Not one came. Not one of his disciples, not one of his relations was there. After he had hung there a few hours he died of loss of blood and suffocation.

Such was his life.

Such was his death.

He was the fairest of the children of men.

The scattered disciples had fled in twos and threes to the north to save their lives. Arrived there, terror-stricken and exhausted, they began cautiously to speak of him. He had certainly believed, he had said to them definitely, "I shall return! soon! on the third day! I tell you, I shall return, clad in divine authority."

Three days . . . eight . . . went by. He did not come.

"He must come. He cannot lie; he cannot be mistaken. It is quite impossible that any grave, however deep, should hold such a hero. How he loved God! How he trusted Him! Did he not say, 'Would a mortal father give the child, that asked him for bread, a stone? and should the Almighty, Whom he trusted so, give *him* a stone?' How he loved us! What a pure and gracious being he was; how he uplifted our hearts. Oh, Lord, what can we do without thee? Return, O Saviour, bring to pass the Heavenly Kingdom! We need thee so."

"He must return," said the old chronicles. "He must return," whispered men, looking around them with yearning eyes. "He must return," whispered the lake and the woods and the wind there where he had been only fourteen days ago. "I must see him again," said Peter, who had denied him, "or I cannot live."

"Listen! Did you see anything, Peter?"

Next day the first rumor arose. In the evening Peter had seen him walking along the beach, where he had walked so often; there in the darkness he had stood, a friendly spirit, his eyes fixed upon him.

The next day a new rumor spread from village to village. His old friends, the fishers, had been sitting on the beach that evening eating their supper of bread and fish round the coke fire. The fire blazed, the sea roared, the stars shone in the sky, the night folded them in her giant arms, and they spoke of him. "Do you remember? Then . . . yes, and that other time . . . what truth he had; what understanding . . . and how good he always was . . ."

a dear gracious being. . . . Do you remember how we sat here . . . here on the beach . . . at our evening meal round the fire, the fire blazing as it is now and the sea roaring; and he sat among us and prayed in his dear voice? . . . Oh, God. . . . Look, then! . . . Did you see? I have seen him! He stood there just behind you!"

Another evening three of his disciples were walking in the darkness on a lonely road leading to the south, in deep converse about him; they wandered on and on, children of an age where all the world was an enchanted garden and the night the home of mystery; the wounds of their souls burned, their love to the wonderful man glowed. . . . "And they saw him? Was it really he? He lives? He lives! Where is he now? It was about this time that they saw him; what does he look like? Dear, they said, and shining . . . yes, dear and shining . . . perhaps he is with us, invisible . . . suddenly there comes a flash of light, and he stands there by the tree. . . . Did you see anything? Oh . . . calm your fevered heart! . . ."

They came home with burning eyes; they had seen him. "He went past us in the darkness and disappeared."

There was no stopping now.

Since waking eyes might not behold him, the yearning eyes of faith, shining with passionate love, saw him. Since he came not in the clear light of day they saw his apparition in the darkness.

Weeks went by. . . . Since he came not in his glory he could not hold his place as a wandering light; the apparitions faded away like mirages in a few weeks. But the legends of the apparitions grew, expanding what had been seen.

Years went by; he never came; they still spoke of him. He had stirred their hearts.

Gradually there collected among the fisher folk and the moor dwellers a band of believers who accepted him as the Saviour and hoped daily, with glowing faith, for the day of his return to bring the Kingdom of Heaven.

Years went by. The band of those who spoke of him and believed in his return, grew, extending as far as the capital, and from there, through holiday visitors, to their compatriots in the great imperial city, including every country and every kind of superstition: Syrians and Egyptians, German soldiers and Greek workmen. They painted and decorated the story of the Saviour's life. These children of a wild and restless age dwelt in an enchanted world; when two or three were gathered together they whispered the legends of his life with beaming eyes.

And so the brave and simple life became more and more marvelous.

"I have been told by some one who heard it from one of the disciples that he walked upon the sea."

"Yes, and have you heard the story of how he commanded the storm?"

"Have you heard—I was told by some one who came from the place—that once four thousand people followed him across the moors? And he fed them all, just think, with seven loaves!"

"No; there were five thousand people, and he had five loaves; and afterward they collected twelve baskets of fragments."

"He raised a man from the dead."

"The greatest is that he himself rose from the dead."

"Yes, that is certain; he appeared to all his disciples."

"The watch over the tomb was broken up."

"He ate and drank with them. They ate fish."

"Once when I was at home for a feast I heard that he had appeared to five hundred people at once."

"He rose up to Heaven before their eyes."

"To Heaven? What will he do there? He is going to establish the Kingdom of Heaven on earth."

"Yes, he will return. He has only gone for a time."

"Yes, indeed, he is in Heaven now; else he was still among us, for he certainly rose from the dead."

All that they had desired in vain from the son of man, heavenly descent, a royal lineage, supernatural marvels, resurrection: all this was now attributed to him by passionate love, poetic fancy, and religious longing.

So they spoke and waited.

One year after another passed. They prayed as he had taught them to their Heavenly Father, "Thy kingdom come;" they lived pure lives and helped one another, happy in their longing.

Some of the disciples died.

And yet he had said, "I shall return in your lifetime."

They waited and waited.

He did not come.

And because he did not come as he had promised there was a danger that his followers might remain a narrow national sect; that his life had been lived in vain and would be forgotten; that the salvation of humanity, the glorious purpose for which he had died, might be lost. There was a danger that this gracious tender personality might float away like a perfume that is shed.

But a man of might arose, a strange, strong man, to be his preserver and his herald.

Not far from his home there dwelt a man of the same race, a Nationalist and clerical; a man of deep learning, wide and general education and experience and keen intellect. Yet he was diseased, through and through. In many passages in his letters to his friends he expounded the nature of his disease; he was tortured by nervous attacks, in which life appeared a scene of misery, horror and death, attacks aggravated at times to epileptic fits, during which he saw in a trance wondrous visions of heavenly glory and beauty. He was a little younger than the hero of the north and had never seen him.

With some of the educated men of his time and country he shared a very peculiar faith; that time of disturbance suggested strange theories to imaginative minds. His belief, passionately and ardently held, was briefly as fol-

lows: God, in the fulness of His eternal might, will send down from the heavenly regions the Saviour, an eternal and heavenly being. This eternal and heavenly being, who had been God's right hand in the creation of the world, greater and more glorious than the angels of God, will conceal his heavenly majesty in a human form. As the Saviour he will fight the evil men and spirits that possess this wicked world; will conquer them or perish. At the last he will conquer with the aid of God and His angels and free mankind from all evil. And this eternal heavenly being is coming soon; it must be soon. How full my life and the lives of all men are of misery, sorrow and distress. It may come any day. Heavenly being! gracious vision! Saviour! The Kingdom of Heaven! come, come; the world is ripe.

When this man, holding this faith, heard that there was a sect in the north which maintained that the Saviour had already appeared on earth in the guise of a carpenter, that he had been denied and killed by the pious authorities of the Church, but had risen again and would soon return, he was consumed by excitement and rage. It was impossible. *His Church* had denied the holy one sent by God? The righteous in the land had not recognized the heavenly being? . . . Calling for assistance from the State he hunted them down and persecuted them zealously.

But his faith gave him no peace; it was cold and meaningless; the mere skeleton of a faith, without the flesh and blood of life. Sick in mind and body he longed for this life. "Lord, send the heavenly being soon! Lord, how will he appear when he comes? How will he come?"

Pondering one day over the "false Saviour," he went along a lonely road, brooding in passionate aspiration. "Gracious and pure they say he was; unspeakably dear; he wanted men to be children of God; away with the external forms of righteousness. . . . Yes, that is true; such are his people. Their trust in God is wonderful, the joyful sense of being His children, with which they endure all that I lay upon them. And they are so gentle, so friendly to

one another. They have all, all that my poor soul yearns for in vain. . . . He was slain and rose from the dead . . . freed from this misery of flesh. . . . Their eyes have looked upon him . . . if it were true? Was he really the Saviour? . . . Oh, if he would only show himself to me! If I could see him, risen, a denizen of Heaven! Then I should be free from the burden of my body, then I should stand, uplifted, free and blissful close to the knees of God. . . . Oh, then! . . . ”

And, behold! as he went on, in an agony of indecision, one of his physical and spiritual attacks came upon him, and he saw the Saviour standing in the radiant glow of heavenly beauty and glory.

From this hour on he devoted himself with restless energy to preaching the hero. “He has appeared to me; he is the Saviour.” And he decked the hero, the true and simple son of man, with all the marvelous attributes of his imaginative faith. He was the eternal Godhead, the great eternal wonder of the world. He overlaid the humble simplicity of the son of man with sevenfold brocade, glittering and heavy.

The simple moor folk had known his mother and father, had sat at table with him, seen him in laughter and tears, in sickness and health; they had seen him doubtful and uncertain, stirred to annoyance and anger. He had walked with them the long sandy ways to the town; they knew that he was not the creator of the world, but a man like themselves.

This man, his poet’s eye in a fine frenzy rolling, had never seen him; he knew little of his life, and was little interested in it; he saw in him only the wonder of the world, dead and risen from the dead.

He cried, “Awake! awake! God has been in the world! Awake! He comes . . . he comes! Make haste! . . . tomorrow or the day after tomorrow he will come down from Heaven and pass judgment.”

His fiery eloquence not only persuaded the disciples and even the ancient followers; it convinced others, fellow countrymen and strangers. People longed for a great and conquering faith to harmonize their view of the world and coördinate its elements. In him gifted, courageous and inspired by a passionate love of right, his new belief and love glowed like some divine frenzy. His imagination knew no bounds; he knew the secret plans of God, the creation of the world, judgment to come—nothing was concealed from him. He erected a marvelous edifice of thought, strongly built and inter-penetrated with the fiery breath of love, that reached up from the foundations of Hell through the vaults of death, up to and even above the arch of the seventh heaven.

And so the noble simplicity of the human picture disappeared. The true man, striving and fighting upward through pain, was distorted into the eternal wonder of the world. The man who passionately loved his poor people and died for them in spite of hopes betrayed became the eternal Redeemer of mankind yet to be. His words, "these are by nature the children of God; they can do His will, if they will it also," were twisted to "these are corrupt by nature, powerless, the children of the devil; they only reach God by the help of a wonder." His words, "Feel thyself the child of God! Do the will of God! Whoso doeth the will of God is blessed," became, "Do this; but only if you believe also that the Son of God has died for you, are you blessed." His hope "that he should soon return to erect the Kingdom of Heaven upon earth" became the belief "that he would appear again as the Eternal Judge of all men, living and dead."

Only in *one* thing did he keep close to the pure and lofty son of man; like him he said that love of God and man came first of all.

He preached sermons glowing with passionate love of the eternal, heavenly being, and of God; and of the men whom

he so longed to save. He endured danger and trouble, mockery and abuse. For all his strangeness, he was a great and noble-minded man; and his courage was heroic. Up to the hour of his death he preached, "The Eternal One cometh! He cometh! and judgment with him!"

But he came not.

He came not.

Then the faithful accepted the conclusion that the time might still be far away. They took life more easily; abandoning the passionate belief that he might return every moment they looked forward to the calm hope, "After death we shall come to him and he will have mercy upon us."

In such a creed there was room for priests once more; they gradually forced themselves between the "Divine Redeemer" and men; the old juggling with human fears and human indolence began again; once more the easy priest grew sleek and rich. It all was as it had been when the hero arose. They collected the old chronicles over which he had so brooded in his youth; they gathered together four wonderful accounts of his life, and the epistles of his great followers, and a few other documents dealing with him; and bound up all these contradictory and discordant stories in a book, which they called "the Holy Writ," a book which they said, and most people believed it, had been written under the eyes of God Himself; a book which contained no error, admitted no contradiction.

The faith thus twice modified was both comforting and attractive. It gained more and more adherents. Even the rich and powerful found it tolerable, and this increase in numbers brought the great mass of the indifferent, so that the faith became the fashion and was accepted as the religion of the State.

Centuries passed. Priests and Synods amended and invented. Legends arose; miracles, effected by old and new saints, were reported and recorded. Great collections of laws were compiled. All these reports, these legends of

the saints, these compilations were added to the Holy Writ. The priests' corn was in flower; its fragrance filled the warm summer day far and wide. Human ingenuity was constantly at work upon the ancient Holy Writ, which was itself as much forgotten as if they thought that no one would ever trouble about it again. In the end, time, human ingenuity and human ambition made a cold and unreal abstraction out of the good countryman, the brave hero who lived the life of a true and upright man: a man who cherished the pure and wonderful faith of a child, and died in lonely despair; an abstraction, that sat above the clouds ruling the world in a garment of stiff gold. Beside him sat his mother, almost greater than he was; his poor, foolish mother! around him, clad in robes of silk, bearing themselves with pride and dignity, stood the wise old peasants who had once gone barefoot with him over the sands.

The eternal might is perpetually at work, working among men as much as among the stars or on the ocean.

So it happened that among the German people a man arose: a true German, full of passionate sincerity and vigorous life, of native power and wide education. As he grew to manhood he sought to set his soul in its true relation to the eternal might. He cast into the mud the mass of stupid contradictions with which the priests had overlaid the Holy Writ, and sat down to study the Holy Writ itself. The trumpet tones of Paul, that strange apostle, rang out clear and full; he heard him only. He did not wholly understand his frenzied vehemence; he adapted what he said. He took as the kernel of his faith the words, "Man is just and pleasing in the sight of God through his faith in the death and merits of the Son of God."

His piety and the courage with which he upheld his faith won for him half his countrymen. The northern part of Germany and the other Germanic races, in whose hands lies the future of the world, cast away the accursed collection of writings; their faith in the "Word of God," the "doc-

trine of the Church," as they called it, gave them a time of satisfaction.

It could not last; not more than three hundred years did their faith hold them.

The so-called "Word of God" or "doctrine of the Church" was founded on an error; it was internally false to history and to morality, in that it taught that the simple hero was merely the outward appearance which concealed the presence in the world of an heavenly eternally existent being, the Son of God and the creator of the world. This error made the doctrine based upon it empty, hard, and unreal. And the more empty and hard it grew the more it appealed to mediocrities, and the more it was regarded as immutable. Narrow-minded fools finally declared "The word of God and Luther's teaching shall never pass away."

And so in the course of the last two centuries the best minds of the nation, its greatest poets, thinkers and leaders, the young, the intellectual, the noble, the aspiring have turned away from this belief and the Church that represented it demanding that their Church should go before the people with a clarion voice leading them in the lofty path of freedom. The churches now stood in the road like two old market women in their broken carts, calling out to the people, but it went on and left them behind. It did go on! Who can name them all? Frederick the Great, Goethe, Helmholtz! . . . Greeting to you, our leaders!

The eternal might is ever busy in the thoughts of men.

Dissatisfied with the cold repulsive teaching of the Church, disturbed by the workings of the eternal in their souls, driving them to seek out God, a hundred and fifty years ago German men found courage and conviction to investigate the Holy Writ. They wanted to see whether the book were really a unity and infallible, as the Church maintained. It was a bold undertaking, but they declared, "We shall examine the book like any other."

For a hundred years a hundred good and true men of

learning continued the investigation, and as they did so it became clearer and clearer that the "Holy Writ" contained many errors, religious and historical, and a mass of inconsistent beliefs: there was much that was noble in it, much that was bad, much that was narrow, much that was contradictory. It was like a garden, a wonderful, varied, disorderly book. The brave men pressed their way further and further into the garden; through the long, rank grass and the tall trees. Further and further they penetrated, anxiously and with reverent hearts, seeking for the Holyland, the bourne of the human spirit. . . . Ah! listen . . . from the midst of the wide garden, hidden away in the mysterious mass of the green bushes, there came, soft and clear, the exquisitely pure voice of a nightingale. It sang with intense and penetrating sweetness, ending on a note of quivering pain, of the love of the Almighty and the divine nature of man.

In the time of Luther there arose in many German hearts a new and passionate search for the word of God, a new love for Him; in our own day there has arisen a passionate and new love for the pure hero who was hidden away under so many strange disguises. It was a time of eager and joyful energy. For a hundred years the brave German scholars toiled, in spite of the scorn and contempt of obscurantists and the depreciation of the anxious, to try and break through the hedge of thorns behind which the hero has slept in concealment for two thousand years. Awake, true hero! awake! Gradually, since many good men and true aided in the work and assisted one another, we saw his soul; six or seven of the most important incidents in his life were established; he stood there, a man.

He was a man. There are proofs enough. First of all: He said so himself. Second: In his thought he was a child of his time. Third: His character is remarkable. Fourth: He developed. Fifth: His nature was not wholly free from evil. Sixth: He made mistakes; he did not return, and the Kingdom of Heaven did not come to pass.

. . . He was a man. Wonderful as his goodness and wisdom and courage, neither in action nor in thought was he more than man. He was the fairest of the children of men.

And his beautiful human soul has given us this: faith in the divine dignity and lofty worth of every human soul; and, derived from this, faith in the goodness and nearness of the unknown eternal might; and, like good fruit from good soil, faith in the stern and beautiful tasks of humanity and its lofty destiny in the Kingdom of Heaven. Thus he brought to light the meaning and the worth of human life and gave it an eternal nobility.

We leave on one side all in him that was temporary, all that was mistaken; his belief in spirits, his miracles, his belief in his bodily resurrection and the immediacy of the Kingdom of Heaven. Even his morality, lofty as it is, cannot bind the children of a time so different from anything of which he could conceive.

We leave on one side all the doctrines which have been laid down from the time of Paul and the Evangelists on concerning God and the Saviour.

We put away the mother of God and the Saints, the Pope and the Mass — away with them. God has had them judged and sentenced to death by German science.

We put away the Trinity and the Fall, the eternal Son of God and the atonement by his blood and the resurrection of the body. Why should we believe such things? They cannot make us happier or better. And, moreover, what have such things to do with belief? They are questions of knowledge. Mistaken conceptions, German investigation has dismissed them once and for all. In their time they may have had a validity and a use for mankind; they may have served as a protecting frame for the precious picture of the Saviour; but they have no utility now. Away with the frame! Only ignorant men or hypocrites fix their eyes on

it now. Saviour, how beautiful is thy picture! how simple and childlike thy faith!

Certainly thy faith had little visible basis, little outward success. Thy "Father in Heaven" let thee descend into the abyss of dark despair and had no mercy upon thee. And how did men treat thee? the men whose dignity thou heldst so high? Ah, but within thy soul had a prize beyond all estimation, precious in that high and lofty faith that made thee so joyful, set such a light in thine eyes, such strength and gentleness in thy heart! Thy faith made thee the brightest star in man's firmament.

Therefore let the unknown eternal power be what it may, let it do with us what it will; thy faith, thou fairest of the children of men, is our faith! And *this* is our faith: we feel and we believe that the hidden and eternal power is good and true and holy. We approach it with a trembling childlike love, we trust it, we rejoice in it, we draw close to it. And in this relation we find a deep and peaceful joy; it teaches us a reverence for our own soul and the souls of others, an eagerness of eye and hand in the cause of progress, a mind ready to help others and a joyous hopefulness for the future of humanity.

And this faith is ours, not because he who first held it was an eternal and wonderful being or because he had any such authority over us. What has authority to say in such questions? How can one soul be responsible for others? Each soul must stand alone. It is ours because it corresponds to the highest elements in the soul. All my life long I have asked my soul, "My soul, you never cease to search for happiness. Tell me, then, my soul, what makes you calm and strong, gay and joyous?" And my soul replies, "The faith that the hero held. He was the true, the complete man, and therefore he discovered the true faith for man. Help me to hold it, eternal power, thou mysterious goodness, thou my Father."

Therefore rejoice, ye school children and teachers

throughout the land. You have still to puzzle your brains over the stupid knowledge that is useless and harmful and has nothing to do with faith; but it will all come soon to the waste-paper basket. Rejoice, ye, too, shall rejoice in Jesus the carpenter, the wonderful stainless hero; ye, too, shall bring into your lives his lofty, childlike faith.

Rejoice, young manhood of the land! The Church is fighting against reason, the gift of God, and against the noble joy of living. Here is a faith which rejoices in every triumph of science, which is in harmony with the lofty spirit of Greece.

Rejoice, scholars and artists! You have stood, shaking your heads over the marvel which the Church had set down in the centre of man's path; you went round about it, not knowing where to begin. Now there stands in the path a fearful, simple child of man looking at you with deep and truthful eyes. The path of mankind is lofty indeed, but human.

Rejoice, preachers of both confessions, ye whose minds are free and lofty. Not for long shall ye be compelled to proclaim a senseless universe, a petty and unjust God, an unhistorically distorted Saviour. Instead, you may proclaim with shining eyes the life, the deeds, the faith of the pure and true hero; and speak with prophetic eyes and voice of the future of mankind, leading it on to the blessed kingdom of God.

Rejoice, O State! The Church has used thee indeed; made thee her servant and her scorn; deceived and robbed thee. She had grown swollen with her secrets; but German investigation has torn her secrets from her. Is she to contest the people any longer, to rule it, to hold it back? Now each man can hear with his own ears the exquisite song of the nightingale, and interpret it after his own fashion.

Rejoice, O Christendom! All seemed lost for thee in our time. Thou couldst not have conquered the world with the "Pope" and the "Word of God." But China, India, and Japan will turn to the pure hero and accept his faith. If

they have souls like ours they will accept it, for it is adapted to the human heart; the heart needs it and opens out to it.

Rejoice, O my soul! Sit still a while and dream, rejoice! What light has been cast into the darkness of German thought! If the light hurts thee, my soul, thy eyes will grow accustomed to it, thou bird of the day! Dost thou see clear now? Dost thou see the land? Dost thou rejoice? What a Holyland! what a joyous future is before it! Sit still a while and look around and think. . . . Now, no more; now arise, and go about thy work thou joyful sad one, thou companion of God.

WILHELM VON POLENZ

By EDMUND VON MACH, PH.D.



OUNT LEO TOLSTOY once referred to *Farmer Büttner* by Wilhelm von Polenz as a product of love. Polenz loved life, loved the world, loved Germany, and above everything else his own little corner in the Lausitz in Saxony. Honest love is not always satisfied with everything, but it is so big that it can see beyond temporary and disagreeable manifestations; and so Polenz could detect the errors and foibles of men, and could describe them, without losing faith in the essential beauty of life.

He was a keen and almost impersonal observer. A pleasant smile about his lips revealed his kindness. From a pair of deep-set eyes, half covered by placidly drooping lids, he looked out upon the world with that calmness which betokens the man who is at peace with himself, the man who cannot be surprised, because the most unexpected thing is after all only another revelation of eternal truth.

Polenz was not tall, rather of medium build, well proportioned, except for the fact that his head seemed to sit somewhat too snugly on his shoulders. It was his head which at once attracted your attention and made you feel the importance of the man, but you could not have told offhand in which sphere of human activity Polenz had made his mark. A curious proof of the manysidedness of his character was given by an episode of his visit to the United States in 1902. An interview was arranged for him with the most famous educator of the country who, knowing that Polenz was one of Germany's big estate owners, engaged with him in a lively discourse on the agricultural possibilities west of the Mississippi. Himself a master of the written

word, he apparently did not realize until after the interview that he had met one of Germany's best writers, one of her poets in prose.

This position, however, is conceded to Polenz not only by the great reading public, but also by the most competent critics. Adolf Bartels, the editor of Polenz' *Collected Works*, recognizes only two contemporaries of Polenz as his equals, the lyric poet Detlev von Liliencron and the dramatist Gerhart Hauptmann.

Polenz was born in January, 1861, in Castle Ober-Cunewalde in Upper-Lausitz in Saxony, and received in baptism the names Wilhelm Christian Wolf, of which, however, he used through life only the first name, Wilhelm. His father was a chamberlain of the king of Saxony and enjoyed other aristocratic prerogatives. In the education of his children, however, he was thoroughly democratic. When Wilhelm was ten years of age he was sent to board with a Protestant minister who gave him his first instruction. Four years later he entered the *Gymnasium* in Dresden and remained there until graduation. He passed all his examinations, but did not like the kind of instruction given him, and therefore spent much of his leisure time in outside reading. Dickens, Turgenieff, Daudet, Dahn, Ebers, and Wildenbruch are said to have been his favorite authors. The seeming catholicity of this list indicates no uncommon turn of mind, because to German boys the great foreign authors are as accessible as their own writers, thanks to excellent translations and the absence of narrow-mindedness in the choice of books for the school libraries. Every large German school has its own library of fiction, carefully selected, which makes it easy for the boys to become familiar with the best literature, not only of Germany but also of other countries.

After Polenz had graduated from the *Gymnasium*, he served one year in the army, and then went to Breslau University to study law. Following the German custom he did not remain in this one law school three or four years,

as is done in America, but went from Breslau to Berlin and from there to Leipzig. In the meanwhile his facility with the pen, which had made him write several youthful plays while still in Dresden, and his innate love of literature suggested to him more and more forcibly that he cut loose from the gentlemanly career of a government official for which his law-studies were preparing him, and launch forth on the less secure sea of authorship. His family, however, were opposed to his wishes, and instead of forcing the issue, Polenz contented himself with attending, in addition to his courses in law, as great a variety of other lectures as his time permitted. Since he was naturally open-minded, the extent of his studies quickly made him give up the last vestiges of a dogmatic outlook on life, and broadened and deepened his general education beyond that enjoyed by most authors.

After passing his law examinations Polenz returned to Dresden to spend the required time in the law courts of the capital. Here, however, he fell in love with a young English lady, whom he married. In her judgment he had great confidence, and she removed his last doubt in his own literary ability. Since he was sure now that it was something more than youthful dissatisfaction with a strictly regulated career which made him wish for a change, he resigned his office, and made writing his life's work. Mrs. von Polenz was wealthy, and the young author could embark upon his new career without tasting the hardships of life, or being humbly dependent on his father.

He went to Berlin, and in his twenty-ninth year published his first large novel in two volumes, *Die Sühne* ("The Atonement"). It was well received, and at once singled him out as a serious writer in command of a distinctly vigorous but pleasantly simple style. The subject of the book was not unusual. Two people love each other, apparently in accordance with the decree of fate. Fate, however, has arranged matters badly, for the girl had married another man before her true mate put in his



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appearance. The story runs its course, as all such stories will, and the lovers pay the penalty for a brief moment of happiness. Similar tales had often been told, but few had abounded in such exquisite character sketches, or made us feel that we stand, in spite of our sympathy with these puppets of fate, on the side of those who condemn the standards of this boy and girl.

In Berlin Polenz came into close relations with Moritz von Egidy, the leader of the German ethical culture movement, and he became deeply interested in Egidy's efforts to convert Germany to a healthier and more useful Christianity than the existing churches offered. He also met all the young German writers who in their search after new gods neglected the good traditions of the older schools. A less discerning man might have irretrievably attached himself either to the few dogmatic conservatists or to the revolutionary iconoclasts. Polenz, however, saw in both only the natural, though contrasting, manifestations of a truth which is so big that it can never find complete expression in any one way. He also soon realized the danger besetting the writer who wishes to be true to life but who has no other pursuit than that of writing. If one never meets people in a natural way, and if their doings never affect one as man to man, one's vision is apt to grow distorted; moreover, if one wishes to do one thing well one should have other interests besides. For Polenz the natural additional interest was farming, for he had been born in the country and his ancestors had been landed proprietors through centuries. He, therefore, bought the country estate Lauba, and later moved to his old ancestral home Ober-Cunewalde, where he engaged actively in agriculture on a large scale until he died, on November 13, 1903, from the effects of an operation.

In the winter months, however, and on frequent other occasions he visited the centres of culture and traveled much, his last journey in 1902 taking him to North America. The results of this trip he published in his book

The Land of the Future, which reveals him as a keen and accurate observer, and a careful chooser of what is worth while in the information gathered from others.

The Land of the Future was his last book. It appeared thirteen years after his first publication and marked the close of a singularly active career, for in these thirteen years Polenz had published eighteen books. One more partly finished novel and a book of poems were published after his death by his brother.

Adolf Bartels divides the literary work of Wilhelm von Polenz into two great periods, from 1890 to 1898, with a distinctly German and somewhat personal flavor, and from 1899 to his death, when his books struck a more universal note.

Of the twelve works of his first period three novels stand out prominently: *The Pastor of Breitendorf* (1893), *Farmer Büttner* (1895), and *The Lord of Grabenhagen* (1897). Polenz describes in them separately the three forces for good or evil in a German country community, the pastor, the independent farmer, and the lord of the manorhouse. The scene is laid in all alike in that beautiful corner of Saxony where Polenz was born and where he lived his active and observant life. Freshness, strength, and finesse respectively have been claimed as the characteristics of these books, but this is only partly true, for Polenz wrote each scene in the style most expressive of his characters. In *Farmer Büttner*, therefore, where rugged farmers play the prominent part, strength prevails, but the picture of the Count of Saland is done with as much finesse as anything in *The Lord of Grabenhagen*. Tolstoy, who admired Polenz, used to speak of his "beautiful German," and undoubtedly had reference to the adequacy of his style. Polenz never wrote anything simply for outward effect or so-called charm of language, for he was a scrupulous observer of the dictates of what is called inner form. His style as well as his idea is appropriate to the material facts with which he is dealing. The gripping

intensity of *Farmer Büttner* is not entirely due to the author's true conception, but in large part to his singularly appropriate style, for it attunes the reader to the reality of the surroundings in which the old farmer lived. Many early painters knew how to reproduce the human form, but their men and women were wooden and lifeless, because they painted them without the envelope of air; and only in air men live. The linear perspective of these painters was good, but until the artists had learned the principles of aerial perspective, portraits of life were impossible. Polenz' aerial perspective is good, which accounts for the life of his characters.

In addition to his three great novels, Polenz published two others and several collections of short stories, and three dramas between 1890 and 1898. His first book, *The Atonement*, was followed by *Temptation* in 1891 which, like the two dramas *Prussian Men* and *Heinrich von Kleist* published in the same year, probably had been written, at least in part, before *The Atonement*. The critics have seen the influence of Guy de Maupassant not only in *Temptation*, but also in *Innocence and Other Stories* published in 1892. *Karline, Short Stories and Poems* (1894) contains studies of a moral nature not unlike the Gustav and Pauline episode in *Farmer Büttner* (1895). The same general note is struck, although more frequently tinged with religion, in *Purity*, another collection of short stories published in 1896. Two years later Polenz wrote *Andreas Bockholdt*, a tragedy of tremendous force, which, however, did not find favor with theatrical managers. Adolf Bartels tells us that Polenz felt deeply this neglect of what he knew to be a masterpiece. He could not understand it, but accepted it as another manifestation of the incalculability of the stage. In the same year (1898) he published the last short story of his first period: *The Forest*, in which he returned to the subject treated in his first book *The Atonement*. *The Forest* is chiefly noted for its wonderful atmosphere, or as one reviewer put it: "You can actually smell the trees in the woods."

Although the brief second period of Polenz' activity contained only four years, from 1899 to his death in 1905, and one of these years, 1902, was largely spent in America, Polenz published six books: *The Watch Tower (Lug in's Land, 1901)* a collection of short stories descriptive of life in his more immediate neighborhood; *Master and Servant (Junker und Fröner, 1901)*, a village tragedy of the eighteenth century; his book on America, and three important novels. The first, *Thekla Lüdekind (1899)*, is concerned with the woman question, the second, *Love is Eternal (1901)*, portrays the peculiar conditions under which artistic temperaments exist, and the third, *Loose at the Roots (Wurzellocker, 1902)*, reveals the life of several writers.

Two of his books were published posthumously, *Harvest Time*, a collection of poems (1904), edited by his brother, and the novel *Happy People*, which was completed in design, although several chapters had remained unfinished.

Adolf Bartels, the friend and editor of Wilhelm von Polenz, believes that the underlying motive of all the writings of Polenz was his deep desire to help his people find the proper way through life. If this is so, Polenz was wise in disguising his purpose. Not one of his books points an obvious moral, while all—especially his great novels—teach a better life only by giving the reader a deeper insight into life. The more men know, not only with their heads but also with their hearts, the straighter they will walk.

The wealth of characters, taken from every sphere of life, that pass through the pages of Polenz' books is enormous, but all are intensely and lovingly observed. In no instance, moreover, was Polenz blinded by his study of detail, nor did he forget that truth is bigger than any individual. He never lost his grip on essentials, and the final words of his last book are singularly descriptive of his own character, for he too "had turned his face to the sun and sent his soul to search eternity."

WILHELM VON POLENZ

FARMER BÜTTNER

TRANSLATED AND ABRIDGED BY EDMUND VON MACH, PH.D.

I



FARMER TRAUGOTT BUTTNER was going to church with his two sons. Three fine looking men they were. The farmer himself was in the sixties, tall and spare, clean shaven, of ruddy complexion and sandy hair turning gray, which he wore very long, as used to be the fashion. He was shod in heavy boots and walked with the swagger and unconcern which betokened the owner of the largest farm in the village. His strong, somewhat angular frame, which reminded one of a gnarled oak, was forced into a dark blue coat with long skirts. The tight sleeves prevented any freedom of motion, but, then, this was the same coat in which the farmer had been married, more than thirty years ago. He was not in the least troubled about the coat having grown too tight for his chest and shoulders. On the contrary, the resulting restraint was an excellent concomitant of that measured solemnity which seems to go with Sunday morning. On his long straight hair he had placed a silk hat which had not grown smooth with age, for it offered a rather ruffed-up appearance.

The farmer was walking between his two sons, Karl and Gustav.

Karl, the older, was as tall as his father, but carried more flesh than the latter. He, too, was clean shaven, as all thorough-going country folk are. His eyes were large, somewhat sleepy, and his cheeks full and rosy, which made him look like a big, kind-hearted boy. His powerful hands,

however, would have quickly quenched any desire to fool with him. Today he carried a thick hymnal in his hand, as did his father, and like him he was dressed in a long frock-coat, which is the proper garb for church. On his round head he wore a silk hat with a very broad brim. In short, Karl Büttner was the well-fed counterpart of Traugott Büttner, except that he was his junior by thirty years.

Gustav was very different from these two. He was a petty officer in a cavalry regiment. Possibly it was due to his smart uniform that his figure appeared lithe, and he himself quick and attractive. The contrast with his two stolid companions was greatly to his advantage. He was somewhat smaller than his father or his brother, rather sinewy and well built, and had a frank and most pleasing expression. Gustav moved along with conscious grace, fully aware of his good looks and the attention he was sure to receive from all the church-goers of Halbenau on this day. Frequently his gloved hand moved toward his blond moustache as if to make sure that the most important of all manly distinctions was still in its place. He had not been seen at home before this, with lace on his coat, for during this Easter visit he was showing himself for the first time to his friends as a petty officer of cavalry.

There was practically no conversation on the way to church. Only now and then an acquaintance nodded his head. It was Easter Sunday, and every one in Halbenau was astir. In the little gardens to the right and left of the village street, the first primroses were blooming, also narcissus and hepatica.

In church, farmer Büttner and his sons sat down in their old family seats in the first gallery near the pulpit. The Büttners had been among the original farmers of Halbenau.

During the singing and the lengthy organ interlude which gave one a good chance at introspection, Gustav looked about the little church. He knew every face he saw. Here and there he missed one or the other of the older people, whom death, he assumed, had called away.

Occasionally he even glanced to the aisle below, where the women were seated, but their gay headgear, caps and hats, made it difficult to recognize their faces at once. There were several girls or young married women with whom he had gone to school, or whose acquaintance he had made in the dance hall.

Until now, Gustav Büttner had carefully avoided looking at one definite spot in this section, for he knew a girl was sitting there who was sure to watch him, if she was in church at all. For nothing in the world, would he have wished to appear as if that interested him in the least. If he wanted to look where she had her seat, he had to turn his head sharply to the left, for she sat to one side of him, almost under the gallery. He controlled himself until the minister had given out his text; then he could stand it no longer; he had to know whether Pauline Katschner was in church.

He leaned slightly forward, anxious to be as little noticed as possible. There she was! And of course, at that very moment, she too had looked up at him.

Gustav blushed, and this annoyed him. It was too stupid! What business had he to trouble about the girl? What was she to him now? If one were to feel interest in every woman with whom one had had an affair, one might as well give up one's future. And above everything, Pauline Katschner!—He could not afford to show himself in town in company with such a girl. They would unmercifully laugh at him in the barracks, if he should appear with her there. She was not much better than a servant girl. Week days perhaps she even went about barefooted and in short skirts!

He assumed a haughty air, silently comparing his former sweetheart with the "ladies" whose acquaintance he had made in the restaurants and on the promenades of the provincial capital. In town, God knew, the simplest maid had better manners than any or all of the girls in his village. He heartily despised Pauline Katschner.

And once this girl down there had been everything to him!—

Suddenly he remembered his parting from her, when he had been obliged to leave home as a recruit. Then, as they kissed each other for the last time, both had thought their hearts would break. And again, when he had returned on furlough after having been away one year! What had he not done then from sheer happiness! And the girl! They had acted like people bereft of their reason. What had he not promised then, what assurances had he not given her!

He tried to drive these thoughts out of his head. He had been such a simpleton at that time, such a terrible fool! No one could keep what he had then promised. It was not binding. And more, she herself had not been faithful to him. The boy! what concern of his was he? Who could prove that it was his child! He had been away so very long.

Well, he had done with the girl! Let the people say whatever they wished. He did not care, if she complained, or wrote him cordial birthday letters, or sent him New Years cards! Such things could not move him. It was foolish. The ladies he knew in town were of another class, real ladies, who spoke well and who could waltz. What had he to do with Pauline Katschner, whose father had been a poverty stricken country laborer!

In the meanwhile the minister had begun to preach, and Gustav was trying to follow his words. He had not been entirely spoiled in the city, and had always been of those exceptional fellows among his comrades, who did not regard their obligatory presence at church as a fine opportunity for taking a nap. At home also, he had been accustomed to strict discipline in such matters. The old farmer set his family a good example, for there was hardly a Sunday when he was not in his seat in church, and he missed not a word of the sermon. He even still joined in the singing, albeit his voice had grown rather thin with age. Karl,

on the other hand, who was somewhat given to indolence, could not be kept from his nap in church, and soon after the minister had concluded the first part of the three enumerated divisions of his sermon Gustav noticed that his brother was peacefully sleeping.

When the service was over, the men gathered about the church door and remained there for some time. Farmer Büttner was pleased to notice the general attention given to his boy Gustav. Old men and young men surrounded the youthful officer, whose uniform recalled to many the years of their own service in the army, and to the older men even their experiences in the war. Farmer Büttner himself wore the medals of the last two campaigns, and even Karl had served his three years in the army, but no other Büttner had ever received a commission.

Gustav had to answer many questions. Had he not about enough of it, and when would he return to Halbenau, he was asked. He replied, with that self-consciousness which the uniform gives to the common people, that he was still too well pleased with his life in the army to think of exchanging his sword for the pitchfork.

Two women advanced in the direction of the men, an older one with a gay shawl over her head, and a younger one in a black hat on which there were some bright pink flowers. Gustav had recognized this hat from the gallery. Years ago, when he was friendly with Pauline Katschner, he had bought her this hat in town, and given it to her when he had come home on a visit.—The older woman was the widow Katschner, Pauline's mother.

“Howdy, Gustav,” said Mrs. Katschner. “How do you do?” he replied, frowning and without giving her his hand. The girl had dropped her head; she was blushing and looking at her hymnal. “Well, Gustav, you are back again in Halbenau?” the widow said and laughed to hide her embarrassment. “Yes,” Gustav replied frostily, and turned to a young fellow with an unimportant remark.

The women hesitated a few minutes, probably expecting

to be addressed by him. Then the girl, who seemed to be on the verge of tears, drew her mother away. "Come along, ma, let's be gone —" Then the two women left.

"You don't seem to know her any more," one of the fellows mockingly remarked to the young officer. And he shrugged his shoulders and rocked his body, and tried to look as unconcerned as could be.

Gradually the men began to move off, ten or twelve young fellows, school friends of Gustav, going together. In the inn they had a glass of beer, standing, and lighted their cigars, then they proceeded along the village street. One after the other they entered their houses, for it was dinner time. They agreed, however, to meet again in the dance hall toward evening.

The Büttner farm was situated at the extreme end of the village. The farmer and Karl had gone ahead, Gustav was just turning into an alley which offered a short cut home, when he heard his name called.

He turned. Pauline Katschner was only a few steps behind him. She was out of breath from having run fast.

At first he assumed a forbidding air, and gruffly asked what she wanted. "Gustav," she cried and stretched out her hand to him, "don't act like this! You are behaving as if you did not know me any more."

"I have no time," he said, and turned as if he wished to pass her.

But she stepped in his way. "Don't, Gustav," she said, "don't treat me like this." She stood before him with heaving breast, and looked straight into his eyes. He could not stand her glance, and looked away.

Then she took his hand saying, "You might at least have shaken hands with me."

This was no way of doing things, he replied, to follow him, and to address him in broad daylight. She should take herself away. He tried hard to appear exasperated with her.

Pauline did not seem to be afraid of him, for she stood

close in front of him where with one movement of his arm he could have brushed her aside. But he did not raise his hand.

“Days and years have passed, Gustav, since we last saw each other, and you have replied to none of my many letters. You are really acting as if I were a bad girl, Gustav!”— Her eyes suddenly filled with tears.

Tears! That would have been the limit! He hated women’s tears. But then he was already half won, just by seeing her and hearing her familiar voice. What memories did not her face recall to him! He had been so happy with her, happier than with any other, and had she not been his first love! This gave him a peculiar feeling, a kind of homesickness and gratitude for all her goodness to him.— That she had to cry just now, was hard. He saw himself as a wicked and cruel man, and was annoyed. He feared it would be difficult to get rid of this girl again.

She wiped her tears with a corner of her black apron and asked, “What have you against me, Gustav? Do tell me, just tell me what makes you act like this!”

He chewed on his moustache and was glum. It would have been easy to tell her point blank that she had had an affair with some one else in the meanwhile. But at this moment and under the steady gaze of her faithful eyes he suddenly saw how shallow his suspicion had been. Really, he had never fully believed the story which others had told him. It had been for him only a welcome pretext to get rid of her.

Now, as she stood before him, a head shorter than he, fresh and healthy, like an apple, with her kind big eyes, and her snow-white teeth, he was again under her spell.

“I have had to be so angry with you,” she whispered and swallowed hard. She always cried easily. Between tears she knew how to look at him tenderly and coaxingly like a tame dove. Nobody had taught this girl these tricks, but the cleverest coquette had no more efficacious means of winning the heart of a man than had this simple child of nature.

Suddenly she dropped her head, her cheeks flaming, and asked in a still lower tone: "Don't you want to look at your boy at all, Gustav? He is almost a year old."

The young man hesitated, deeply moved. He fully knew that this moment would determine everything. If he did as she wished and went with her to look at the boy, then he confessed himself to be his father. Until now he had not done so, fortifying himself behind the excuse that one could not really know whose it was.

Pauline had raised her head and her eyes conveyed her request. Then she said, and her voice was sweet and girlish: "I have told the boy so much of you. He cannot yet speak, but 'papa' he can say.—Come on, Gustav; do at least look at him!"

She took his hand and drew him in the direction she wished him to go. "Come, Gustav, come with me," she coaxed while he still hesitated.

At last he followed her. And then he was angry with himself for having yielded. He did not understand himself. There was no more daring horseman among all the subalterns of his garrison. He loved to train young horses, and yet he could be so soft, that his sergeant major once had called him a "milksop." That had been when his chestnut bay had developed a spavin and had to be shot. Then he had wept like a child.

Pauline, it seemed, knew how to reach him. She could appear as if she did not notice anything, when she wished. She acted as if there never had been an estrangement between them. She uttered not another word of reproach, for she was more than anxious to keep him in good humor. Her aim was to give him no time to recollect himself. She spoke of her mother and of her boy, and told him many jolly things, and thus brought him to her door, before he really knew that he was going with her.

Pauline lived with her mother, the widow Katschner, in a thatched cottage, one of the smallest and most insignificant dwellings of the village. There was only enough land

for a garden, not enough to live on and too much on which to die outright. The two women earned a pittance with their handiwork. Pauline used to work at the manor house, but had not done so of late.

Pauline had her own little room in the rear of the house. Every step here recalled vivid memories to Gustav. By this low door, through which he could not pass without stooping, he had entered, when she first had admitted him to her chamber on a hot July night. And how often had he not come and gone since! By day and by night before he entered the army, and even after that when he was at home on furlough.

Few changes had been made in the little room during the past year. Everything was scrupulously clean and orderly, and there was a definite place for everything. Here stood her bed, the wardrobe was close by, and next to this the chest of drawers. The mirror, with a crack in the lower left hand corner hidden by a New Year's card, hung in its accustomed place.

Gustav's eyes took in everything almost involuntarily, but they failed to find what they sought. Pauline followed his looks and smiled. She knew for what he was looking.

She stepped to her bed and petted down her fluffy pillows. Close to the head board, almost lost in the featherbed there lay something round and dark.

She beckoned to him with her eyes to approach, and he understood that the boy was asleep. Carefully he raised his sword from the ground and tried to step softly. "There he is!" she whispered, and smiled happily while she smoothed the pillow on which the head of the little fellow was resting.

The young man stood before his boy and was embarrassed. The sight took away his breath. He had not even had time to remove his helmet, and hardly dared to look at the baby. This then was his son. He had a child!—The thought was rather oppressive, benumbing. He felt restrained by a sense of strange responsibility.

She came to his assistance, relieving him first of his helmet, and then gently raising the boy from his pillow. She herself guided his big hand that he might touch his own flesh and blood. Finally she nestled close to him, and asked how he liked the child.

He did not reply, for he stood helpless and astonished before his offspring.

Suddenly a smile chased across the baby's face and he moved his tiny fingers, still fast asleep. And not till then did the father realize that this little bundle was really a living thing. This thought touched him to the quick.—Such a little thing with such a tiny body was alive and would be a man some day—his son! Pauline and he had given him life; this new creature was part of their own flesh! The eternal miracle of creation in its fullest significance flashed across his mind.

Gustav felt the tears rising to his eyes. He swallowed hard, and blew his nose. He gritted his teeth and mastered his emotion, for he would not have wept here for anything in the world.

Pauline, in the meanwhile, was busying herself about the room. She had taken off her black hat with the pink flowers, had rolled up her sleeves, and put on a white apron. She was even prettier without her hat, for her singularly beautiful blond hair showed to its best advantage. She wore it parted in the middle, as is customary with country girls, and had gathered it into a veritable nest of little braids on the back of her head. Her black dress was the same dress in which she had gone to her first communion, and only by letting out its seams and adding a bit at the bottom had she managed to have it still fit her well developed womanly form.

At last she tripped back to the bed, saying the boy had slept enough, he needed his bottle. She awakened him by gently raising him and kissing him on his forehead. The child opened a pair of big dark eyes, looked about greatly astonished, and immediately began to cry. The

father, who was unfamiliar with such sounds, looked greatly perplexed.

Pauline, however, told him that this did not mean much. The child was hungry. She took a tin can from the chimney cupboard. The little room had no stove of its own, but only a chimney which was heated from the next room. In the can there was a little bottle of milk. Pauline who had the child in her arms raised the bottle to her lips, tasted the milk, and quickly attached a rubber nipple. Then she put the boy, who with looks and hands was eagerly asking for his well-known bottle, back on the bed. Finally she placed the nipple between his lips, whereupon his crying ceased, giving place to a comfortable gurgling sound.

Gustav drew a breath of relief. The incident had made him feel uneasy, and while Pauline was proudly happy, he could not avoid a sense of oppression. The girl stooped over her baby who was giving his whole strength and attention to his food, and arranged his pillows with that tenderness which only a mother can show.

When her boy was at last thoroughly at ease, the thought of Gustav reëntered her mind. She dusted a chair for him with her apron and asked him to sit down. He had not yet said one word about the boy. Now she urged him to express himself.

He thought the boy seemed to be strong and healthy. But this did not satisfy her motherly pride, and she, in her turn, began to sing the baby's praises. Was he not remarkably well formed and big? She even maintained that he was marvelously intelligent, and cited as a proof, several of his little tricks. He was big for his age, and had been a giant even at birth. He had made her suffer much when he arrived, she added under her breath, lowering her head. Then she related that she had nursed him herself until he was six months old.

Gustav only half listened to these stories which were of such importance to her, for he had his own thoughts. What was to be done now? He had confessed himself the father

of this child. Since he was a decent fellow, he would have to assume its care. He had always despised those fellows who desert girls and children for whom they are responsible. Once he had even promised Pauline that he would marry her. When he looked at her, taking care of everything, neatly and capably, and always pleasant and cheerful, the thought of marrying her was rather agreeable to him, for did he not know that she was a thoroughly good girl!

But why marry at all! He recollected the misery of most of the households of married subalterns. The very thought was enough to make him shiver.

And there was another difficulty. He would have to break with several "ladies" in his garrison. All these considerations gave him a headache.

Then Pauline began to speak of her own affairs, and how sad and lonely the last winter had been. Her mother had been sick in bed for weeks, they had had no money, and no man near to help them. The care of her child had prevented her from doing much else. To cap the climax Gustav had no longer written her; and now she asked again what had been the matter with him. He avoided a reply and asked instead why she no longer went to work at the manor house.

There had been a good reason, she said, and then with lowered voice, as if she feared the child might understand her, she explained, that the young gentleman there had wanted to take liberties with her. For this reason she had decided to stay away from there, although she could ill afford to do without her wages.

Gustav pricked up his ears. This was the very story of which he wanted to know more details, for he had been told suspicious rumors coupling her name with that of the young gentleman. What had happened, he asked, how far had matters gone?

Pauline was deeply moved when these things were mentioned. She did not mince her words in relating the

offensive behavior of the man who had tried to take advantage of her position. Her looks said more than her words, and everything proved to Gustav beyond a doubt that she had remained faithful to him.

Gustav let her feel how glad he was that these stories had been baseless, and she learned for the first time that he had known of them. This then was the explanation of his disapproval of her. But who could have carried the slander to him?

He only said that "people" had spoken to him about it, and did not reveal to her that the aspersions had come from his own family, who had never looked with favor on his relations with Pauline.

Pauline took the whole affair much to heart. She was grieved that he should have suspected her for so long, without speaking to her about it. She suddenly grew very silent, for she felt the injustice and humiliation of his attitude toward her as women are apt to feel such things, deeply. Quietly and without looking at him she busied herself in the back of the room.

He did not feel easy either, for he knew too well how much he had sinned against her. He was embarrassed and studied the tips of his boots.

There was a pause in which one could distinctly hear the regular breathing of the child who had finished his bottle.

Suddenly Pauline walked to the bed, and taking the boy from the pillows said, "But you haven't had the boy in your arms at all, Gustav," and with these words she held the baby out to him.

He took the child as he would have taken a bundle, while the boy fixed a vacant stare, as babies do, on the glistening lace on his father's collar.

"He has also been baptized," Pauline added. "I wrote you at the time, but you sent him no gift. The minister was angry at first, and scolded much, that such a thing had happened to me."

In the meanwhile, Gustav had settled matters with himself. He would recognize both the mother and the child.

The baby reached with his hand for his father's moustache, but Pauline gently pushed his little hand aside. "Everybody says he looks just like you, Gustav; your very image."

For the first time, the young father smiled at his counterpart. Pauline had taken his arm, and her looks moved happily from Gustav to her boy. This little rascal had at last taken hold of his father's moustache and gave a shriek of joy.

They were the picture of a happy family.

II

Gustav Büttner reached home much too late for dinner. The family had finished some time before. The old farmer in shirt sleeves sat in his corner snoozing, while Karl was smoking his pipe—he really let it go out only during meal times. The women were busy clearing the table and washing the dishes.

Gustav's mother expressed her surprise that he had stayed so late, for it had not been his custom, she said, to frequent the inn on Sunday mornings. Gustav accepted this reproof with good grace. It was not necessary for his family to know what had happened.

He took his seat silently on the wooden bench before the big square family table. Then he unbuttoned his army coat to make room for his food, while his mother brought the dishes from the hot closet.

She was an easy going woman, in her fifties. Her face might have been very pretty in her youth, but since then she had developed a double chin and lost several of her teeth. She looked amiable and kind-hearted. Gustav resembled her more than any of the other children. Her movements were slow and rather stiff and awkward. Rheumatism, the greatest evil of country folk, often troubled her.



MAX LIEBERMANN

WOMAN WITH GOATS

One of her daughters offered to assist her, but she wanted to have the pleasure of serving her boy herself. The young officer was her favorite child. Placing a covered dish on the table and standing before him, arms akimbo, she said smilingly: "Well, Gus, attention!" Then she raised the cover, and there were pork and dumplings with stewed pears. "Your favorite dish," she laughed at him, nor did she take her eyes from him as he helped himself liberally. The loving mother seemed to relish every mouthful her darling ate. They did not speak. You could have heard his tin spoon strike against the earthen dish, for Gustav did not trouble with a plate. The old farmer was snoring in his corner, and Karl was on the best way to follow suit, in spite of his pipe. In another corner of the room, where the huge stove stood and the broad bench in its cosy recess, the younger women were busy with the pans and dishes in a steaming tub of water.

The farmer had two daughters. The third woman was the wife of Karl, the oldest son.

The Büttner girls were very different in appearance. You would hardly have taken them to be sisters. Toni, the older, was of medium height but very strong with a broad back. Her round face, with her red lips and cheeks, was pretty, largely owing to her health and youth. She was the typical peasant beauty with her full bosom and strong body.

Ernestine, the younger sister, had only recently been confirmed, and had hardly yet grown to woman's estate. She was slender and delicate in appearance, which is unusual in the country. But she was muscular and by no means weak. Judging by her quick and graceful movements, she was clever at any work. She could do more and do it more easily than her sister.

Out of respect for father's nap, they avoided making too much noise with the dishes. Therese, however, the daughter-in-law, seemed to trouble little about the old man. She spoke in a deep, rough voice with that gurgling intonation characteristic of those who have an incipient goitre.

She was tall and thin and had a long, pointed nose. Her cheeks were pale, but her bones were strong and her neck very thick.

In taking the clean dishes to the cupboard she had to pass her husband whose head had dropped to his breast, while his long pipe was resting on his legs. She roughly knocked against him exclaiming: "There is no need for you men-folk to sleep most of the day, just because we women are working ourselves to death. That would be a nice world. Wake up, Karl!"

Karl jumped up and looked about him in great confusion. Then he took up his pipe and began to relight it, but soon his eyes closed again, while his better half went to and fro grumbling and scolding.

Therese's wrath was not due to her husband's drowsiness, for she was accustomed to it, but to the fact that the choicest bits were given to Gustav by his mother. She did not like this brother-in-law, whom the old people preferred to his older brother. Possibly, she also felt that Gustav was superior to her husband in many ways, and this made her jealous. Thoroughly angry she whispered to the other girls — in so far as you could ever have applied the word "whisper" to her — "Mother is again stuffing Gustav, as best she can!"

At last Gustav ceased eating and pleased his mother by having cleaned the platter. He stretched himself, yawned and remarked that such food, he was sure, could not be had in the barracks.

In the meanwhile the farmer had waked up. "Has Gustav been here?" he asked, looking about him with sleepy eyes; and when he learned that his son had already eaten, he rose and said that he wished to take a walk over the fields with Gustav.

The young officer was ready to join him. He never knew how to pass the long Sunday afternoons at home.

Karl left the room in company with his father and brother, apparently to go over the farm with them. But

he soon disappeared, for he had only seized the opportunity of making his escape. He wished to continue his nap in the hayloft undisturbed by his wife.

The farm consisted of three buildings, built in a square with the open side toward the south. The living-house, an ordinary structure of wood and sundried brick, with a woodshed attached, used to have a thatched roof, which the present-owner had exchanged for one of tiles. The wooden beams were painted black and the big squares of sundried brick white; the attic windows, like eyes, pierced the roof under big arches, and the aspect of the whole house was orderly and friendly, old fashioned and substantial. The house had been banked for the winter with moss, leaves and sand from the woods, and this girdle of warmth had not yet been removed. The house was well guarded, and you could see that the people who lived here, loved and protected their hearth.

Another long and high roof sheltered the barn and mows and two threshing floors, while a third building contained the stables for the horses and the cows and the piggery. Both these buildings still had old-fashioned thatched roofs.

They were old, but well kept. You could see that generations of good and industrious managers had been at work here. There were no cracks and every hole had been closed betimes.

The manure heap was in the middle of the courtyard with the pump for the liquid manure close by; and into one of the gables of the barn, a pigeon house had been built in the shape of a little castle, where the doors and windows took the places of ordinary pigeon holes. A circle of sharp iron barbs kept out the beasts and birds of prey. In the open barn you could see carts, hay racks and other wagons, while their poles stood in orderly array in the courtyard. The ladders were hung under the projecting roofs; wood, split and sawed for the kitchen, kindling and brush were stored in the woodshed. In addition there was a place in which to slake lime, and close by, a pile of sand.

There were also the appropriate stones on which to sharpen the scythes.

Everywhere the useful and necessary things had been attended to, as they should be in every well-kept farm, while the comfort of the owners also had received attention. A small garden had been made on the south and east sides of the house, protected by a wooden fence. There Mrs. Büttner raised vegetables and useful herbs, and also a variety of flowers, especially those that were noticeable for their bright coloring or fragrance. A touch which added considerably to the splendor of the garden consisted of shining glass balls mounted on gaily painted sticks. In one corner, there stood a simple wooden arbor over which gaudy beans twined in summer time. There also was a grassy orchard, and the trees, judging by the size of some of them, were well nigh a hundred years old.

The door of the house was especially pretty. Three smooth stone steps led up to it, and the jams and lintel were also of granite. On a block over the door, this inscription had been carved:

“ Securely men build earthly nests
Where they can sojourn only as guests,
And give no thought and not much care
To what will be their lasting share.”

Gustav and his father went from the house straight to the stables without exchanging words or looks, for here the most interesting possession of the farmer was to be seen; a two year old bay mare, which Büttner had recently bought. This was already the third or fourth visit which the young officer was making to the new horse, although he had arrived only the previous evening. He had even asked to have the horse taken out-of-doors that he might inspect her gait. But he had not yet expressed an opinion, although he knew perfectly well that his father was waiting for this.

Even during this visit, after having carefully examined the leg muscles and sinews of the mare, he said nothing.

The Büttners were a peculiar lot, in that nothing was more difficult for them than to express themselves freely to one of their own people. Frequently they silently carried about with them for weeks their thoughts on the weightiest matters. Every one found this burdensome, but their mouths remained sealed until iron necessity or some accident loosed their tongues. It was almost as if the members of the family were ashamed to discuss among themselves matters which they would have mentioned with greater ease and frankness to a stranger. Perhaps this was because each one knew intimately the inmost feelings and wishes of his next of kin, and realized that his own ideas were equally as transparent to the others.

After having sufficiently petted and stroked the mare, and having renewed her bedding, father and son stepped out into the courtyard. There had been no noticeable changes since Gustav had last visited the farm, beyond the new little pigs and calves, and these Gustav had inspected with his mother before going to church. The two men, therefore, left the courtyard without stopping anywhere else.

The farm consisted of a long and narrow strip of land which extended from the village to the woods. The buildings were on its lower end. From the woods belonging to the farm a little brook ran down, on the banks of which Büttner had his meadows. The fields were cut by a broad road with old and deep ruts, partly overgrown with grass, which extended from the barn to the woods.

Father and son proceeded slowly, each on his own side of the road. There was no need to hurry today, for there was no work to be done. They did not speak, because neither expected the other to speak first. At the several divisions of the field, the old man stopped, giving his son a slanting look each time, as if to challenge him to an expression of opinion.

Gustav was by no means indifferent to what he saw, for he had been born and brought up in the country and knew

every square foot of the farm and loved it. His help in the management of the farm had been sorely missed by his father since he had joined the army.

Karl, the future heir of the farm, was not half so valuable as a laborer or a farmer as his younger brother.

They had surveyed several fields in silence, when Büttner stopped before a clover field. Pointing to the heavy stand of reddish green clover, he said: "Such clover is found nowhere in the neighborhood. No other peasant in Halbenau has ever had such a stand. Even in April a hare can hide itself here."

He stood there with his hands behind him, his legs comfortably apart, and his old honest weather-beaten face glowing with pride. His son pleased him greatly by declaring that he had never yet seen better clover at Easter time.

When they had sufficiently examined this field, they slowly continued along the road. The silence had been broken, and Gustav began to tell of his experiences. He had seen much during his manœuvres and army exercises, and since he had kept his eyes open, he remembered what he had seen and learned in other parts of the country. The old farmer was told a good deal of modern machinery and new ways of doing things, which his son tried to describe to him. "Indeed, indeed," the old man said over and over again in his astonishment. Gustav's account seemed to him to be almost incredible. Especially skeptical he was at the tale that a machine had been invented which could tie sheaves. He could not understand this. Sowing machines and threshers, that he could believe, for he had actually seen some, but that a machine should pick up sheaves and bind them—! "If that's so," he said, "a fellow 'll soon come along with a machine to plant potatoes or to milk cows. Well, I'll be—! If that should happen, we small farmers might as well give up now as later. Times are hard enough for us as they are. The noblemen are oppressing us, and the dealers are skinning us. If in

addition, everything is to be done by machinery, that 'll be our finish."

Gustav smiled. He had got rid of many peasant prejudices during these last years, and tried to convince his father that the new inventions were not at all harmful. On the contrary, people should use them and benefit thereby.

Büttner was immovable, although he loved to listen to his boy, who had learned in town a lively and clever way of expressing his thoughts. Unable himself to formulate a finished sentence, he was secretly happy and proud of Gustav, but he did not waver one particle from his original position. These new things, he said, were not good for the little man, for they spoiled a farmer, if they did nothing else.

Thus conversing, they had reached the woods, where the fields ended in a swampy meadow boarded by a growth of scrubby trees. A few solitary pines rose behind them, but most of the ground was covered with a great variety of shrubs. Annually the farmers had drained this soil by carting away its covering, as a bedding for their cattle, until the soil was no longer able to support a decent stand of trees. Büttner, like most small farmers, was a poor forester.

The old man was ready to turn back, but Gustav wished to see the field beyond the woods, since they had come so far. Büttner himself had bought this lot as an addition to the farm, but he did not seem very anxious to let his son see it; and he had his reasons. The field had remained uncultivated, and the farmer was ashamed of the weeds luxuriating there.

"What did you plant there this year?" Gustav asked innocently.

"Not much! The woods are encroaching on that plot, the deer are feeding on it in hordes, how can anything grow there?"

He did not mention that neither plough nor harrow had touched the field for more than a year.

“Does the Count still wish to buy our woods?” Gustav asked.

Upon this, the old man grew red in the face and angrily exclaimed, “The idea! That I should sell the woods! No! As long as I live, the farm will remain undivided.” In anger, the veins stood out heavily on his forehead.

Gustav tried to conciliate his father and said he had only asked for information and “the woods are not doing us much good.”

The farmer stopped, and turning to the woods said: “I am not going to sell any part of the farm. When I am dead, you can do what you like, the Count will never get the woods from me, however much he may offer for them. My woods are not for him; certainly not!” With this he clenched his fists, spat on the ground, and turned his back on the woods.

Gustav wisely kept silence for he had touched his father on a sore spot. The owner of the neighboring estate had more than once urged the farmer to sell him his woodlot. Such sales were nothing new in Halbenau and the neighboring towns. The estate of Saland, originally a gentleman's holding of average size had grown to its present proportions by the acquisition of other estates and the purchase of many small farms. Already it surrounded the Büttner farm on three sides, and the old man watched it encroach upon him with increasing anxiety. Being unable to stem the tide he had gradually come to view with wrath everything that had to do with Saland. He had grown even more bitter since he had lost a suit against the count for damages done his crops by the game kept on the estate.

Father and son followed a meadow path on one bank of the brook. The fields rose gently to the right and left, shedding water toward the strip of meadow land. Occasionally patches of excessive green revealed over-great dampness, and here the soil was barely able to support the weight of the men. The whole meadowland was well nigh a morass.

Gustav thought drainage should here be resorted to.

“But where shall I get the money for it, in these hard times?” his father replied. “As it is, I can hardly make both ends meet. Fellows like me can’t consider drainage. It may be all right for a big estate and its management, but an ordinary farmer—”

He did not finish his sentence, and began to think deeply. Something had been troubling him all along, but he was afraid to confess it to his son.

“Another couple of hands on the farm might do it,” he finally said. We are not enough here, Karl and I, we two the only men. The women are willing enough to help, but what a woman can do on the farm does not amount to much. We two, Karl and I, cannot do all the work. There should be a third man here!”

Gustav understood what his father had in mind. It was the same old story. He did not doubt that his father missed him on the farm, for Karl could not at all be compared with himself; self-satisfied as he was, he knew this very well. Moreover, this was not the first time his father had complained that the farm was going back since Gustav had joined the army. But he could not help matters, he thought, since he had no intention of resigning his office to become the hired man on his father’s place. If he could have worked for himself, it might have been different, but to slave for the whole family, parents, brother and sisters without any profit to himself! The heir of the farm, after all, was not he, but Karl.

And so he replied rather coolly: “Why don’t you hire a man?” Whereupon the old farmer stopped abruptly and gesticulating wildly exclaimed: “A hired man! I, to hire a man! I should like to know where his wages are to come from. You’ll have to pay such a fellow eighty dollars a year, and feed him too. And then he expects a gift at Christmas and a gratuity at harvest time. I have enough mouths to fill, indeed I have! How could I keep a hired man!—No, the fellow who belongs here should be

a member of the family, who would receive no wages. Such a one is needed here!"

The young officer only shrugged his shoulders, and his father said no more. They returned in silence. The features of the old man moved spasmodically as if in anger; he seemed to continue the conversation with himself. Before they entered the house he touched his son on the arm, and whispered in his ear: "I want to show you a letter, Gustav, that I have received. Come with me into the room."

Büttner went ahead into the living room. Only his wife and daughter-in-law were there. Therese was swinging her baby which lay in a basket fastened by two ropes to a beam of the ceiling. When the farmer began to hunt for something in a drawer, his wife asked, "What are you looking for, Büttner?" to which he replied, "The letter from Karl Leberecht."

"I have hidden it," she said as she came limping from her corner, "wait a moment." She went to a chest of drawers where she found a key, and with this key she went to the wardrobe, which she unlocked. On the upper shelf there was an old book containing a number of papers. She carefully turned its pages, and at last found the desired paper. "Here it is."

Büttner touched it carefully, almost reverentially, as he did all written documents. Then he handed it to his son: "Read this, Gustav."

The letter was written on a large sheet with the printed business address: "C. G. Büttner—Groceries at Wholesale and Retail." Then the date was given. Gustav looked at the signature and saw his own name: "Gustav Büttner." The letter was, therefore, from his cousin, who was just as old as he, and who was a partner in the business of the old Karl Leberecht Büttner. Gustav had seen his uncle and his cousin just once, when they had made a hurried visit to their native town many years before.

This Karl Leberecht was farmer Büttner's younger

brother who had left Halbenau early with the reputation of a good-for-nothing. For years nobody had heard anything of him, when he suddenly reappeared as a married man and owner of a grocery business in a provincial town of medium size. Since then his business had grown to be both wholesale and retail.

The two families, the one in the country and the other in town, had practically no points in common. When the estate was settled, thirty years ago, they had come for a little while closer to one another. During the past score of years, however, they had only occasionally heard or seen anything of each other.

G. Büttner Junior was writing for his father recalling the mortgage which he had held on the farm since the time of the settlement of the estate, and requesting the farmer to pay the same on St. John's day of the current year. As the reason for calling the mortgage, he gave the contemplated enlargement of their business.

The tone of the letter was purely that of business, and gave no indication that he who wrote it and he who was to receive it were close blood relations.

Büttner and his wife stood behind their son while he read the letter and looked over his shoulder.

"Have you done anything about it?" Gustav asked when he had finished.

"What do you mean?" the farmer exclaimed looking at his son without understanding.

"Have you done anything about the money? You'll have to pay on July first."

"Do you see, Büttner?" his wife cried. "I've been telling you right along to hustle and look for the money."

"I've done so, and I've asked for some. I've been to see Ernest Kaschel. He says, he'll give me the money, if I will promise six and one half per cent."

"That's just like that rascal," Gustav exclaimed. His uncle Kaschel was the owner of the inn in Halbenau. He was a widower, his late wife having been a sister of farmer

Büttner. He was looked upon as a capitalist in Halbenau, where cash was somewhat of a rarity.

“Something has to be done soon,” Gustav went on, “or they’ll bring a suit against you.”

“Good Lord, husband,” the old woman cried, “Now you see what I’ve been telling you all along. Our farm will be attached! Truly, it will—, oh Traugott!”

“I won’t believe this of Karl Leberecht,” the farmer replied, but his anxious look showed that he was not at all sure.

“That crowd won’t hesitate long,” Gustav said, and his mother added, “Listen to that, Traugott, Gustav agrees with me.” And to her son she said, “But your father is always thus; he thinks and he thinks, but he does not do anything. He’ll delay till they come and take the farm away from us.”

Büttner stared at his wife angrily. She had touched him to the quick, and he broke out furiously: “Shut up, woman. What do you know of business?”

His wife seemed more sorrowful than hurt at these words and withdrew to her corner. Gustav was meditating what advice he should give to his father. At first he felt like suggesting once more that the farmer sell the count his woodlot. But when he remembered how that advice had angered his father a little while before, and that no one ever had succeeded in changing the old man’s mind, he said: “I know no other help. You must go to the city, father. Here no one has money except Ernest Kaschel. I should think there would be money in the city you could get.”

“I’ve thought so too,” the farmer replied greatly troubled.

There ensued a long silence, during which nothing was heard but the squeaking ropes on the beam and the crackling basket in which Therese was swinging her baby.

Then the two daughters entered. Toni was in her best clothes. Her well developed form had been squeezed into a bright blue dress, which happened to be rather short

in front, revealing her heavy black shoes. Her throat was decorated with a brooch of glistening glass. Her blonde hair was reeking with bay-rum, and in spots appeared almost brown. She seemed, however, very well pleased with her get-up, and moved about with such stiff awkwardness that she might have been carved of wood, for she was not accustomed to lace shoes, a stiff collar, and a pair of corsets. Her walk was more that of a doll than of a human being.

Gustav, who had formed his taste in town, smiled at his sister, who told him that there was to be a dance tonight at the inn. She hoped he would accompany her, and had dressed with special care for his approval. The farmer who hated all pomp and useless luxury, growled something that sounded like "bedizened ox," but his wife sided with her daughter. Girls needed their little flings on Sunday, after having worked hard all the week in the house and the barn and on the fields.

Supper was served early that the young people might not miss a minute of the entertainment.

Gustav accompanied his sister to the inn. She told him on the way, that Otilie Kaschel had asked more than once during the last days, and again that very morning after church, whether Gustav would come to the dance. The young officer smiled when he thought of his cousin. Otilie was a few years older than he, but being the daughter of the innkeeper, she was by far the best match in Halbenau. In past years Gustav had frequently joked with her. He knew that she liked him, but when he thought of her looks he had to smile. In his regiment they had an old white horse, which they called the "concertina," thin, over-tall, with a hollow back. His cousin Otilie reminded him of this horse.

Gustav let his sister enter the inn alone, saying that he would follow later. The windows of the big hall in the second floor were lighted, and above the sounds of the music, one could hear the feet of the dancing couples pound the floor and trail over the boards of the dance hall.

It did not attract Gustav, for whom there were other pleasures in store this evening. Silently he continued his way over little traveled paths between houses and gardens. When he saw a company of young fellows coming along he climbed over a fence. He did not care to be accosted.

In Pauline Katschner's room a small lamp was burning, for she was waiting for him. These two had made no appointment in the morning, but both of them knew what would happen in the evening.

He gently tapped at her window, the curtains parted and a white figure appeared. Pauline opened a sliding pane and said: "The door is unlocked, Gustav, but be silent, ma is at home."

The young officer took off his shoes and handed them to the girl through the window, without saying a word. Then he crept through the small door into the house with the stealthy movements of a cat. Immediately thereafter the light went out in Pauline Katschner's room.

III

A few days later farmer Büttner in his little cart came driving through the village street on his way to the city. He sat way in front on a bundle of hay and almost touched the horse's tail with his feet, for the cart was filled with bags.

He had shaved, an act which he generally performed only Saturday evening, and wore a clean shirt, a black coat, and a low felt hat—all indications of his going to town.

As he passed the inn of Halbenau, his brother-in-law, Ernest Kaschel stood there in the doorway with his pointed cap on his head and his hands under his apron,—which is the characteristic pose of an innkeeper.

The farmer acted as if he did not see the husband of his late sister, and when he neared the inn, looked straight ahead along the country road, trying to whip his black horse into a trot.

He had never cared for his brother-in-law, and his rela-

tions with him had been strained ever since the settlement which Büttner had been obliged to make with his brothers and sisters after the death of their parents.

But the innkeeper did not let Büttner pass without a greeting: "Howdy, Traugott," he called, and when the farmer did not reply, the little man quickly ran down the steps from the inn to the street, although he was in wooden half shoes, and approaching the cart said: "Stop a moment, Traugott, I have something to tell you."

The farmer, with several powerful jerks on the reins, stopped his horse, which was not easy when the old animal was once started, and asked what "in the hangman's name" Kaschel wanted with him, and he did not look pleased.

The innkeeper laughed. It was one of Kaschel's peculiarities that he grinned on all occasions, which made him look shy and almost awkwardly foolish. But in spite of this he had achieved a certain power over his fellowmen.

This time also Kaschelernst, as he was generally called, drew his features into an intentional grin, and instead of answering Büttner's question, asked in his turn: "What's your hurry, Traugott? I only wished to ask where you are going so early in the day?"

"I'm going to town to sell my oats," Büttner replied, angry at the delay, and at the hated smile of his brother-in-law, the real meaning of which he had often enough known with sorrow to himself. He was, therefore, on the point of rasing his whip and driving off, when Kaschelernst took hold of the horse by his bridle and began to stroke his nose. If the farmer had started at that moment he would in all probability have knocked the innkeeper down.

Kaschelernst was a measly little fellow with a reddish thin face. In his watery eyes you could see his liking for the beverages which he sold in his inn. His head was bald and pointed, his chin long, and what remained of his teeth aggressively protruding. In short, he looked somewhat like an old rat. On his head he always wore a pointed cap,

while his body was laced into a bartender's apron. On his feet he had long blue stockings, which came up over his trouser legs.

He snorted what sounded like "Well, well, old boy," and was meant for the horse, and then turned with a foolish laugh to his brother-in-law and said: "Where, in the devil's name, do you get oats for sale at this season of the year?"

"We've scraped together everything in the barn, and there is some left for the horses. I thought, because the prices are high now, I'd better sell my oats before the prices fall again."

"I could use about ten bushels myself," Kaschel replied, "if you don't ask too much."

"The quotations are given in the papers."

"Well, I shouldn't care to pay the market price, if I bought them of you. You wouldn't take advantage of a near relative, would you, Traugott?" Kaschelernst knew how to look very honest and sincere whenever he wished.

"As to our relationship!" the farmer excitedly replied, "to ask six and one half per-cent of a near relative who needs the money! It is you who can do that! Get out of my way, I want to drive on."

Kaschelernst did not let go the horse's head, although the farmer raised his whip threateningly. "I'll tell you, Traugott, I've thought matters over concerning the mortgage of Karl Leberecht. I'll let you have the money at five per-cent. I'll do this, because 'tis you, Traugott. You may be wanting it badly. I've thought matters over. I'll let you have it at five per-cent."

The farmer cast a suspicious look at his brother-in-law. What could have changed him so? The other day he had asked six and one half per-cent., and not a penny less, if he were to take the mortgage which his own brother Karl Leberecht had called. The farmer well knew that Kaschelernst would do nothing just to please him. On the other hand, the offer was tempting. The mortgage placed at five per-cent.—To be sure this was money enough! and

there was a chance that he might place the mortgage in town at half a per-cent. less. And was it not after all better to have no further dealings with Kaschelernst, who owned another mortgage on the farm, and had unfortunately other claims?

“Well, how about it,” the innkeeper broke into Büttner’s meditations. “Are we agreed on five per-cent.?”

“It would suit me all right to get the money right away.”

“The money is ready. I have it in the house, and you can take it along with you to the post office, Traugott, if you wish to pay Karl Leberecht. Well then, is it a bargain?”

The farmer thought awhile. He was suspicious, for he knew there was a pitfall he had not yet seen. If Kaschelernst played the part of an honest fellow you could be sure that he had set out to cheat you. “You say, you’ve got the money ready?”

“A thousand dollars and more! They are in my fire-proof safe. Do you want to look at them, Traugott?”

“You say five per-cent.? Can’t you make it less?”

“No, surely not less. And there is another thing I wish to say to you at the same time. For my own mortgage which I have inherited from your sister, let me tell you now, I should also like to have five per-cent. from next October. Four per-cent. is not enough. Do you understand me?”

“You are crazy.”

“Five per-cent. for both mortgages. If you agree, I’ll give you the money. If you don’t, the deal is off, Traugott!”

This was the last straw. The farmer’s patience was at an end. He raised his whip and beat his horse, and Kaschelernst, who realized that Büttner was in earnest this time, had just time enough to jump aside. At first the horse remonstrated at the sudden blows, but then he started. The farmer, with a face flaming with anger, turned to his brother-in-law and volubly told him what he thought of him, while the cart was careening from one side of the street to the other and almost tumbled into the ditch, the farmer

in his excitement pulling alternately on the near and on the off rein.

The innkeeper stood in the middle of the road shaking with laughter, while he looked after the rapidly disappearing cart. He jumped delightedly from one foot to the other, snickered and gasped for breath. His son Richard, an awkward fellow of about sixteen years of age, who had eagerly watched the proceedings from a bar-room window, stepped out when farmer Büttner had driven away, and wanted to know what had happened. Kaschelernst, however, was almost crying with merriment and could hardly tell his story; he was laughing so hard.

Büttner himself, for some time, found relief for his wrath in voluble curses. He was the angriest with himself for having been induced to speak again to his brother-in-law. As if anybody who had ever had anything to do with that "cut throat" had not been cheated by him; for wasn't he the slickest rascal in spite of his stupid expression? He acted as if he could not count from one to three, and thereby caught every simpleton.

When Kaschelernst had come to the village years ago, he had not owned a penny, and today he was acknowledged to be the richest man in Halbenau. He owned the inn and a goodly number of acres. He had erected a dance hall with large modern windows, two bowling alleys, and a shooting gallery. In addition to his liquor business he had a grocery store, and at times dealt in cattle and grain. He even dabbled in the real estate business, and people often said that he had been concerned in the speculations of cut-up estates which had occurred more than once in Halbenau recently. He was hand in glove with all the dealers and brokers and agents of the neighboring city. Hardly a week passed, without one of this guild stopping at his inn.

And to think that this fellow had achieved all this only because he had married a daughter of the owner of the Büttner farm!

When Traugott's first anger had passed, he sank into

gloomy meditations. How had all this come over him and his family!—There was no justice in this world! Let the pastor say from the pulpit, if he wished, that the bad receive their punishment and the good their reward even in this world! This was not true so far as he and his family were concerned. The very opposite was taking place. There was no justice in this world!

The Büttner farm was one of the oldest farms in the village large enough to maintain horses. Farmers of this name had owned it as far back as the church records went. Long before the big war in the seventeenth century, men of the Büttner family had more than once been chairmen of the board of selectmen; and the Büttner name was engraved on many a gravestone in the ancient churchyard.

During the Thirty Years' War, when Halbenau and its neighborhood had suffered severely, the Büttner family had almost succumbed to the plague, for only two of its members had survived. Since then this single branch of the family had subsisted in Halbenau. There had always been children in large numbers, but the younger sons had remained single, or had stayed with their families on the farm and helped, or gone to work on the big estate. The children, moreover, as was the law then, were offered to the manor lord as serfs, for since the peasants were not living on their own land, the lord had the right to dispose of them as he chose. The Büttners, however, had been so valuable and useful that the lords had always recognized their worth and had never sent them to smaller holdings, as often happened to farmers in those times. Since the Büttners had paid their dues to their lords by working for them whenever they were asked to do so, they had, of course, been unable to grow rich. Their families, moreover, had always been large, while the soil of their farm was not of the best. The times of servitude, however, had passed without loss of land or decrease of mental vigor on the part of the Büttners, and although many peasant families had been crushed to dull submission, the Büttners had maintained their solidarity.

The emancipation of the peasants had taken place in the lifetime of the grandfather of the present owner of the farm. Serfdom had been abolished, and in lieu of the annual payments to the manor lord, one-third of the Büttner farm had been given to him outright.

Under Traugott's father the family had reached, comparatively speaking, its zenith. He had been very active and had achieved a certain amount of wealth, thanks to a number of remarkably good harvests. He had even increased the size of the farm by a very fortunate purchase, and had invested much of his money in lasting improvements.

But he too had found it no easy task to maintain his independence by the side of the growing estate of the Count, who was steadily adding to his acres by the purchase of smaller farms or parts of some of the neighboring large estates. Traugott alone of all the children had remained on the farm, being its prospective heir, while the others had scattered in all directions following the spirit of their time. When Traugott's father had suddenly died of a stroke of apoplexy, no testament had been found among his papers contrary to every one's expectation. Having been a farmer through and through, he had abhorred writing, and been suspicious of the courts and the lawyers. He had, moreover, been one of those people who do not like to be reminded of death; and a will may have seemed to him to be altogether unnecessary, for he considered it self-evident that the oldest son would inherit the farm, as had always been the case, and that the other sisters and brothers would agree.

Things, however, happened very differently from what he had expected.

He left five children and a widow. Traugott, the oldest, became the head of the family and the owner of the farm. The second son had exchanged the country for the city, years ago, a third son had gone to Austria and remained there. Then there were two daughters. One had married

the inn-keeper of Halbenau, the other had married a miller and moved away from home.

The property consisted only of the farm and buildings with the necessary tools and furnishings. The cash had been spent on the dowries of the two daughters and improvements on the farm.

The oldest son was ready to assume the farm and to pay small legacies to the other heirs, as his father had often directed that he should do. But the old man had counted on a spirit, such as had governed the family in his own youth, a spirit of solidarity, which the younger generation did not cherish. Not one of the heirs was willing to sacrifice anything in the interest of maintaining the family farm.

They asked that a valuation be made of the property, and when this appeared too low to them, they wanted to have the farm sold.

The oldest boy who had arranged his whole life with a view to taking over the farm at his father's death, did not agree to this, and finally assumed control of the farm at the unfairly high figure demanded by his brothers and sisters.

He was, of course, unable to pay them in cash, and had to give them mortgages on the farm, and be glad that they did not ask more than four per-cent. interest of him.

So it happened that the new owner found himself in possession of a property which had suddenly been overburdened with debts where formerly it had been free of any encumbrances.

Several wars occurred, and Traugott fought for his country. Later good years and bad years followed each other as rain follows sunshine, but being without capital, he was unable to improve the opportunities of the good years, while the bad years threatened to crush him like a tight coat of mail laced over a sore body.

Fortunately, farmer Büttner was not the man to submit easily.

His farm was extensive, his farthest fields being at a considerable distance from his barns which were built on the other end of the narrow strip along which his property extended. The soil was light and shallow. The farm's exposure also was unfavorable, for it was unprotected in the north and east, while high hills in the south and west fostered cold and dampness on his fields and tended to shorten the warm season. His harvests, therefore, were mediocre, in spite of his unremitting activity. The interest on the mortgages ate up the proceeds of each harvest, and Traugott's debts increased slowly but surely. He had no chance of making improvements. Whenever he started to use more fertilizer, or to dig ditches for drainage, or to mend and rebuild his barns, new misfortunes like hail, epidemics among his cattle, disease and death at home, always pushed him back into his old state of misery, spoiling all his work.

His was the desperate battle of a seasoned swimmer who barely succeeds in keeping his head above the towering waves.

In such a struggle, farmer Büttner had grown to be sixty years old.

IV

Farmer Büttner had come to town, and was stopping as usual in the inn called "The Courageous Cavalier." After he had taken his black horse to the stable and had attended to it himself, he went to the market place.

It happened to be the chief market day of the week, and the streets were filled with throngs of people who had come from the country. Farmer Büttner, everywhere well known, was frequently accosted by the small merchants and trades people, who were standing in the open doors of their shops, and asked to make them a visit. But he had no intention of being persuaded to make any purchases at all today. First he wished to sell his oats at a profit, after that there would be time to see whether a few pennies would be left over for such things.

In the market place there was a corner familiar to all initiated where the trading in grain used to take place. When the farmer approached it, a dealer met him at once with outstretched hand and inquired what his wishes were. He was drawn into the circle of the men assembled there, greeted with cordial slaps on his shoulder, and asked why he had not been seen in town for so long.

This astonishing cordiality of men whom Büttner hardly knew put him on his guard and made him wonder whether they intended to make sport of him. When he was, therefore, asked whether he had anything to sell, his replies were cautious and evasive. He soon left this group of men for another, apparently satisfied with being only a spectator. He listened everywhere with his hands behind his back. There was a heavy demand especially for oats, and many bargains were struck, to judge by the hand clasps which invariably sealed the oral agreements.

After awhile Büttner left the market place with the feeling that the noisy and nonchalant way of doing business which the dealers exhibited in the market place was meant to cheat the farmers.

Today he was anxious to obtain an especially high price for his oats, for he wished to invest the proceeds in the purchase of a cow which should take the place of one he had been obliged to kill last winter.

He remembered that he had been well paid for his rye last year by a dealer in the centre of the town, who had sent him his quarterly catalogue since then. Only a few days ago he had received an announcement from him in which the "highest possible prices" under the "most liberal conditions" had been promised.

The farmer, therefore, thought he might try his luck again with Samuel Harrassowitz. If he did not succeed there, he could still sell his oats in the market place.

Harrassowitz had his office in a rather narrow street, on the ground floor. You entered through a deep gateway which led into a paved courtyard, and then by a side door into the office itself.

The farmer knocked and entered, removing his hat before crossing the threshold. The room was long and narrow and divided in the centre by an office railing behind which many clerks sat perched on high stools. A young man with glasses jumped down, approached Büttner and asked him what he wanted. The farmer replied that he had some oats for sale, whereupon the young fellow, who was wiping his pen on his sleeve, inquired "how much?"

"There may be some ten bags," Büttner said. Then the youth smiled in a superior way and remarked that his firm made no purchase *en detail*.

This expression was unintelligible to the farmer who asked what it meant, and there ensued a string of questions and replies while the other clerks stared mockingly at the old man in the old-fashioned coat.

In the meanwhile a rather stout man of middle age with a bald head, curved nose and fiery red whiskers had entered the office from the next room. At once all the clerks turned to their work, bent low over their papers and were excessively busy.

Samuel Harrassowitz, however,—for it was he—scanned the farmer carefully, and finally approached him with extended hand. He smiled ingratiatingly and said, "God bless you, my dear Mr. Büttner. What can I do for you?"

The farmer was greatly surprised. How did this gentleman know him? for he could not remember ever having seen him.

"Of course, I know you, Mr. Büttner. You are a well known man with us, for you are the owner of a fine estate in Halbenau— are you not?"

The farmer stared with open mouth at the man who seemed to know everything, and could not recover from his surprise.

"I know you, know you perfectly well, Mr. Büttner. Well then, what can we do for you?"

During these last words the young clerk had whispered a few words to his boss who loudly exclaimed: "Well,

Mr. Bellwitz, I trust that you have purchased Mr. Büttner's oats."

"I thought"—the clerk replied.

"Oh indeed, you thought! You are always thinking, and thereby you are possibly losing us such a client!—Certainly, Mr. Büttner, I'll take your oats without looking at them; we'll take anything you'll send us. Have you the oats in town?"

The farmer drew with much difficulty a little bag of gray linen from the deep pocket of his frock coat.

"Ah, you have brought a sample along? It is really not necessary, Mr. Büttner, I know your grain. All quality, of course."

He nevertheless opened the bag and looked carefully at the grains of oats trickling through his fingers. "We'll buy them, and give you the highest market price.—Mr. Bellwitz, send a man at once to "The Courageous Cavalier" to fetch the oats.—In the meanwhile, Mr. Büttner, please come for a minute to my private office. I should like to have you tell me what the prospects of the harvest in your neighborhood are this year."

The farmer had entered the little side office with its one window to the courtyard, before he realized what had happened. He was asked to sit on the sofa while the red whiskered dealer sat down opposite him at the other end of the table.

"Well, my dear sir, how are matters going in Halbenau? I know several agriculturalists there. The soil is only fairly good—isn't it? Also a little high—isn't it? You are troubled by late frosts. Afterward the corn won't yield much, however promising it seemed at first. I know that, . . . yes, I know all that.—Well, now you tell me everything. Is the sowing all done?"

"My son and the girls are planting the last potatoes today. Then the cabbages will have to be planted. In about two weeks, I reckon, we'll be done."

"My congratulations! That is fine! I suppose you have a large family?"

“Large enough, Mr. Harrassowitz, just large enough,” the farmer replied with a quiet grin. “Counting the grandchildren, eight mouths have to be fed—eight of them!”

“Good! Then you have that many more hands to help in the work and at harvest time, haven’t you, Mr. Büttner? A large family is a blessing from God, especially for a farmer. I know the conditions in the country, I know them! You may rest assured of that, my dear Büttner.—Well, and the winter rye? How does the rye look?”

The farmer reported that the rye had weathered the winter in splendid condition. “It’s a joy to look at. Like the bristles of a brush, so help me! The field looks just like a brush.”

“I am delighted to hear this. Then the prospects of a good harvest are excellent. That will mean much money for the farmers! And if the farmer has money, every one has money!”

“That may be so—you’re right there, I suppose, Mr. Harrassowitz!” the farmer agreed scratching his head. “But money has been mighty scarce. Bless my soul, but it has been scarce recently, Mr. Harrassowitz.”

“Ah, go along, Mr. Büttner. You are not going to complain! You with your fine estate!—How large is it, if I may ask?”

“Two hundred and upward of thirty acres, all in all, including the woodlot.”

“You don’t say! That’s almost a lord’s holding! And you will complain? But, my dear Mr. Büttner, pray what should the small farmers do, if you are grumbling?”

“Oh, it would be all right, if there were not so many taxes and duties and debts.”

“I know, ah, I know! The agriculturalists have much to bear. But tell me, are the taxes so very high in Halbenau?”

At this point farmer Büttner made a clean breast of all his troubles. Harrassowitz did not interrupt him, except

by an occasional remark, and this only made the farmer whose tongue had been loosed, describe his circumstances in greater detail.

Finally he had reached his chief cause of complaint, his powerful neighbor, the estate Saland.

“ Oh my, oh my,” the dealer agreed, “ I believe every word you say. It is no fun to have such a big estate owner as a neighbor. These people are always greedy for more land, and would like to see the last of the independent farmers. The huge estates are the curse of our nation, for we need the free and independent farmers who are the bulwark of the state. If they are gone, where shall we find recruits for our army—I ask you, where? Those brave soldier-boys! Do your fields touch those of Saland on one or on several sides? ”

The farmer said that he was practically shut in everywhere by the large estate, and heatedly related the harm done him by the big game.

“ But that is terrible! And the count, of course, pays no attention to it,” the dealer exclaimed in a tone of great vexation, “ when the harm is done to the fields of a little man! Oh, our conditions are very, very sad!—I suppose the count has even offered to buy your whole place, has he? ”

The farmer related that the count had been trying for years to buy his woodlot, but that he did not mean to sell one foot of it, to all of which Harrassowitz listened most attentively. Finally he assumed again his air of great concern.

“ Yes, those conditions are very sad. They must be eating into your savings; and you, my dear Mr. Büttner, are not without your cares, are you?—Tell me, are there any mortgages on your farm? ”

“ Oh Lord! ” the farmer cried in reply to this question which Harrassowitz had asked with the most innocent expression in the world. “ Good Lord! ” and he jumped from his seat. “ Mortgages! There are enough! If there were fewer, it would be better for me! ”

“Well, about how much do they amount to? I ask, because I am really interested.”

Büttner made his calculations, and then replied in a low, dull voice: “They’ll probably sum up to about twenty-two thousand marks, Mr. Harrassowitz.”

The dealer gave a low whistle, contracted his brows, shook his head, and said, “That is a good deal.”

“Isn’t it? Oh, it is a great deal,” Büttner assented with a vacant and disconsolate stare.

“But how, in creation, can you make your farm pay the mere interest on your debts?” Harrassowitz asked, as he took paper and pencil to make some quick calculations. “Yes, my dear sir, there is something wrong. And in addition you want to live yourself on the proceeds of your farm, and your entire family!—But that is impossible! You are only cheating yourself, my friend!”

“Yes, it is hard, very hard!” the farmer sighed. “A fellow often would like to turn himself into a dollar that he might pay the interest. We have to work hard from morning till night, and there are times when one has hardly enough to eat, because both ends will not meet. It is a damned poor life, if a fellow has as many debts as his dog has fleas.”

“And you bear it so quietly? Really I am angry with you that you should kill yourself for your creditors.”

“Well, what should I do? Didn’t I get the farm with all the mortgages on it? My family would not let me have it any cheaper.”

“There is only one way out, my friend. Throw up the whole business, and tell your creditors: ‘I won’t play so any longer. Let some one else try to earn the interest money from the farm. I can’t do it. I am tired!’—And then you’ll see how they will look. Not one of them will take over the farm, you may be sure! On the contrary, they will come to you and beg you for heaven’s sake to stay where you are, and save their money. Such tricks have often been successful. You yourself should ask to have the

farm sold because of too many debts, and you will see how differently your creditors will act. Possibly you may buy the farm back yourself, and you'll be rid of a goodly part of your debts. My rule is, not to be diffident in such matters! After all, this course is only a way of readjusting one's affairs, if one has not been successful. I thank God that it can be done."

The farmer shook his head. He had probably not understood the full meaning of the proposal, but his sense of honesty seemed to tell him that something was not right.

He declared that he wished to stay on the farm, and that he hoped to be able to pay his interest money regularly, if only the times would grow better, and if some one would give him a helping hand just now.

In the meanwhile the bags of oats had arrived from "The Courageous Cavalier," and were being unloaded in the courtyard. The young man from the outer office entered to make his report, whereupon Harrassowitz remarked: "Kindly get your pay, Mr. Büttner, from the cashier near the door of the office. I'll accompany you." The farmer received his money and had to sign a receipt, which took some time because his hand was no longer accustomed to the pen. Finally his cumbersome signature was accomplished; he had counted and pocketed his money, but he did not move. Turning his hat in his hands, he hesitated as if he wanted to say something more.

The dealer's keen eye did not fail to notice Büttner's remarkable behavior; he came round the office railing, behind which he had been conferring with one of the clerks, and said, "Is there anything else I can do for you, Mr. Büttner? We carry a rich assortment of the best fertilizer. Do you not need some?"

"No, not that," the farmer replied, "it isn't that I need. But there is something else I wished to tell you—perhaps you can help me.—One of the mortgages has been called. I'll have to pay on St. John's Day."

"Well, I never—" Harrassowitz exclaimed in simulated

surprise. "I'm afraid I shall not be able to help you there. Mortgages do not belong to my kind of business.—Nevertheless—," and he took the farmer back with him into his private office.

"And so a mortgage has been called for St. John's Day," he continued when they had entered. "Is it a first or second mortgage? What is the rate of interest? How much longer would it have to run?" He then asked many questions seemingly at random. Finally he began to figure, while Büttner was thoughtfully watching his expression, and anxiously noting that Harrassowitz had elevated his eyebrows and was constantly shaking his head.

Finally the dealer rose, and stepping up to his visitor looked at him intently. He could not let him have the money, he said. He was a merchant, nothing but a merchant, and not in the habit of loaning money on real estate. But since he had seen that Büttner was honest and reliable he would help him. He had a business friend, a thorough gentleman, to whom he would introduce Büttner, and possibly this man would be able to assist him. But he could do this only as a favor, distinctly only a favor, for it was not his custom to mix in such matters.

He then stepped to the telephone and called Mr. Schönberger's number: "Good morning! Is Mr. Schönberger in his office?—I should like to speak to him. . . . Thank you."

The farmer watched his host in great surprise. He had never even heard of a telephone and, of course, had never seen one.

Harrassowitz stood waiting with the receiver to his ear, and smiled at the comic fright of the old man. "Here, Mr. Büttner, is the other receiver. Put this thing to your ear.—Oh, it won't bite you." But the farmer could not be induced to touch the receiver.

In the meanwhile Mr. Schönberger had come to the telephone at the other end, and Harrassowitz began:

"This is Harrassowitz. . . . Yes! . . . Good morn-

ing Schönberger! The estate-owner, Mr. Büttner, of Halbenau, is here, and wants to borrow money for a mortgage that has been called. May I bring him to you?"

Then followed a pause while Harrassowitz listened attentively. Then he suddenly laughed out loud and cast a mocking side glance at the farmer, before he called into the transmitter:

"Simon pure, needs it badly. A splendid opening. . . . Nonsense, are you daffy? . . . What? . . . No, a jack pot! . . . I can't hear. . . . Of course! He is half loony. . . . I'll sign a note. . . . All right! I'll bring him. Goodby!"

"That's what is called a telephone, my friend," he said patronizingly to the farmer, as he hung up the receiver. "You see, you've learned something that you can tell the folks at home."

Then he added that they should now go to Mr. Schönberger, and he invited the farmer to come along with him.

The Loan and Brokerage Office of Isidor Schönberger was located at the other end of the town, and also in a crooked little street. Harrassowitz, however, did not enter the main office, but took Büttner across the hall to a back room.

Here in a shabby desk chair a heavy, bald headed man was sitting, whose big dark eyes, peering from two deep cavities, gave him somewhat the looks of a night owl.

"Good morning, Schönberger!"

"Good morning, Sam!" The heavy man did not budge from his chair which seemed to have become a part of him. Harrassowitz, who was widely known in the business world as "Sam," apparently knew the habits of his friend and, therefore, drew up a chair for himself and asked the farmer to be seated also.

"Let me introduce to you," he began, "my business friend, the estate-owner, Mr. Büttner. I know him. He is reliable. You need not hesitate to open an account with him."

Schönberger shrugged his shoulders, and when he spoke his voice was hoarse and lisping. It was a risky business, he said, in these times to loan money on farming property. There were too many forced sales, and farmers failed even more frequently than business men.

“But I can vouch for this one,” Harrassowitz exclaimed. “He is one of the good old sort. He is reliable through and through.” And patting the old man he added, “He won’t fail. I’m right, am I not?”

Isidor Schönberger, however, persisted in his refusal. He had had too many bad experiences recently, he said. The interest had not been paid, and had been lost in forced sales, so that he had been cheated out of his money.

“But when I tell you that this man is O. K.! When I vouch for Mr. Büttner with my word of honor! Look at this gentleman, Schönberger. Does he look as if he would wrong us? If I say he is O. K., then he is O. K.!”

“Which mortgage is it?” Schönberger asked, maintaining his stolid air in strong contrast with his lively friend.

“What has that to do with it?” Harrassowitz exclaimed. “The estate has more than two hundred acres of the best possible soil! The mortgage is as sure as a gold bond!”

“Why was it called?” Schönberger asked.

“His brother had it,” Harrassowitz explained, “and he has called it because he needs the money in his business. He must be a fool to give up such an investment!—Do be sensible, Schönberger, let’s have the money.”

The fat man took up a notebook, moistened his pencil, and asked Büttner to enumerate all his debts, one after the other.

It took some time before the old farmer had recollected all the figures, but at last he had named them.

First there was a county-mortgage of four thousand marks, then the mortgages of his family: Karl Leberecht and Gottlieb, his deceased sister Caroline or, rather, her heirs, Ernest Kaschel and his children, and his sister Ernestine. All of these had equal rights. Then there followed

more recent debts, and among them one to Ernest Kaschel for seventeen hundred marks.

The man in the desk chair maintained his characteristic air of gloom while he coolly noted in his book every one of the figures which hesitatingly fell from Büttner's lips. It seemed as if the heavy features of his bloated face were unable to register either surprise or excitement. "Is that all?" he asked when the farmer had stopped. Büttner nodded his assent.

"I'll give you the money!" was all the hoarse voice said.

Harrassowitz jumped up. "What did I tell you, Büttner! My friend Schönberger is a noble man! See! He'll give you the money!"

"How much interest did your brother get," Schönberger asked, and when Büttner replied, "Four per-cent.," he added.

"My rate is five per-cent. with quarterly notice."

The farmer heaved a sigh of relief at these words. He had been afraid that he would be asked to pay much heavier interests.

"Well, what did I tell you?" Harrassowitz cried; "you see what kind of man Mr. Schönberger is! He asks for only five per cent. You have made a splendid bargain, my dear Büttner!"

The farmer began to think so himself, and he felt gratitude in his simple heart for the man who had helped him in his hour of need. He walked up to Mr. Isidor Schönberger rather awkwardly and took his pale and faded hand, which was decorated with many rings, between his own brawny hands, and pressed it hard. "I thank you, Mr. Schönberger, with all my heart I thank you! God bless you! You have taken a great care from me!"

Isidor Schönberger looked at him with the same air of tired contempt which he had for everything in this world that could not be expressed in figures, and dismissed him with a hardly noticeable shake of his head.

“Now we’ll go to the lawyer, Mr. Büttner,” Harrassowitz broke in, “and then to the record office. You had better go ahead and wait for me outside. I just remember that I have a few things in another matter to talk over with Mr. Schönberger. I’ll follow you in a minute.”

The one minute had grown to at least ten, before Harrassowitz joined the farmer, whom he took by the arm. “Come along, dear friend,” he said, “now we’ll put everything in writing, for you should have a security and proof of our agreement. Let me take you to my lawyer. He won’t charge you much.”

[The manager of the count’s estate, Captain Schorff, was a kind hearted man who admired old Mr. Büttner. On one of his visits to the farm he learned that Büttner was in pecuniary difficulties, and offered to interest the count, and to broach again the subject of taking over Büttner’s woodlot. The count and his entire family were of a genial disposition, obviously desirous of living on good terms with their farmers and tenants, but they had so little knowledge of the conditions under which these people lived that they could not bridge the gulf which separated them from the men and women of the village. This is brought out in a number of incidents omitted here for lack of space.]

V

A small one horse Victoria had stopped at the inn of Halbenau. The livery of the coachman indicated that the owner had come from the city. The owner himself, a red whiskered man in a gray overcoat and big-checked trousers, dismounted and gave orders to have the horse unharnessed.

In the barroom there happened to be at the time only Otilie, the innkeeper’s daughter. Harrassowitz studied her with the searching look he had for all women, whether they were pretty or homely. “Is your papa at home?” he asked, “for you are no doubt his daughter. I am Samuel Harrassowitz from town. Your father knows me.”

[Here follows a scene of an amusing flirtation between Sam and Otilie, which is cut short, to her regret, by the entrance of Kaschelernst. The latter and Sam apparently are old acquaintances.]

Kaschelernst then sent Otilie to bring glasses, while he himself fetched a bottle, and urged Harrassowitz to taste his new whiskey which was especially good.

They spoke of the crops, of the weather and cattle diseases. But these were only skirmishes. These two men knew and estimated each other at their proper worth. Kaschelernst knew perfectly well that Sam had not come to Halbenau for nothing, but this play of hide-and-seek seemed to suit them for the present.

Sam was the first to talk in a serious vein, and indicated his desire to do so by moving closer to his host and dropping his voice. Kaschelernst took the hint and sent his daughter, who had withdrawn behind the bar, out of the room. At last it was possible for men to talk "sense."

Sam inquired after the circumstances of a number of people: farmers, estate-owners, artisans; and Kaschelernst replied with the gusto of the malicious informer. His delight in the misfortunes, errors, and stupidity of his fellowmen was very apparent.

When he spoke of a farmer who was on the point of failure, he smiled. He also smiled in speaking of another who had put fire to his barn, and he laughed outright when he mentioned the poor day laborer who had recently committed suicide by hanging, because he had lost his only cow.

Kaschelernst seemed to know everybody in the neighborhood, and what everybody was doing. Harrassowitz listened most intently, almost reverentially, as if Kaschelernst was uttering a gospel when he said, "Farmer so-and-so could not keep above water for more than two years," or "such-and-such a man had good credit because he was the sure heir to some property."

They had drunk several glasses of the good whiskey which Harrassowitz seemed to enjoy, when Sam, having absorbed enough wisdom, rose and said he had to go to the village.

“Is that so?” Kaschelernst asked. “There is no business for you in Halbenau at present.”

“Ah well, I just want to look at a farm.” Kaschelernst grew attentive, although he was anxious not to betray his curiosity, and asked in a casual way: “Which farm?”

Sam made as if he had not heard the question. “People say it is a good farm. Fields and meadows A1, the buildings in excellent condition, only, of course, considerably in debt, as all farms are today. I thought I would look at it.”

“Take care not to lose your way in Halbenau, Harrassowitz!” Kaschelernst remarked as he followed his guest to the door. “There are many farms here, large and small. Just where do you wish to go?”

“To the Büttner farm.”

Kaschelernst did not bat an eyelid when he heard the name of his brother-in-law, although Harrassowitz was looking at him intently, and asked. “Do you know the farm? I am interested in it.”

Kaschel shrugged his shoulders and looked mysterious, saying he could give no information, for the owner was his brother-in-law. “Your brother-in-law, Mr. Kaschel!” Sam exclaimed in well simulated surprise. “That is very interesting. I have assisted the man to a loan, and I am exceedingly glad that you are related to him—very glad indeed! Now the farmer is twice as dear to me as before, for, of course, you will not leave your brother-in-law in the lurch—isn’t that so?”

Kaschelernst made a very foolish face. It was so foolish that one could easily detect the craftiness which it was meant to hide. Harrassowitz burst out laughing, and Kaschelernst joined with a will. These two noble fellows had once again found each other out.

“That’s all right then! Well, I think I had better look

at the farm of your brother-in-law," Harrassowitz remarked as he turned to take the path which Kaschelerst described to him.

Sam approached the Büttner farm critically examining everything. First the buildings—the dwelling house, a frame building with a tiled roof; the barn and stables, thatched roofs; and found everything in good order. The farmer then was not yet entirely lost!

He entered the hall through the open door, and knocked at the door of the living room where he met only old Mrs. Büttner who was rocking her youngest grandchild to sleep.

She stared open-mouthed at the stranger who walked up to her most graciously, saying that he was a business friend of her husband, and had come to visit the farm.

Sam's clothes made a great impression on her, especially his glistening scarf pin—for the good old woman did not know that there are diamonds of glass—she marveled that her husband had such noble friends in town, and in spite of her rheumatism ran to fetch a chair for Sam. But he was too quick for her, and asked her for heaven's sake not to inconvenience herself for him. If the farmer was in the fields he would go to look for him there. Under no condition did he wish to occasion any inconvenience in the house. Mrs. Büttner told him that the entire family was in the fields, the women in the vegetable patch, Karl carting potatoes, and Büttner sowing near the woods.

The stranger looked about the room and commented on its comfort and neatness; he examined the wainscoting which made a room so cosy in winter, he said; he admired the china closet and took several dishes down for closer inspection. In short, he was interested in everything. "Very charming here,—very, very charming," he said with a friendly laugh at Mrs. Büttner; "such genuine and honorable patriarchal conditions! Oh I love them! In town we have nothing of the sort!"

Mrs. Büttner was most favorably impressed by all this

praise, but deemed it proper to play the part of the humble woman. She denied, therefore, that everything was beautiful here, and was sure that the gentleman was accustomed to much better things. On the contrary, Harrassowitz assured her, there was nothing more ideally perfect than a farmer's home, and he much preferred it to his office.

Then he approached the cradle, played with the baby, tickled it under the chin, sounding a funny "Kss, Kss," which made the infant laugh and kick with joy, praised its healthy appearance, and said that one of his daughters had recently married.

Mrs. Büttner was captivated by the familiar behavior of the stranger, and could not understand how a man could be so fashionable and so cordial at the same time.

When at last Sam announced that he would go to the fields, she accompanied him to the farm-gate to show him the way, in spite of her lameness, and asked him to be sure and call again.

He first saw the women in the vegetable patch, diligently plying their hoes. Coming up from behind he saw the three bent backs, and under short skirts six bare legs. Thus they stood in a row as if on exhibition.

Sam had come up close to them, unnoticed on the soft meadow path. Then he stopped, and was lost in what he saw. He always took what came his way.

At last he cleared his throat. The hoes at once ceased working and three heads were turned in his direction. There he stood on his short bow-legs, with his feet far apart, his stomach sticking out, and smilingly addressed the women: "How do you do, ladies? It is very warm today," adding that he hoped they would not tire themselves.

Therese, the oldest and boldest of the three, replied that he had better take a hoe himself, it would help him to get rid of his fat. But probably, she said, he did not know what honest work was.

The two girls, Toni and Ernestine, snickered at their

sister-in-law's quick repartee, but Sam who did not appear to be offended, remarked that he had chosen a different career from hoeing vegetables, and inquired where he could find farmer Büttner.

The woman studied the clothes of the stranger. Seen in broad daylight, his collar was far from clean, and his vest showed several grease spots. Toni was an innocent creature, not given to finding fault. Therese, however, and little Ernestine were exceedingly critical, and he had hardly gone beyond earshot when they made fun of his homely mouth, which was insufficiently hidden by his red beard, of his bow-legs, and the latent lasciviousness of his whole bearing, which had not escaped their sharp eyes.

In the meanwhile Karl, who was hauling potatoes nearby, had run up to the stranger and told him that his father was in the further field, indicating the direction with his whip. Sam studied the tall young man, asked him whether he was the farmer's son, and finally requested to be shown the fields.

Karl called to his wife to watch the horses, and followed the stranger.

Sam walked around several fields, examining the soil ever and anon with his stick which was provided with a long metal tip. He also asked many questions of his companion about the boundary lines, the neighbors, the roads, the rotation of crops, the water supply, and the average yield of the several crops. Even the more intimate family affairs seemed to interest him. Karl was astonished at the many questions, but it never occurred to him to keep back anything. On the contrary, he answered every question honestly and to the best of his knowledge.

When they approached the woods, they could see the old farmer with a big gray bag tied in front of him walking up and down and scattering the seed over the field in well measured handfuls.

The wild state of this field, which was called the bushland, from the neighboring woodlot, had at last been

intolerable to the old man. As soon, therefore, as the rest of the farm had been attended to, he had started on the cultivation of this lot. He had ploughed it himself and prepared part of it sufficiently for seeding. Since it was late in the spring he was sowing there a mixture of oats and peas.

At first he did not recognize Harrassowitz, who had to recall himself to the old man. But then he shook him by the hand and exclaimed: "Mr. Harrassowitz, I almost failed to recognize you. It is nice of you to come out here to visit us."

Büttner's pleasure was genuine, because he appreciated the visit which the city-man was making him in the country, and to a certain extent he was even proud of it. He quickly removed his bag of seed and gave it to Karl to carry, whereupon the three men slowly returned along the meadow path to the house. Karl walked in respectful distance behind his father and the stranger.

Harrassowitz had a word of praise for everything he saw. The soil, he observed, was excellent, the meadows in splendid condition, and the appearance of the fields remarkably good. These words were like honey to the honest old farmer, who smiled delightedly.

"You will have a splendid harvest, my dear Mr. Büttner!" Sam said. "I am glad of it, for these fields represent a great amount of labor, I can tell!"

"God grant that you are right," Büttner replied, crossing himself. He was not pleased that Sam had given words to his prophecy. One should not do that for fear of preventing its fulfilment. "We could use a good harvest, heaven knows. But—there's many a slip between the cup and the lip," he sighed, for during the past days he had been greatly worried.

His brother-in-law Kaschelernst had sent him a registered letter, calling his mortgage of seventeen hundred marks. This had come like a bolt out of a clear sky. Where could he get the money for this mortgage which was entered



MAX J. COOPER

GUARDING THE CATTLE

as the last of all his mortgages? But the way in which it had been called had angered Büttner even more than the fact that he would have to look for money elsewhere. It had made him downright furious. A registered letter! Had such a thing ever happened before? He saw in it a special manifestation of Kaschelernst's meanness. A registered letter! He had even been obliged to sign a paper for the postman! And his brother-in-law lived only a few hundred feet up the road from him. If necessary one could shout a message from one house to the other.

If Kaschelernst had met his brother-in-law on that day there probably would have been an accident.

And this was not all, for so far as the farmer was concerned the shoe was pinching in several places. The man of whom he had bought his new cow without having been able to pay for her completely, had definitely demanded the balance due him; and then his county taxes also had become overdue. Büttner had counted his cash over and over again and found it insufficient, nor did he know where to get more. He would have to pass payment on several debts, and in the distance the spectre of a forced sale loomed anew.

"Isn't it like the visible blessing of God," Sam exclaimed, stopping by the big field of rye close to the barn. "Really here the soil is yielding better than pure gold!"

These words untied the farmer's tongue, but he did not blunder at once into the subject that troubled him. On the contrary, he began a long way off, as is the custom with silent and suspicious country folks, and only gradually came around to his main theme.

Harrassowitz let him talk, and listened sympathetically. When Büttner at last had come to the point of revealing his precarious position, Sam looked sad and troubled. He was very sorry, he said. "Tell me, my dear Büttner, what do you think will happen? Your creditors will not be satisfied with your promises. What will be the outcome of it all?"

“ Well, Mr. Harrassowitz, don't you know a way out? ”

“ I! But, my dear Sir, how should I know a way? I am a merchant, and unfamiliar with farm conditions. ”

“ I thought . . . you could perhaps . . . as regards money . . . ”

“ But, my friend, for what do you take me? ”

“ I only thought, because you have already once . . . because you so kindly assisted me the other time! ”

“ Oh, you mean the affair with Schönberger! Well, you see, matters were more favorable then. At that time you needed money for a perfectly secure mortgage. But now . . . No, these are things with which an honest merchant does not like to concern himself. ”

After that they continued their way in silence, the old farmer in deep despair. With all his recent cares he had silently placed his hope in Harrassowitz. If everything failed, he had thought, he would turn to him, and Sam would help him. Now this hope also was gone.

They had almost reached the gate and were passing along the back of the barn, when Harrassowitz suddenly stopped. “ Büttner,” he said, “ I have thought matters over; you should receive help! Let another harden his heart against giving succor to a man who has labored as honestly as you! I cannot do it. I will get the money for you, although I do not yet know where. My own money is invested in my business. Men like myself cannot always do what they wish, but you shall have what you need, enough to pay your pressing debts. After that we shall find ways and means to take up the mortgage. Tell me, how much do your running debts amount to? ”

The old man trembled with joy at this sudden help. His good fortune had come so unexpectedly that he was unable to think clearly for some time. He figured, and named a sum, and then he took it back, and was floundering between his own figures, not knowing which were right and which were wrong.

Sam tried to quiet him by cordial pats on his shoulder :

“Slowly, slowly, my friend. Don’t get excited! We shall have time enough to figure it out in peace. Now let us look at your barn and stables.”

They entered, and Sam’s experienced eye sized up the value of the cattle. One cow was afflicted with tympanitis, and he knew just what advice to give. In the barn he was especially interested in the sills and beams. He even looked into the shed and investigated whether the overshed was watertight. Then they went into the garden, where he picked, in passing, a narcissus for his buttonhole, and rested a moment on the wooden bench around the apple tree which faced the western gable of the dwelling house.

Nothing, he said, gave him greater pleasure than the idyllic charm of country life; and after a careful glance at the pretty house he added that he would love to give up his business and become a farmer.

In the meanwhile Mrs. Büttner had made coffee of an excellence unknown in her house, and appeared in the garden where she made a bow to Sam in spite of her corpulence, and asked the gentlemen to come to a simple repast.

She served butter, cheese, honey, and brown bread, of all of which Sam partook, winning an even warmer place in Mrs. Büttner’s heart because he was not at all fastidious.

When he had eaten and drunk enough, he leaned back in his chair, drew a cigar case from his pocket, and asked: “Do you permit smoking? After a good cup of coffee, a cigar is in order!” Then he took a heavy pocketbook out and laid it on the table before him.

“Shall we now talk business, Mr. Büttner? That is, if you wish.”

During all this time Büttner had remained alone in one corner of the room, where he had noted several figures with chalk on the brown wall. When Sam spoke, he wiped the figures off with his coat sleeve and approached his friend, to whom he said in a low voice, “I’ll need about 300 marks to pay my current debts.”

Sam opened his pocketbook and looked through his papers.

“Let the women leave the room for a while,” the farmer said when he noticed that Ernestine and Therese were curiously watching the dealer. “Mother and you, Karl, may stay here!”

While the three younger women left the room, Sam took several yellow bills from his pocketbook and said: “By a lucky chance I collected some money today. I do not generally carry so much.” He then put three hundred-mark bills on the table, and retaining the rest in his hand, added: “There you are, my dear Büttner! Had I perhaps better give you another hundred marks since I happen to have them?”

The farmer stared at the money without touching it or saying a word.

“I’ll allow you as much credit as you wish, Büttner. Such a good manager, and such a harvest in the fields! Your signature means as much to me as actual cash.”

The old man felt dizzy. He looked from the dealer to his wife near him. Could he trust his senses, and was this not a dream? Here on the table was as much money as he needed, and even more to free him from all his cares! And there sat a man who was actually urging it upon him. What could he make of it?

Unable to think clearly himself he was on the point of asking his son’s advice when he noticed that Karl was watching the whole procedure with a vacant and uncomprehending stare. He, therefore, turned his questioning eyes upon his wife, who nodded her head and encouraged him by saying: “Take it, Traugott, of course you must take it. This gentleman is kindly disposed toward us.—Aren’t you?”

Thereupon the farmer reached out his hand to take the money, when Harrassowitz said: “One moment! There is another small matter.” He placed his pocketbook on top of the bills, and continued: “Only to have everything done properly. We are always in God’s hands and do not know how quickly He may send His summons for us. Then

there are no proofs, and this we do not want to happen, do we?"

He had taken a small printed blank from his pocketbook, and asked whether there were pen and ink in the house. While Karl went to get them, Harrassowitz continued: "Things must be done properly. That is a duty which an honest merchant owes to himself." Then taking up the pen which was handed to him he wrote, "Four hundred marks. That is right so, isn't it?" No one spoke, but the old farmer was breathing so deeply that he could be heard anywhere in the room. "Well then; will you please sign here," and Sam handed the pen to the farmer.

For awhile Büttner stood there, hesitating and turning the paper over and over. In his helplessness he glanced from his wife to his son and to Harrassowitz, who admonished him to read the paper before signing it. "One should never sign a paper unread." Büttner raised the note with trembling hands and studied it a long while.

"Don't be afraid, my friend. Everything is written there that should be there," Sam's jocose voice broke in upon his meditation. "Everything is all right. No one could make matters easier for you. Here is the money, and here you agree to repay me on the first of October of this year. Before then you will have garnered your crops. I cannot possibly offer you more liberal terms. This slip of paper is necessary to secure me; a mere matter of form, nothing more. Well then; please!"

But the old man still hesitated, and one could see from his expression that he was fighting a mighty struggle with himself.

Then Sam assumed a more gloomy air. "I almost believe Mr. Büttner has no confidence in me," he said to Mrs. Büttner. "If that is so, I had better take my money back, for I do not wish to force it on anyone. I only thought that I could do a favor to this gentleman, but if he does not care . . ." and Sam stretched his hairy hand to take up the bills.

But Mrs. Büttner quickly poked her husband in the ribs, exclaiming: "Traugott! Don't be a fool! Why don't you sign the paper?" Then she pulled his sleeve and whispered in his ear, "If you wait much longer, he'll be angry!"

She gave him the pen herself, and Sam said pointing to a line: "There please, right here, Mr. Büttner . . . No, a little more to the right . . . There! . . . Only your name."

And so farmer Büttner signed the note.

[The harvest turned out badly. Heavy rains beat the grain down and much rye rotted in the fields. Büttner worked harder than ever, but in vain. When he saw that he would be unable to pay his taxes and interests and also his note to Harrassowitz, he went to town, but neither Harrassowitz nor Schönberger were willing to admit him. In the office of the former he was even curtly dismissed by a young man named Schmeiss.]

VI

A few days later, the same Mr. Schmeiss who had snubbed Büttner in Harrassowitz' office, arrived in Halbenau in a hired carriage. A young lady was with him, and while he visited the farm, she strolled through the village street to the delight of the children who had never seen such high heels, such a waist, and such modish sleeves.

Edmund Schmeiss, a young man of medium height with a daring little mustache and curly hair, turned up his nose when he passed the compost heap in the courtyard and mumbled contemptuously, "Regular country ways!" His light-gray suit of faultless cut, and his entire bearing were, to use his own favorite expression, A1, although experts would have noted the absence of the hall mark of reliability. His manners were borrowed from somewhere, probably from the army-officers or the younger set of government officials, but his choice had not always been good.

It would not have been easy to define accurately Mr. Schweiss' position in life. Harrassowitz spoke of him as "A young man devoted to me," but he "worked" also for Schönberger, although no one seemed to be able to say exactly what he did for him. He often was his dummy in the purchase of farms or city real estate, and appeared at forced sales as one of the bidders. When a small merchant or an artisan was in pecuniary difficulties, Mr. Schweiss turned up as the saviour in distress. He was always ready to discount a note, or to find a "third" man to loan money, provided the borrower was willing to make a "slight sacrifice," as Mr. Schweiss called his commission, which was never small. He was a drummer for all kinds of unregistered business houses, and claimed to be the authorized representative of corporations which did not wish to be named, because they had not yet been fully organized. There was no time, when he had not at least half a dozen "splendid bargains" to offer. In short he was a very useful, practical and smart young man, equally at home in many situations, and familiar with the law and the practice of the courts. He preferred to call himself a "commissioner."

Edmund Schweiss then entered the Büttner house just about noontime, and found the family at table. He requested them not to trouble themselves on his account, and it must be confessed that he stood on no ceremony with them either, for without much ado he asked the old farmer, before his whole family, whether he was ready to pay his note which had come due that day.

All the Büttners had risen and were looking frightened and astonished at the strange intruder, who seemed perfectly at home. It took some time for the old farmer to find a reply, but at last he said he had to do only with Mr. Harrassowitz.

"Nonsense, Harrassowitz!" Edmund Schweiss exclaimed, "I am the man now. You will have to pay me, you may assure yourself. This is his indorsement."

With these words he offered Büttner the note requesting him to look on the back.

The farmer saw that something was written there, apparently a name. But what had he to do with that? How did this young man who had never given him a penny, suddenly happen to be his creditor?

He shook his head and declared that he owed money only to Harrassowitz.

Edmund Schmeiss grew impatient and cried: "Good Lord! Don't you understand? You have acknowledged the receipt of the money, and this is your signature, isn't it?"

The farmer assented without looking again carefully at his signature.

"Do you acknowledge having received value? I mean, do you confess that you received four hundred marks from Mr. Harrassowitz at the time here indicated?"

"Yes, yes, I received the money all right from Mr. Harrassowitz, at this very table.—You remember, wife, don't you?" She nodded. "Yes, sir, I received it."

"Well then! Harrassowitz has discounted your note.—This is a three-months note.—Then he has indorsed the note to me. I am, therefore, the present owner of the note. Everything is perfectly clear, unless you assert that I have come illegally into the possession of your receipt. Do you assert this?"

The farmer looked on in a most perplexed way. He did not understand a word. But since his visitor had much assurance and seemed deeply offended, he finally and in a very low voice said, "No."

"Of course not!" Edmund Schmeiss replied, frowning and opening his eyes wide. "Well then, I now present to you your note. It is due. I ask you whether you accept?"

The farmer looked even more perplexed than before, while the faces of the others showed a variety of feelings, in which consternation and fear of the stranger predominated, for that little piece of paper seemed to have given him power over their father and all of them.

“ I am asking you, Mr. Büttner, whether you will pay me? And it seems to me that this is not difficult to understand.”

The old man wished to see the note again, and when he had received it he turned it over and over in his trembling hands, and looked disconsolately about. The letters swam before his eyes, and he was obliged to sit down.

At this juncture his wife sent the children from the room, for she did not wish to have them see their father in his weakness. Then she stepped to his side and said, “ Be quiet, Traugott, be quiet! ”

But he burst out in a high and breaking voice, full of despair: “ Good God in Heaven! What shall I do?—What do you want of me, here? ”

“ Payment! Nothing more! Pay me, Mr. Büttner, and everything is all right,” was his cool reply.

“ And the money! Where shall I get the money? You know, I haven’t got it.”

Edmund Schmeiss shrugged his shoulders, whistling the latest popular tune and keeping time with his foot, and looked about the room.

In the meanwhile the two old people conversed in half-tones. The farmer still had some money in his box from the sale of his rye which he had been obliged to sell a few days ago in spite of the low prices. But since he had paid the October interest on his mortgages and his taxes, there was not much left, certainly not enough to redeem his note.

Cold sweat had gathered on his brow. His eyes were fixed, his jaws were trembling, and in utter collapse on his chair he offered a pitiful sight. His wife tried to console him. “ Courage, husband! Control yourself! This gentleman will be good and show a little patience.”

Then she turned to the young man coaxingly and very humbly began to stroke his hand: “ Won’t you, sir? You will give my good man a little time? We’ll give you our promise, and we will try hard. We shall pay you everything.”

Edmund Schmeiss replied very coolly, he knew all that from experience, and he could do nothing of the kind. He

had bought the note as a good one, because Harrassowitz had told him that Büttner was a reliable man. He had counted on getting his money, and had planned on it. Consequently he must insist on receiving his pay. If he did not get it, he should be obliged to go to court.

“ You won’t sue us? ” Mrs. Büttner exclaimed in greatest horror, and when he replied that this was his right, she almost yelled: “ Oh God in Heaven! ” Her trembling fingers groped for her mouth, and weeping and moaning she repeated over and over again: “ What will become of us? Oh husband, what will become of us? ” The farmer groaned.

Unspeakable fear had seized both the old people. Their ideas of the law were very confused, and back of every suit there loomed, in their imagination, a prison cell, for one was as helpless before a judge as before a lawyer. They already saw the sheriff take their last cow from the tie-up. If the stranger entered suit, everything was lost.

The brave farmer who in two campaigns had given evidence of his courage, shook like an aspen leaf. He who was generally calm was bereft of his reason, before this calamity. His eyes had grown big with fright, his dignity had forsaken him, and he, the man of sixty, sadly watched the face and expression of the young man whose pleasure or displeasure, he believed, would seal his fate.

Edmund Schmeiss drew a big gold watch from his pocket, opened it and cried: “ I must be going, a lady is waiting for me outside. Goodby, my good people. ”

He turned to go, but Mrs. Büttner ran after him, took hold of him, prayed and begged him to stay.

“ Well, well! If there is anything more, please hurry. Time is money. ”

The old people conferred again, although Büttner was as if stunned, and replied to everything his wife said, with “ I know nothing—nothing! ”

“ Then I will make a proposal, ” young Mr. Schmeiss said, “ that we may at last conclude this matter, for I am

beginning to be bored.— Give me all the cash you have, and write me a new note for the balance. Do you understand? The new note may run to the last of December. I shall, of course, take interest. Ten per cent. is my regular rate on a three-months note, and my commission amounts to three per cent. These are very liberal terms considering your financial instability.— Do you agree? ”

The farmer had not understood him except in so far that he believed the immediate danger of a law-suit had passed. He, therefore, ran to his secret box and counted the money he found there with trembling fingers. There were a few pennies over one hundred and twenty marks. Edmund Schmeiss counted the money too and placed the large coins in his pocket while he pushed the pennies and nickels over to the farmer. “ I never bother with nickels,” he said. Then he took his gold pencil from his watch chain and began to figure. “ Well then, I have received in cash, one hundred and twenty marks. Balance due two hundred and eighty marks. Isn’t it so, Mr. Büttner? ” The farmer hesitated a bit and then nodded his assent. “ Including interest and cost—you understand my commission and interest for Harrassowitz and myself—three hundred and sixty marks in all. You owe me, therefore, in addition to the one hundred and twenty marks just paid, three hundred and sixty. Please remember this figure. Now, kindly give me a new note for this amount. You understand? I shall then destroy the old note before your eyes. All right! That is simple.”

Then he took a blank from his pocket and as if suddenly thinking of something added: “ By the way, three hundred and sixty marks is a poor figure. Why didn’t I think of it before? You can always make use of a fertilizer on a farm, and I can sell you patent food for the cows, which you will very much need considering the poor hay harvest, also a splendid preparation of linseed meal. What do you say? Let’s write six hundred marks, and for the remaining two hundred and twenty marks I’ll send you fertilizer and patented food. That’ll square us, won’t it? ”

The farmer looked with vacant eyes at the young man who remarked: "Don't you understand, Mr. Büttner? Really, the matter is very simple." He went over his calculations, and asked: "Do you agree?"

Büttner thought matters over before saying very humbly that he had never believed in artificial fertilizers, and had no use for the patented food, since he hoped to get through the winter all right on his second crop of hay. He wanted, please, to be spared these other things.

"All right!" Edmund Schmeiss replied. "As you wish, Mr. Büttner! I thought that I had met you more than half-way. But if you prefer . . ." With that he rose, buttoned his coat, and walked to the door. But Mrs. Büttner again ran after him and persuaded him to stay. "Husband, Traugott, do be reasonable!" she urged the farmer. "If this gentleman is so accommodating to you! Be sensible and take what he'll give you."

Büttner sat in his chair with bowed head, unable to object with another word while his wife went to fetch pen and ink. She offered them to young Mr. Schmeiss with an ingratiating manner and tried to win his favor with a smile from her old toothless mouth: "Will the pen suit you, sir?" she said. "You must be indulgent, for we do not often write here."

Edmund Schmeiss filled out one of the blanks, and as soon as Büttner had signed it, tore up the old note. Handing the pieces to Büttner, he remarked that it was settled.

Then he took his departure, calling back from the door: "You will receive the goods very soon, Mr. Büttner, All quality, of course!—I have the honor!"

On the street, his lady-friend was impatiently waiting for him. She had inspected the sights of Halbenau—church, rectory, school, poorhouse and fire station. There was nothing else worth seeing. The village pond was dirty, because the geese flocked about there day and night; and most of the houses were small and poor with nothing but thatched roofs. The children too, playing in the streets,

uncombed and unwashed, and their little noses running with colds, were disgusting in the eyes of the "lady."

Some women were returning from the fields with rakes and baskets over their shoulders, followed by a company of young fellows. The girls quickly noticed the strange apparition in the village street and, whispering comments to each other, laughed a good deal, while the boys significantly nudged them.

The city dame, who was indignant at these signs of country insolence, dropped her veil just as the young people were passing her. The fellows openly stared at her, while the girls snickered audibly, and when one cried, "Look, she wears a mosquito net," all burst out laughing.

When Edmund Schmeiss came up to his friend, he found her outraged at the vulgarity of the villagers.

[In the meanwhile Gustav had decided to leave the army and marry Pauline. When he arrived home, and learned how matters stood with his father, he visited his Uncle Karl Leberecht in the hope of securing his intervention, but was unsuccessful. Captain Schorff, however, was hopeful that the count would take his advice and assist Büttner.]

VII

Kaschelernst had gone to town, largely to do errands and leave orders for his hostelry. On such occasions he had to do with brewers and dealers in cigars, liquors and wine, none of whom were averse to treating a "friend," when a bargain was struck. He had, therefore, acquired a very happy frame of mind early in the afternoon, but since he rarely drank so much that he became insensible, today was no exception, and although he was dangerously unsteady on his short legs, and his rat-like face had taken on a purple hue, he was perfectly clear in his head, and his cunning was no whit dulled by his rosy outlook on life.

In such a mood he went to visit his friend Sam in the latter's office.

Mr. Kaschel of Halbenau was a welcome guest in the graindealer's quarters, and was shown immediately to Sam's private office, for he generally came with important information from the country districts.

There two drinks were served, while one topic after another was lightly touched upon. Kaschelernst related many interesting matters, for he heard much in his popular hostelry that others did not know; his choicest bit, however, he reserved for the end. It was, he said, winking his eyes, a bit of news which would interest both of them. The Count of Saland intended to come to the assistance of Farmer Büttner.

The dealer jumped up in alarm. "But that is terrible!"

"It is just as I say," Kaschelernst gave back. The count will pay my mortgage. Büttner is to remain on his farm. That's so!"

Harrassowitz cursed, and asked whether Kaschelernst was sure. Perhaps he had been wrongly informed. But the other insisted that the count was negotiating with him concerning the mortgage. "I needn't complain," he added with a cunning smile. "If the count pays me, I shall get my money all right."

"You would have got your money all right anyhow, if we had turned the trick together," Harrassowitz exclaimed angrily. "And I should have let you in on the profits too. You know that very well, Kaschel. This is against our agreement. It will help the farmer to get to his feet. Damned scoundrels these aristocrats! They must have a finger in every pie. What business has the count to mix up in this affair? He is spoiling the prices for honest people!"

Harrassowitz felt genuinely outraged, for he looked upon the help which the count had offered to Büttner as a personal injustice and the illicit interference of an outsider in his own domain.

Kaschelernst smiled and rubbed his hands together in silent amusement, for he was pleased to see Sam's anger.

Then he emptied his glass and said as he was leaving: "Well, there won't be anything doing this time."

Sam was very angry. The thought that he should lose Büttner's farm was painful to him. He had already made his secret dispositions as if the farm were his, and had actually entered negotiations concerning a steam brick factory which he had meant to build there. He also had settled in his mind just which fields he would keep and which ones he would sell. His chief profit, however, would have come from the woods, for which the Saland estate was to pay him an exorbitant price. All these plans were to be spoiled by what he had learned from Kaschelernst, for if the count would really assume the Büttner liabilities, then there would be no forced sale as Sam had hoped. He had spent much time and careful thought on this business, and suddenly both threatened to go to waste. That was most annoying!

Sam, however, was not in the habit of nursing his wrath. It took time to be angry, and "time was money." He valued money far too highly to place it on a lost cause. He, therefore, exerted his reasoning power to see if perhaps something could not still be done; and soon he had hit upon the right idea.

What was Schmeiss there for! He had had more than one proof of the daring and craftiness of this young fellow. Edmund Schmeiss was the proper man in this difficulty also! Sam's plan was as follows: The owner of Saland was a cavalry captain stationed in Berlin. Sam did not know him personally, but knew that he was a man of fashion who did not take much personal interest in his estate. During the summer and early autumn the count and his family used to spend a few weeks in Saland; for the rest, his duties and the demands of society kept him in the capital. With the details of farm management, therefore, he did not concern himself, for he had several men in his employ to attend to such matters. He probably cared only for the revenues of his estate, and was satisfied to give its

management as little thought as possible. It was, moreover, a fair assumption that the count would not know much of his small tenants and farmers, and their affairs. Probably his own appointees had told him all he knew of such matters. What interest then could the count have in Farmer Büttner? Samuel Harrassowitz was not naïve enough to believe that the count harbored any strong interest in the survival of a vigorous stock of independent farmers; for didn't he know the gentlemen of the nobility! Indeed he did! Probably the count had his eye on the woods of the farm which he wanted to add to his own preserves. This then was the perfectly tangible and selfish reason which had induced the great lord to come to the assistance of the small farmer.

The question, therefore, arose, how could the count be kept from doing this? It was a very ticklish business and would have to be attended to with tact.

Such aristocrats were exclusive, and did not like it if people were insistent. But they took life easy, and made their decisions quickly. It was, therefore, not difficult to persuade them and sweep them off their feet. The most important thing was that the polite forms and the laws of etiquette were scrupulously observed.

Sam knew himself well enough to be quite sure that nothing could be done if he himself went to Berlin and called on the count. He did not consider himself vulgar, but he knew that the tastes of people like the count were difficult, especially when they were cavalry officers. He deemed it best, therefore, to keep his own personality in the background. But Edmund Schmeiss — that was a different matter! He was a well appearing young man, always properly dressed, and with his fine manners invariably A1. Sam had always taken great pleasure in the smart bearing of his protégé, and had no doubts at all that the "commissioner's" appearance would win also the count's favor.

Edmund Schmeiss, therefore, was chosen to make the

trip to Berlin, after an agreement had been reached concerning his commission, as behooved careful business men.

Sam always liked to combine several matters, if this could be done, and since he had undertaken the expense of sending his commissioner to Berlin, he gave him several other matters to attend to, for he had many connections there. Schmeiss was told to call on some men in the produce exchange, and to sound them on a variety of subjects, for Sam wanted to know what people at the source were thinking, especially regarding the futures in wheat. The Berlin reports for about a week had been: "Wheat steady, prices firm." But Sam was suspicious lest this be only the lull before the storm. The offerings were not large, but the prices did not rise! Rye had gone down, and there was not much doing in barley. A number of large dealers probably were fishing in the dark, taking advantage of the low prices and buying ahead in order to send the prices soaring when they had bought enough. It would be exceedingly interesting to find out exactly what the big dealers in wheat were doing. If one could get some advance information, one could trim one's sails to the wind.

Edmund Schmeiss, therefore, went to Berlin. First he bought in a haberdashery a new silk hat, a pair of brick-colored gloves and a wonderfully bright necktie. He did not ask for an appointment because he feared a refusal, and decided to surprise the count, and if necessary to force an entry. He hired an expensive cab and asked the driver to wait. Nothing should be left undone that could make a good impression. So he drove to "The Pavillion" where the count resided, as he had learned from the directory.

A brougham drove up almost at the moment of his arrival; a footman opened the door and an officer in the uniform of the Ulans descended, accompanied by a lady. The officer gave some directions to the footman before he followed the lady into the house.

Edmund Schmeiss who had watched this scene intently and had impressed the faces on his memory, walked up to

the brougham, and taking off his hat asked the coachman who the lady and gentleman were. He learned that they were the count and the countess.

The "commissioner" was satisfied, for he now knew that the count was at home. Looking again at the carriage, he saw that everything, from the harness and liveries down to the rugs and the gloves of the coachman and the footman, was of the best, tasteful and solid.

Edmund Schmeiss waited a few minutes, walking to and fro on the sidewalk, before he rang the bell. A butler opened the door, and although Mr. Schmeiss had assumed a nonchalant and superior air which he believed would impress a servant, this tall, smooth-shaven gray beard, with the bearing of a lord, gave him only one searching look before he said that the count was not at home. He was on the point of closing the door when the "commissioner," who understood things as quickly as he knew how to act upon them, jumped half way in and shouted with a voice that was meant to reach the farthest room: "Tell the count that I have important news for him from Saland. Here is my card."

The butler read the card, looked at Schmeiss, shrugged his shoulders and disappeared.

After a rather long wait he came back to the door and seemed even more contemptuous than before. The count, he said, was at luncheon and sent word that the visitor should return later, if he desired an interview.

Edmund Schmeiss reflected. Should he leave and return in an hour? Possibly the count would then again be "not at home" for him. Wasn't the whole message perhaps a trick to get rid of him? No! he would remain in the house he had entered. This was an advantage he would not renounce.

He, therefore, told the butler that he preferred to wait until the luncheon was over. The old man measured him with a contemptuous look and ushered him into a room. "This way, please. You may wait here."

The "commissioner" found himself in a narrow room with one window, a kind of a dressing-room where fur coats and other garments hung on hooks and several pairs of shoes stood on a shelf. A couch stood on one side, and the pictures on the walls had apparently been mustered out elsewhere. The room was not heated.

Although Edmund Schmeiss had no strongly developed sense of self-respect, he felt considerably hurt. His vanity had been offended, because the butler had not acknowledged him as a gentleman, in spite of his silk hat and smart clothes. He studied himself in a big mirror that hung in one corner and had probably been relegated here because it was badly cracked. So far as he could see, he was altogether A1, and might have been an officer in civilian clothes, a baron, or a count. It was remarkable what a fine scent these lackeys had!

Schmeiss, however, was not the man to be long depressed by painful experiences. His treatment had not been what you might call friendly, but such were the chances of business. As to his success thus far, it was incontestable. He had got near the count, and it was inconceivable that he should not be received after this. In his business the most difficult, and also the most important, thing was to get at his people. Since he had been admitted to the count's house, he no longer doubted his ultimate success.

He sat down on the couch and looked about. There were several lamps on the table, some of majolica, others of bronze, and still others of porcelain, true masterpieces from the Royal Factory in Berlin. A winter in Berlin, as the count spent it, must cost money, with his entire family here, with his servants and carriages and an apartment in "The Pavillion." Schmeiss made a quick estimate.

Suddenly his attention was attracted elsewhere, for he heard noises in the next room, the rattling of dishes and many voices. It must be the dining room! He could recognize the voices of women. The people in there seemed to be having a good time, for they laughed much. Schmeiss

changed his seat that he might hear better. He had never yet dined with counts and countesses, and it would be interesting to know how they talked when they were alone.

His hearing was good, but at first he could catch only disjointed words and sentences which conveyed no meaning to him. Luncheon seemed to be over, for he could hear no more rattling of dishes, although the animated conversation continued. When he had learned to distinguish the voices, he could occasionally understand some things.

The people seemed to discuss very unimportant matters. He had caught a few names; there was a "Wanda" and an "Ida." The count apparently had the members of his immediate family at table.

Finally there was the scraping of chairs, and it seemed as if grace was said, which greatly astonished Mr. Schmeiss. Then he heard a masculine voice say: "Your excellency, the gentleman is still here."—Somebody asked "Which gentleman?" and Schmeiss heard his own name mentioned, whereupon a man's voice said, "What in creation does he want?" and several girls broke out laughing: "Schmeiss! Did you hear that? This fellow's name is Schmeiss!" More gay laughter and then the question: "How would you like it Ida, if your name was Mrs. Schmeiss?"—The rest was drowned in laughter.

Edmund Schmeiss had blushed, a very rare happening with him, but he was stung by the insult to his name. He ground his teeth, and anybody who had seen him at this moment, could have guessed to what lengths this man would be willing to go when he was offended.

Very soon the door from the hall was opened and the gray-haired butler announced that the count would receive his caller. Schmeiss quickly twirled his moustache, pulled down his cuffs, and followed the butler.

The count received him in his study. He was tall and slender, and his face appeared older than his figure, for his blond hair had grown very thin. His nose was long and too pointed to be beautiful, but his eyes were bright and

friendly, the only lively spots in a rather worn face that received a martial touch from a big moustache. The count wore his undress-uniform.

Edmund Schmeiss had to fight down an annoying feeling of oppression as he realized that he was in the presence of a real aristocrat. It passed quickly, however, and he resolved not to be impressed. Distinction! All right. He would not deny it to the count. But would his host prove to be as clever as he!

The count acknowledged the deep bow of the stranger with a nod of his head and pointed to a chair as a sign that he might sit down. Then he sat down himself. "Well then, Mr. —" The count prolonged this Mr., obviously trying to recollect the name. "Schmeiss is my name." "Quite so, Mr. Schmeiss. What brings you to me?"

Edmund Schmeiss had advanced one foot and placed his silk hat on his knee. Then he began to explain the reasons of his visit, in the broad and fluent fashion of a drummer, while his manner alternated between humility and prying curiosity, and at times even insolent boldness.

The count listened, but seemed bored and began to polish his finger nails. When he had attended to all his fingers he looked up and said in a somewhat nasal tone: "But, my dear fellow—I don't know—you said you brought me news from Saland. This was the only reason why I received you. I really do not see what I have to do with all this."

"But yes, your Excellency. Kindly let me finish what I have to say. I believe that the interests of Saland are closely connected with my suggestion. The woods of the Büttner farm are contiguous to your estate. They are like a wedge driven in your Excellency's own forest. . . .

"I know that probably better than you," the count, who was beginning to grow impatient, rejoined, "I have been negotiating for this woodlot for years. Now at last I expect to get it. There are only about fifty or sixty acres in the whole piece."

“But your Excellency will have to pay far too much for it. We could get it for you much cheaper.”

The count regarded the speaker in astonishment, and for the first time looked more closely at the man who had forced his presence upon him. He seemed to be a funny fellow! The count laughed, “Who do you think you are, my dear sir? Let me tell you that I need no intermediaries when I am dealing with one of my own farmers.”

“Your Excellency! I am not acting for myself and should never have taken such a liberty if I were. I am a commissioner, the emissary of the house of Samuel Harrassowitz. You surely know this name. It is that of a big grain-house, and the owner is a fine and thoroughly honest business man.”

The count had started slightly at the name “Harrassowitz.” He rose to look through some papers on his desk. “My manager writes me,” he began and rummaged again among his papers which did not seem to be kept very orderly. “I cannot find his letter.” The sharp eyes of the visitor did not fail to notice how carelessly the count looked through his papers before he finally said, “No matter! Captain Schroff tells me that this . . . this . . . the man you just named”

“Harrassowitz” Schmeiss quickly supplied, and was pleased to note that the count had a poor memory for names.

“Quite so. This Harrassowitz, he writes, is a land-jobber.”

This was the time for Edmund Schmeiss to play his trump-card. He rose with an offended air and said, “I am sorry that your Excellency is so badly informed. Harrassowitz is a perfect gentleman; he is my friend.” With these words he buttoned his coat as he had seen insulted heroes do on the stage, and prepared to leave. Insight into character was not the count’s long suit, for he was guileless and kindhearted by nature, and the idea of having offended anybody was distasteful to him. He said, therefore, in a

conciliatory tone, "Never mind, you needn't go. No harm was meant."

"Yes, your Excellency, but land-jobber is an ugly word. To think of my friend Harrassowitz in this connection,—I will rather not repeat your remark to him."

The count did not notice the veiled threat that these words were meant to contain, and said quite innocently, "That's all right now. You had better sit down again, and do not excite yourself unduly."

"Does your Excellency wish to hear me further?" Schmeiss asked with the well simulated air of a deeply hurt man who is nevertheless ready to let bygones be bygones. He really felt triumphant.

"Please continue; and what is it you or your Harrassowitz wish me to do? I do not yet understand. There is this farmer—this—this—in Halbenau."

"Büttner, your Excellency wishes to say."

"Yes, Büttner! an old and honest chap, it seems to me, who is threatened with a forced sale. Captain Schroff writes me that he can be saved with a couple of thousand marks."

"Permit me, your Excellency, to interrupt you here. Our experiences with old Büttner are of a different nature. We are of the opinion that there is a scheme on foot to induce your Excellency to help an undeserving man. You are expected to give your money in a cause which is, to say it mildly, very doubtful. This is the plan we happen to have discovered, and which I have come to Berlin to frustrate."

While Schmeiss was speaking in the tone of an honest man whose sense of morality has been shocked, he watched the count's expression so carefully that nothing escaped him. If the count swallowed this, Schmeiss could give him a good deal more of the same sort. The count let his eyes rest on the speaker in amazement. His mouth was half open and he did not look very bright just then. After a

while he asked: "Do you know this . . . this Büttner so well?"

"We have had enough of an experience with him and I may add with his whole family, to be permitted to say that we know his tribe well."

"My manager speaks highly of these people."

"The judgment of Captain Schroff appears to me — well, I shan't say it because your Excellency thinks highly of him. But after what he has said of my friend Harrassowitz, I can take no further stock in his judgment! Your Excellency will understand this!"

"I believe it was misfortune in his family that brought the old man into trouble."

"Bad management, your Excellency, and nothing else! The old man is a reckless manager and, I am sorry to say, he drinks. His sons are even worse, and with his daughters — one illegitimate child follows another. Your Excellency should make inquiries, and you will learn that I do not exaggerate. I have been in their house; I know these people. In this way the farm has naturally grown worse and worse. Now Büttner is in debt up to his ears. He owes money to Harrassowitz. I too have lost money through him. We have been thoroughly cheated, because we thought he was honest. We are going to lose our money, and other honest business men will fare no better. He is at odds even with his own family, and his brother-in-law has entered suit against him. Your Excellency should make inquiries. The whole business is more than bad."

The count shook his head. "If that is so — then matters are indeed somewhat different. But why was it not presented to me in this light?"

"The well-known generosity of your Excellency was to be exploited. The people may be thinking 'The count is far away, in Berlin, and a couple of thousand marks are nothing to him.' They are counting on your kindness. But in this instance generosity, however beautiful it may be elsewhere, is not in place. Suppose your Excellency helps

the man out of his difficulties this time—a few thousand marks, by the way, will not suffice, for I know that the old Büttner owes considerable sums to people who have not yet given notice. Even if your Excellency, therefore, should pay Büttner's debts now, other demands will follow. It is like a sieve where the water you pour in runs through. And whatever the farmer may promise now, after a year it will be the same old story. Then a new forced sale will be at hand. Your Excellency will experience only difficulties and annoyances and will lose your money."

"But that is very sad," the count remarked in a tone which clearly showed that he meant it.

"Yes it is exceedingly sad," Schmeiss echoed.

"Such people, it seems, cannot be helped."

"No, indeed, your Excellency! Such people cannot be helped," Edmund Schmeiss repeated with an important air and sorry countenance. "No, indeed! The papers print so much concerning the sad conditions of the farmers; especially the more liberal organs, the democratic press, which is always ready to blame the big estate owners. The lords are accused of ruining the farmers and absorbing their acres. But nobody tells us that the farmers themselves are to blame for their ruin. Yet see how they are acting! The farmers are suffering from their own actions, and not from those of the estate owners. We have a telling proof of this in the case of old farmer Büttner."

Edmund Schmeiss had recited his last sentence with a certain solemnity of tone and manner, as if he were revealing his deepest thoughts. His words were not lost on the count. He too had heard complaints and demands which the advocates of a new order of things were making of the lords, and had been annoyed by them. This defence of the big owners sounded well to him.

"Everything these democratic papers say is nonsense!" he declared. "What do they know of the farming problems? Let them go to the country to see how conditions really are before they write their flaming articles. Really,

such people, editors and reporters, should be punished by having to work in the fields for several weeks. Isn't that so? Such people should have to hold the plough or load manure! What is your idea?"

The count deigned to smile at his own merry remarks, and Edmund Schmeiss did not neglect to join in the laughter. He too thought the idea excruciatingly funny. The tone of their conversation had undoubtedly grown warmer, and the count was no longer so unapproachable and haughty as at first. He finally asked:

"What do you say? I suppose nobody can blame one under these conditions, if one leaves such a man to his well deserved fate?"

"On the contrary, your Excellency. I believe it would be indefensible if one were to raise a finger in this case. Such people cannot be helped, and no reasonable person will dare to expect it of you."

After this, Schmeiss found it easy to convince the count. People like the count, who have little judgment and great magnanimity, are easily persuaded to be hard. The count was angry because he believed that another attempt had been made to abuse his kindness, and he decided not to forgive his manager easily.

Mr. Schmeiss left him with the feeling of having accomplished his task brilliantly. He was also greatly pleased at the satisfaction he had obtained for his vanity, for toward the end the count had not treated him badly, and had even offered him a cigar.

Edmund Schmeiss left the house with an increased sense of his own importance and the delightful conviction that these aristocrats are outwardly very refined, but in reality, exceedingly stupid.

[After this, things moved rapidly. Like a spider who is ensnaring a fly, Harrassowitz was drawing his nets closer and closer about Büttner, until at last the farm had to be sold under the hammer. Mrs. Büttner died, but the old man

was permitted to remain on the place as a kind of a caretaker. Karl had moved away, when the farm was sold, and, as is brought out in several chapters devoted to him and his wife, was going from bad to worse. The major portion of the parts, which are not translated here, concern Gustav and his attempt at earning a living by supplying laborers from his village to a big sugar estate in Saxony. On the farm itself great changes were made; several fields were sold, the woodlot knocked down to the count at an exorbitant figure, and a big steam plant for the making of bricks and tiles was built.]

VIII

Now great changes took place on the farm. Masons and carpenters appeared; the floor of the living room was taken up, the old dull window-panes were discarded to make way for new large ones of plate glass. Then the plumbers arrived. The old fashioned built-in oven, which had heated two rooms, and on which the late Mrs. Büttner used to cook the meals for the family and the hot mash for the cattle, was taken down, and in its place a modern porcelain stove was built, as they have them in city houses. The kitchen was moved into another room. Then the painters and decorators put in their appearance and tore down all the wainscoting. They plastered the walls and painted them and even papered the room designed for the new young mistress.

The new owner often ran out from the city urging the workmen to hurry, for he wished to move in soon.

Büttner was driven from one corner to another. He was like an old animal which one suffers to live on, from charity.

The workmen were all over the house, and finally the old man moved with his few belongings to a large closet in the attic.

In the fields matters were the same. Innovations everywhere!

The brickyard grew apace. A new layer of clay had been discovered which promised to be even better than the first.

It was being dug, for Mr. Berger, the new owner, had had a little railway built from there to the brick ovens.

The whole farm was cut in pieces. The large fields, once the pride and joy of Büttner, were all measured off into narrow strips, on which poor men cultivated four or even five different kinds of crops.

The woods also had been changed. The count's forester had cut down all the trees in the autumn and prepared the ground for reforestation. The snow had hardly melted when the planting had begun.

The old man had a hatred of all the innovations he saw about him. There was something obtrusive and impertinent in the younger people's way of doing things.

Forty years he had carried on his farm just as his fathers had done before him, and suddenly, almost over night, everything was changed and turned topsy-turvy. What he had done was destroyed as if it had been useless.

His life's work was deemed good for nothing. The traces of his activity were being erased. What gives a man his incentive and stimulus and is the real cause of his striving and working, the desire for immortality and the wish to live forever in his works here below, and to erect a monument to his own worth, by which his children and children's children will remember him and which will keep the dark night of forgetfulness from swallowing up himself and his efforts, all this had found its expression, in so far as Büttner was concerned, in his farm, house, barn, fields, meadows and woods; and all this had been destroyed. In a few brief months strangers had completely altered what he and his ancestors had built up in love and piety in the course of time and through many generations.

Time had moved on and had left him behind.

He was being placed in a corner like an old and useless tool. He was a tree trunk dug up by the roots, which lay helpless on the very ground which it used to refresh with its shade in the good old days of its flourishing strength. The manifold relations which had tied Büttner, like every-



LEWIS A. HERVEY

PARADISE LOST

one else, to his fellow-men, the innumerable little roots with which we draw strength and give strength every moment of our lives had been cut. He had grown useless to himself and to others. He might leave the world, and there would be no empty place anywhere.

Aimlessly he walked to and fro, through the village street, over the fields, in the woods. When had this ever happened before! Every walk had had an aim. Barring holidays, no one had ever seen him inactive. But what should he do now? for whom should he bestir himself?

People spoke to him, a few from pity, most from curiosity, for his actions puzzled them. But since he rarely replied, they ceased speaking to him. The children, it is true, laughed at his unkempt appearance and followed him, and even the older ones made fun of him behind his back. But to his face no one dared mock him, for even misery had not entirely deprived the old man of his venerable appearance.

One day the minister stopped him on the street and accompanied him a little way. He gently scolded him for no longer coming to church or partaking of the Lord's Supper. The farmer listlessly shrugged his shoulders but did not reply.

Another time Büttner met the manager of the large estate. Captain Schroff stopped his horse and greeting the old man said how sorry he was that things had happened as they had. Now when he could no longer buy the farm, the count had changed his mind and regretted having let the Jew take a foothold here. The count abhorred his new neighbor.

Probably the captain saw that such words were too late to mend matters. He, therefore, pressed Büttner's hand and left him to his own lonesomeness.

What did the people want of him? The old man despised them from the bottom of his heart. It was useless to talk to him and a waste to pity him! Every word of sympathy was to him a humiliation. He only wished to be left alone; this was all he asked of the people.

[The old man did not even unbend to Gustav, and refused to move with him to the city where Gustav had secured an excellent position. All entreaties were in vain.]

Pauline, however, did not give up all hope of prevailing upon the old man, for since she had married Gustav, she had become his favorite. Occasionally he had even unbent sufficiently toward her to let her see how he was suffering.

[The young woman, therefore, had another interview with her father-in-law, all alone, and talked to him with her own peculiar hearty simplicity, telling him that they would make his lot as pleasant as he could wish.]

She tried to entice him with the food she would cook for him. He should have the dishes to which he was accustomed. She had learned from his wife how to make them and knew exactly what he liked best.

The old man's eyes suddenly filled with tears, and with a tenderness unsuspected in him he replied, "No, no, Pauline. You had better desist. You are good. I know you and your husband mean well, but you had better leave me alone!" . . .

Then he fell to thinking.

She ventured to take his hands and to caress them. Once more she showed him how much better he would fare if he stuck to his own kin than if he lived among strangers.

"It is all the same, Pauline!" he replied. "I am played out. Nothing can help me, and soon I shall be done for."

She, on the contrary, insisted that he would live many more years, for he was still strong and the match of most young people.

"No, no. I am through with life! I am through with life!—Mama also is dead. It is not pleasant to be so alone in the world."

He blew his nose and wiped his eyes with his hand, and continued: "You had better go and leave me in peace. You are young and do not know what we older people feel. Sometimes, at night—all alone—and day times too so lonely! One almost could wish that the sun would not shine

again. Everything is distasteful. No, no, nobody can understand such feelings unless he has had my experiences.— Leave me alone. I'll find a little place for myself, if not in this world, maybe elsewhere."

Pauline burst out crying at these words, and he continued: "But it is so. I believe I shall not have to suffer much longer. And before you go, Pauline, I wish to give you a few things—to remember me by."

He then walked off to his closet and soon returned with an armful of clothes. There was a sweater which had belonged to his wife and a silk apron he had given her when they were engaged, some of her linen and a few more things, all of which he gave to Pauline.

Gustav too should have some presents, and the old man fetched his big furcoat, which he had worn through thirty winters and more.

Pauline refused to take the furcoat for Gustav, because the old man would need something warm next winter and should keep his coat.

"I shan't see another winter," he replied.

Finally when he had almost become angry at her refusal, she took the coat, but she intended to leave it with her own mother who should keep it for the present and return it to him early next winter.

On a Sunday morning early, Gustav and Pauline said goodby to Halbenau. Their departure had brought out many friends. Mrs. Katschner was weeping copiously. Her daughter made her promise by everything that was sacred to her that she would take care of old Traugott Büttner.

The widow had not yet given up all hope of enjoying once more the blessings of married life, and in the secret recesses of her heart there reigned only one thought: Traugott Büttner.

The old man himself had not come to bid his children goodby. The people said they had seen him on the road that led to the village church.

IX

Old man Büttner had gone to the village barber on Saturday evening to have his beard shaved off. Sunday morning early he took his Sunday clothes from the press, his long frock coat which had been made for his wedding day, his waistcoat with the long buttons of mother of pearl, his silk hat that had served him through thirty years and had grown more and more ruffed-up in spite of all coaxing and smoothing.

Traugott Büttner went to partake of the Lord's Supper. He walked down the village street, dressed in his best clothes, with his hymnal in his hand, looking neither to right nor to left. Other communicants who passed him looked at him curiously.

Was this really Traugott Büttner, or was it his ghost? The pale cheeks, no longer hidden behind a beard, revealed what they had not done before, how exceedingly hollow and emaciated they were.

He replied to none of the greetings which were offered to him from all sides, and walked slowly but firmly, staring straight ahead.

People gathered. "Look," they said, "Traugott Büttner is going to confession."—He had become a stranger among the churchgoers.

During the service which followed upon the communion, Büttner sat in his accustomed place. Many eyes were focussed on him. It was as if a church member had appeared again among his fellows after a long illness. Even the preacher seemed to feel that a special guest was in his congregation today, and more than once directed his words to where the old man was sitting.

Büttner listened attentively to every word of the sermon. When it was over he put his coin in the collection box as he had always done when he had been to holy communion.

People gathered about him as he left the church and wished to speak to him. "Well, Traugott," they said, "where did you keep yourself all these weeks?"

But he seemed to have no time for his questioners, and shaking his head gazed at them with a singularly serious expression. Then he turned and walked away. Many a one who hardly noticed it at the time was bound to remember it well later on. "Just as if he wished to pierce you through and through, and yet as if he was looking at something entirely different," one of the eye witnesses used to describe his looks in later days. Then he had suddenly disappeared from the crowd of the churchgoers and no one knew how this had happened.

Traugott Büttner returned to the farm which had been his. The house happened to be empty, for the workingmen were not busy there, it being a holiday.

He went to his little room, took off his Sunday garments and dressed in his working clothes. Then he carefully folded his good clothes, put them on a chair, and on top he placed his hymnal.

After that he went to the barn and gave the cows their feed, large enough to last through two meals. Then he gave the pigs their husks and poured a quantity of milk into their troughs preparing for them a regular feast. When he had looked about once more, as if to see that everything was all right he closed the door behind him and left the courtyard in the direction of the woods.

After a while he stopped. Had he forgotten anything? No. He only wished to see once more the roof under which he had lived all his life. There the friendly gable appeared over the thatched roof of the barn.

The old man shielded his eyes with his hand against the blinding rays of the spring sun. Thus he stood for some time looking at everything carefully. He would not see it again!—

There on the ridge of the barn the straw had blown loose. It stood up like ruffled hair every which way. To think that he had not noticed it before! Well the new owner would attend to it!

Suddenly he shivered.

Why was he standing here? What was he about to do?— Oh yes, indeed! Well then let him hurry! The quicker the better! Why stand here and gape? That did no good. But the thatched roof. . . . He had not known that it had blown so hard the other day. Recently he had not been here much because the brick-yard annoyed him. Oh, this brick-yard! The whole farm was disgraced. There he could see the big chimney now; he would rather not look in that direction.

He made a big detour about the brick-yard and came back to the main farm-road well in the rear of that hated yard.

How many thousand and thousands of times had he not walked here! At all seasons, empty-handed or with a heavy burden, alone or with his wife and children, with or without his horses! This road led from the Büttner farm through the Büttner fields into the Büttner woods. One could walk in a straight line for half an hour and never leave the Büttner ground.

Here he was surrounded by the witnesses to his life and his labors. Yonder uncouth boulder reminded him of days of hard work until he had removed it from his field. This was the corner where in early childhood he had been miraculously saved from death. The horses had shied and run away dragging him when his father, coming from the woods, had hurled himself at their heads and had stopped them and rescued him. This clump of wild roses he had spared when he had cleaned out the bushes all about, because his wife knew how to make a tasty kind of jam from their fruit. Every square foot of land had its own special meaning for him here, every blade of grass had a story to tell.

At last he left the main road and turned into a path between two fields, where he stumbled over a newly placed demarkation stone. This was the new partition! Everything had been turned topsy-turvy; his boundaries, his fields, his rotation of crops!

Here was a small field with a young green stand. It could

not be oats. What the devil was it? The farmer stooped and carefully looked at a little blade. It was barley! Was the fellow crazy, to sow barley here in this wet corner. He would find out in the fall what kind of harvest he could gather here. Didn't he know his fields? This here was an impervious clay soil, always wet. And here such a fool sowed barley!—The old man snorted with wrath.

But he had something else to do. Yes, he had! Again a shiver ran down his back. For heaven's sake, he thought, he must not let fear master him. If properly done, the whole thing would be over in a jiffy. He felt in his pocket and made sure that he had the thing he needed with him.

What would people say when they had found him?—What would his tormenters say?—Ernest Kaschel the dog! There was *his field*. His corn seemed to be thriving. Last year when he ploughed under the whole stand, hadn't that been a great joke?—A faint smile flitted across the sullen face of the old man.

But he had to stop for he had walked too fast. "Quiet," he said to himself, "quiet." He would arrive early enough. He cast a glance toward the village, which could be seen from here in its whole extent, way down to the church. The bells had started to ring. The second service was beginning there. Involuntarily Büttner took off his cap and folding his hand said a Paternoster. Then he heaved a deep sigh and proceeded on his way.

Would they give him a Christian funeral? They would have to acknowledge that he had died a Christian and not a heathen, for had not the pastor and the whole congregation seen him in church and at the altar? This would have to count.

Possibly the thing he was to do was not right in the eyes of mankind and a sin before God. But what else could he do? He had pondered over it a thousand times. Untold sleepless nights had passed since that one when the idea had first occurred to him. It was while the dead body of his wife lay in its coffin the night before her funeral. He

himself had washed and dressed her. She had lain there in her shroud full of peace. Then as he had studied the placid face of his life's companion, the thought had first struck him how much better off the dead were than the living. Death was not at all terrible. It was natural and good. Since then, a secret longing after rest had possessed him.

At first he had often shuddered at the thought that such an end was against nature and custom. He recoiled from executing his purpose. Gradually, however, he had accustomed himself to the gruesome idea so completely that his pulse beat no harder when he thought of it.

There was no other way. People had torn up everything which could make his life worth while. He had been practically squeezed out of his own, his farm, and all that was due him. They had snatched away the ground under his feet. If they could have done it they would doubtless have deprived him also of light and air.

He was a beggar; but they should not drag him into the poorhouse. He would not give them the pleasure of seeing farmer Büttner in the poorhouse. Now he would show them that he could have his own way. They had always been ready with counsel and admonition, but not one had raised a hand to help him. He despised them, all of them! It would be a long wished-for happiness to see their faces no more. And they had given him no peace, however deeply he had tried to hide himself; they had followed him everywhere in their talkative and curious fashion. To escape them he would have to leave the world altogether. After he was dead they would probably talk more wisely than ever and say he should not have done it, and cry shame. For did he not know them, coldblooded and unsympathetic while a man was suffering, but when he had miserably died, then they always came running up from everywhere to surround their victim and moan and weep.

But this would not trouble him, he would no longer be able to hear them! He would do what he considered right.

No one should interfere with him. Everyone was justified in doing with himself as he pleased. People who give you nothing must refrain from ordering you about.

He had almost reached his goal. There at the farthest edge of the field stood his tree. It was a wild cherry-tree of slender growth. A pile of stones gathered from the fields lay at its foot. Its crown shone in the full glory of snowy white blossoms, like a country woman's cap. Behind it was his back lot.

The old man stopped. What had happened here? Little mounds of earth one behind the other in endless rows; and green tufts sticking from every mound—tiny pine trees!

So they had planted trees here, where he had labored hard with plough and harrow through many a weary day! Here too his work had been in vain. What he had won from the wilderness through many years, the count's men had planted with trees in a few hours.

This evidence of his activity too had been destroyed. The people had unravelled all the stitches of his active life.

He stood staring at the green tops of the little pine trees and was seized with rage.

Then he remembered just in time how foolish his anger was. He need no longer fret or be offended. Hereafter he had as little concern with the world as the people had had for him.

Once again he felt the thrill of joy of the man who is truly alone, the pride and contempt of him who needs nothing because he is on the point of laying aside his last threadbare garment.

He had reached his goal with quick and hurried steps. Here the cherry tree stood with its dark and shiny, almost polished trunk, every branch, even the smallest, covered with blossoms. The first bees were humming in its leaves.

Traugott Büttner gave no thought to the humming or to the sweet smell, but measured the tree with careful eyes. The lowest branch would be strong enough. By stepping on the piles of stone he could reach it. A noose—then a jump—and then—

Again he shivered. His throat felt contracted, as if he were being throttled, his abdominal muscles were convulsed, and his legs grew so weak he could hardly stand.

Overcome by weakness he had to lean against the tree, for before his eyes things were dancing. His jaw dropped and he stared straight ahead with unseeing gaze. The thing he was about to do was too horrible! To kill himself! Awful! If anyone had prophesied this in his youth!

He repeated the Lord's prayer and felt relieved. Then he straightened up. His fear had passed.

He wanted to die and had well considered it thousands of times. This was not his first visit to this tree with a rope in his pocket. Formerly the thought of his children had kept him from executing his purpose. They should not see him hanging thus.

But now they were gone and he cared little what the others, strangers all, would say.

Today he would finish everything, for was he not well prepared to die? He had been to confession and had taken the holy communion. God would have to forgive his sin.

At last he stood on the piles of stones. The rope was firmly attached to the branch. All he had to do was to place his head in the noose —

Once more he stopped. His eyes took in the fields and meadows at his feet. They were his, he would die on his own ground. Then his eyes looked for the house where he was born. There it lay, beckoning to him across the blooming apple trees.

Almost without knowing it he slid the loop over his head. If he took one jump now the deed would be done.

Once more the Lord's prayer!

Already the rope choked his neck. He felt the stones roll from under his feet. Involuntarily his feet were seeking for a support. In vain! He had lost his ground. His body grew long.

What was this thing about his neck? A necklace of iron? — His body was torn to pieces! Did he really hang from a

tree? for he could still see everything distinctly: there those two men, not ten steps away!—

“ Help me, why don't you help me? Can't you cut me down? Don't you see what I have done? ”

No response. The two men do not stir. The wind is having his sport with their hair. Their eyes are big and silent. One is his father, whom he at last recognizes distinctly, his father with his long light hair and without a beard. The little bent man at his side is his grandfather; a very old man with a crooked nose and inflamed eyelids. There they stand watching him silently and solemnly.

He wishes to talk to them. If only there were no collar around his neck.— Help! oh help me!

His father approaches. Father!— That's right.— Now he feels better.— Ah, what huge black birds. . . .

The wind is rocking the body to and fro; and the bees go on about their business. The head with the long gray hair has sunk down to the breast. The eyes are wide open gazing at the soil, the soil to which the man had dedicated his life, to which he had given himself, body and soul.

LUDWIG FULDA *

By RUDOLF TOMBO, JR., PH.D.

Late Associate Professor of Germanic Languages and Literatures, Columbia University



HE exceedingly cordial welcome extended to Dr. Ludwig Fulda, poet, dramatist, essayist and translator, on the occasion of his visits to the United States as the guest of the Germanistic Society of America, in 1906 and 1913, furnishes eloquent testimony of the great popularity he enjoys in this country. The influence of German culture upon the intellectual life of America has been a profound and beneficial one, and there are few men in the German literary world of today who are better fitted to disseminate the message of modern German thought and literary striving than Fulda, whose clever *American Impressions* stamp him as a clear-eyed and sympathetic observer of foreign manners and customs, inclined, however, in true optimistic fashion, to look chiefly on the bright side of things.

Perhaps no other nation possesses the power of *Anempfindung* to such a marked extent as the Germans do, with the result that many a foreign author has become a German classic—Shakespeare is played much more frequently in Germany (1156 performances in 1912) than in England or America. Luther possessed this gift in eminent degree, as did Herder and Voss and August Wilhelm Schlegel; of living German writers few, if any, possess it to a greater extent than Fulda, who has furnished models of the translator's art in his German versions of the masterpieces of Molière and Rostand—it was for these classical translations that he was awarded the Cross of the Legion of Honor

* This sketch is probably the last piece of writing done by the late lamented Professor Tombo. If he had lived, he would perhaps have given a somewhat fuller estimate of Fulda's literary importance.—Ed.

by the French government in 1907,—of Beaumarchais' *Figaro* and of Cavalotti's *Il Cantico dei Cantici*, and who is responsible for a large part of the German translation of Ibsen's posthumous works, as well as for a modern German rendering of the Middle High German *Meier Helmbrecht*, and finally for a translation of Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, which appeared in the fall of 1913.

Fulda was born in Frankfort-on-the-Main on July 15, 1862, and after graduating from the *Gymnasium* of his native city and spending a brief period at uncongenial employment in the office of his father, a wealthy merchant, he took up the study of Germanic philology and philosophy, attending the universities of Heidelberg, Berlin, and Leipzig. In 1883 he received the degree of doctor of philosophy from the first named institution, *summa cum laude*. At the age of twenty-two he turned his steps to Munich, where he fell under the spell of Paul Heyse and the Munich School, and this influence may be held responsible for much of our poet's formalism. Fulda has given expression to his indebtedness to Heyse in the following verses:

"I chose thee for my leader to the heights of art,
Albeit 't has now wellnigh an idle-tale become,
Courage to learn, courage to show a grateful heart."

The ferment that was stirring literary Berlin in the late eighties soon drew him, by way of Frankfort (1887-88), to the national capital, with which he has been associated during the past twenty-five years, and where, as an active member and president of the Berlin branch of the *Goethebund*, he has frequently raised his voice in defense of intellectual and artistic freedom. His summer home is at Karersee near Bozen in the Tyrol.

Fulda is a prolific writer, who, since the appearance of his maiden play, *The Sincere*, thirty years ago (1883), has scarcely allowed a year to pass without publishing a dramatic work, a collection of poems, or a translation. The year that marked the publication of his first dramatic effort

also witnessed the appearance of his doctor's dissertation, *The Opponents of the Second Silesian School*. The thesis appeared in the nature of an introduction to the writings of the individuals concerned (volumes XXXVIII and XXXIX of Kürschner's *Deutsche National-Litteratur*), the first dealing with the poet Johann Christian Günther (1695–1723), the second with the seventeenth century dramatist Christian Weise and several other members of the school.

As for Fulda's dramatic activities, he has written a number of successful stage plays, including his greatest theatrical successes, *The Talisman* (1893), *Friends of Youth* (1898), and *The Twin Sister* (1901), the first and last mentioned of which have also been popular with the reading public, *The Talisman* having passed into nineteen and *The Twin Sister* into six editions. It is to the drama that Fulda has devoted most attention, his contributions in that field including no less than twenty-eight plays, of which eight contain only one act. His dramas are not always profound, yet they harbor many a clever idea, many a happy situation, many a graceful line. Fulda's polished verses flow on easily and melodiously and artistically, and he displays thorough command of dramatic form and technique, exhibiting special mastery in the handling of dialogue. While at one stage of his career he showed a leaning toward realistic production, as for example in the comedy *The Wild Hunt* (1888), a satire on modern climbers, and the drama *Paradise Lost* (1890), his chief activity has been directed along idealistic lines (classical and neo-romantic). Fulda's realistic work calls up the social satires of Sudermann rather than the crass naturalism of Hauptmann, and his association with the preachers of revolutionary doctrines was of short duration. He is not by nature inclined to upset established conventions, and his protagonists rarely preach iconoclastic doctrines, although Fulda does not hesitate to give firm expression to a personal conviction. Flashes of wit abound in his plays, and his comedies con-

tain much bright dialogue and many humorous situations, while at the same time they stamp him as an accurate observer of modern life with all its foibles and all its follies. As a result, the element of satire on the modern social structure is not lacking in his work, as for example in the comedy *Comrades* (1895), and the drama *Masquerading* (1905). The satire is not particularly bitter, however, while it sometimes borders on caricature.

In his symbolic and fairy-tale dramas Fulda exhibits much poetic fancy and deep sentiment. By far the most popular of these is *The Talisman*, the plot of which is founded on Andersen's tale of *The Emperor's New Clothes*. In this fairy-tale play the influence of Grillparzer and of Raimund is unmistakable, the latter being found, for example, in the character of Habakuk, who suggests Raimund's *The Peasant Millionaire*. It was for this play that Fulda was voted the Schiller Prize, which was, however, not awarded to him owing to objections on the part of the Emperor, the play having been interpreted as a satire on the theory of the divine right of kings with a reference to the unpopular dismissal of the Iron Chancellor. An opera based on *The Talisman* and dealing primarily with the love episode (Maddalena and the King) has been composed by Mrs. Adela Maddison (1910). From the time that Fulda caused flowers to appear as *dramatis personæ* in a youthful puppet play, the fairy-tale, with its symbolical and allegorical elements, has always exercised a peculiar fascination over him. His other fairy-tale plays are *The Caliph's Son* (1897), and *Land of Cockayne* (1900).

Of the realistic plays, *Paradise Lost* shows the influence of Sudermann's *Honor* (1889), dealing with the problem of the conflict between capital and labor which was at that time such a popular theme for narrative and dramatic treatment. Note, for example, Kretzer's novel *Master Timpe* (1888), Hauptmann's drama *The Weavers* (1892), and Wildenbruch's play *Master Balzer* (1893). Another realistic satire, *The Woman Slave* (1892), deals, as the title implies,

with the inferior position of woman in the German social system.

Agnes Sorma has frequently appeared with success in the comedy *The Twin Sister*, of which an English version by Louis N. Parker has been presented in America. An adaptation of the amusing *Friends of Youth* has also been performed here. One of the most popular of the one-act plays is *Tête-à-Tête*. Fulda occasionally returns to the episodes and characters of his earlier plays, as for example in *Master and Servant* (1910), the theme of which is based on an idea of the sixteenth century Italian novelist Bandello and which suggests the earlier *Talisman*, as it does the influence of Hebbel. This play is said to have been submitted to the Deutsches Theater of Berlin anonymously and it proved a considerable stage success. Not so successful was a tragedy *Herostratus* (1898), which deals with a page of Greek history and in which the famous Matkowsky appeared in the title rôle. In this ambitious work with its deeply tragic conflict the author's artistic sense and his mastery of form are strongly reflected. The first play of our poet was also an historical drama, which described the tragedy of the unfortunate Silesian poet Johann Christian Günther; this effort goes back to Fulda's Heidelberg student days, but has never been performed. His latest dramatic production is a comedy entitled *The Pirate* (1911).

Fulda's poems have appeared in several collections, as follows: *Satura—Pasquils and Humorous Sketches* (1884), in which Heyse's influence is plainly visible; *Epigrams* (1888), verses thoroughly characteristic of his lightness of touch and his bright humor; *Poems* (1890), and *New Poems* (1900), of which a second largely augmented edition has appeared under the title, *Melodies—a Book of Poems* (1910). In addition to the *American Impressions* (1906), he has written a series of essays entitled *From the Workshop—Studies and Suggestions* (1904), which contains among others an admirable essay on *The Art of the*



LUDWIG FULDA

Translator. In the same year appeared a lecture on *Schiller and the New Generation*.

Fulda's talents lie rather along dramatic than along narrative lines, and thus, aside from a volume on *Aladdin and the Magic Lamp*, published as an Ullstein *Jugendbuch*, his only contribution to prose fiction consists of two short stories which appeared in 1894 under the title of *Fragments of Life* (*Edwin Dürer* and *The Wedding-Trip to Rome*). He has also written a prologue for the dedication of the new Schauspielhaus at Frankfort (1902). The beginnings of Fulda's literary activity are humorously portrayed by him in Franzos' *The Story of the Maiden Effort* (pp. 285-296).

LUDWIG FULDA

TÊTE-À-TÊTE

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

FELIX VOLKART, M.D.

BAUMANN, *a servant*

HERMINE, *his wife*

LOTTIE, *a housemaid*

BARON HUBERT VON BERKOW

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TÊTE-À-TÊTE

TRANSLATED BY E. L. TOWNSEND, A.M.

Assistant Professor of German, Trinity College, Durham, N. C.

Dining-room at DR. VOLKART'S. Side-doors on the right and on the left. A window in the foreground to the right. In the centre of the stage is a long table, richly set, with some thirty or forty covers. In the foreground on the right is a small sofa, and on the left are several easy-chairs. In the background are portières which have been drawn back, showing the drawing-room. There are chandeliers in both rooms. From right to left in the order named are: HERMINE (who has made an elaborate toilet), LOTTIE, BAUMANN (who is engaged in lighting the chandelier in the drawing-room). Later FELIX.

HERMINE (*to LOTTIE, who is holding a hand-mirror before her, pointing to a rose in her hair*). Put this rose higher,—higher than that. I wonder what the hair-dresser was thinking of! That's right! But do be careful; you're crumpling my lace!

LOTTIE. Madam looks charming today, as usual.

[*Puts down the hand-mirror.*]

HERMINE. Do you think so? I don't feel comfortable at all. It's easy to speak of one's first ball; but the worrying, the trouble, the disorder, the thousand things one has to bear in mind, the thousand things one is afraid have been forgotten after all. And old Baumann is utterly unreliable now that he has passed sixty. [*Calling.*] Baumann!

BAUMANN (*hurrying toward her, lighter in hand*). Yes, Madam!

HERMINE. Good heavens, the thing's dripping! Blow it out!

BAUMANN (*blows out the light*). Yes, Madam! I've attended to everything.

HERMINE (*glancing at the table*). Have you put on the table-cards?

BAUMANN. To be sure I have! But at the left corner—

HERMINE (*impatiently*). Well!

BAUMANN. There are three gentlemen sitting together at the left corner.

HERMINE. There you are! Blundering again! Straighten it out!

BAUMANN (*still standing before her*). Well, if your poor mother had heard you say that — the Baroness always used to say —

HERMINE. I know what my mother used to say. Now, go to your work! [BAUMANN *goes to the table.*]

FELIX (*entering from the left, in morning dress*). I've found you at last, Hermine! Do tell me where's my writing-desk?

HERMINE. In the attic.

FELIX. A nice place for it! I've got to look up a reference on rheumatism. Now I'm likely to get a touch of it myself. [*Exit quickly, to the right.*]

BAUMANN (*coming forward again*). The little tables are all set, too. Shan't I put any cards there?

HERMINE. What little tables?

BAUMANN. In the blue room.

HERMINE. Heavens! Why, Baumann, those are the card-tables. You must take the covers off of them at once.

BAUMANN. You see, when I used to look after you, Madam, and you were a little girl, I really never thought that when you gave your first ball, I should have the good fortune to —

HERMINE. It's just dreadful! Do attend to it, Lottie, will you?

FELIX (*entering from the right*). All hope abandon ye who enter there! My writing-desk is there but not my books. Who's been storing *them* away?

LOTTIE. They are in the bathroom, in the large linen-closet.

FELIX. In the bathroom? How wonderful is the logic of events! [*Exit to the left.*]

HERMINE. Lottie! Look and see whether the carpet is stretched across the sidewalk. [*Exit LOTTIE to the*

right.] And Baumann, you ask the chef whether the missing lobster has come at last; if not, then telephone!

BAUMANN. To the lobster?

HERMINE. To the caterer! Number 746.

BAUMANN. I'll attend to it all. Only to think that that is now twenty years ago and that I still have the honor and the pleasure—

[*Goes to the drawing-room and busies himself with something.*]

HERMINE (*aside*). He's incorrigible.

FELIX (*enters from the left, smoking a cigar*). Why, the key has been taken out of the lock.

HERMINE. It's in your writing-desk, no doubt.

FELIX. This running up and down stairs is very pleasant! Another trip to the attic, then? No, I give up now.

[*Sits down in an easy-chair.*]

HERMINE. Felix, are you smoking, here in the dining-room?

FELIX. Well, there's nobody here yet.

HERMINE. The smell of stale tobacco at our first ball! It would mean our social destruction.

FELIX. Then I'll stop. [*Puts down the cigar.*]

HERMINE (*calling*). Baumann!

BAUMANN (*from the drawing-room*). Yes, Madam!

HERMINE. Take that nasty stub away!

BAUMANN. I'll do it at once. [*Takes the cigar and smokes behind her back.*] That's the genuine article!

[*Exit to the right.*]

HERMINE. Felix, it's high time you dressed for dinner!

FELIX. I'll try to, if I can find my dress coat. Under the conditions which prevail, I suppose it's in the cellar.

HERMINE. You're certainly in a good humor!

FELIX. The humor of despair, that's all! Besides we haven't seen anything of each other today, so I thought—

HERMINE. We'll see enough of each other this evening.

FELIX. Yes, in the crowd, without a chance to speak as we pass by.

HERMINE. Have you no sense whatever of the duties of a host?

FELIX. Certainly. But of other duties, too. That's just why I'd like to have a few minutes' chat with you.

HERMINE. A chat, now! There's no time. Tomorrow.

FELIX. Why, you're going to drive to the races tomorrow.

HERMINE. The day after tomorrow, then—

FELIX. Then you have in the morning the benefit performance for the victims of the flood and in the evening the tableaux in aid of the sufferers from the fire—I say, what's the title of the tableau in which you are taking part?

HERMINE. The Family Circle!

FELIX. Oh, indeed! The Family Circle. A promising title. You see, my dear girl, that for the present we shall have as little time for chatting as we had in the past. We have been married exactly four months; we have time to talk to strangers, never to talk to each other.

HERMINE. Now, Felix, there are a hundred things I've still got to attend to. Do go and dress for dinner. If anybody came—

FELIX (*looking at his watch*). Nobody ever comes in the first half-hour. And you know very well how quickly I can slip on my dress suit.

HERMINE. Well then, for goodness' sake say what you have to say, and be quick about it. I suppose I won't get rid of you till it's done.

FELIX. Are things to go on like this forever, Hermine?

HERMINE. What do you mean?

FELIX. Why, that we only have a bowing acquaintance with each other, that the only privileges attached to my position as your husband are the right to escort you to a ball and escort you home again, the right to sit behind you in our box at the theatre, carry your fieldglass when you go to the races, hold your bouquet or your fan while you are dancing, and look on indif-

ferent or even well-pleased while other men pay court to you. I am like a supernumerary in a play, who would be only a nuisance if he tried to take part in the action, and people think me a model marital figurehead. For since you maintain that it is very unseemly for me ever to sit beside you at supper or dance with you at a ball—

HERMINE. Certainly it's unseemly. Married people get enough of each other's society at home; while in society—

FELIX. At home?—Why, when are we at home, my dear girl? At home is as far as we are concerned merely a geographical term, it is only the base which we use as a starting point for our social campaigns.

HERMINE. How you do exaggerate! Haven't we the whole morning to ourselves?

FELIX. The morning? That's when you sleep.

HERMINE. But when I'm up—

FELIX. Then I've my consultation hour.

HERMINE. And as soon as that's over—

FELIX. By that time you've driven to pay calls or are receiving,—the very best people, I admit. All are meritorious people, even if their merit consists only in their high birth, the ribbons on exhibition in their button holes or their ability to talk on every subject, especially on subjects they don't understand. We are sure either to be invited out for lunch or to have guests ourselves.

HERMINE. Well now, wasn't that just a charming luncheon we had at the Chinese Embassy lately?

FELIX. Extremely interesting. The Great Wall of China seemed to surround even the mind of the lady who sat next to me. When you're in Rome, do as the Romans do. I kept making spasmodic efforts to entertain her, but her only answer was invariably: How funny! At last in desperation I delivered to her a lecture on the cure of hydrophobia. How funny!

HERMINE. It was your own fault. Now *I* had a splendid time.

FELIX. With von Walheim?

HERMINE. A very pleasant companion.

FELIX. What did you talk about?

HERMINE (*trying to remember*). Well, about—about—

FELIX. Yes, that's what one always talks about with men like him.

HERMINE. Why, you haven't the slightest idea what we were talking about.

FELIX. Nor have you either, much less von Walheim.

HERMINE. But yet we've got the afternoon to ourselves.

FELIX. But then you're driving, or shopping, or at five o'clock tea. And in the evening—

HERMINE. You're exaggerating.

FELIX. In the evening we usually don't come home till morning.

BAUMANN (*entering from the right*). The lobster has come.

HERMINE. All right!

BAUMANN. A beautiful creature; it's still alive.

FELIX. It's all right, Baumann!

BAUMANN. Shall I kill it?

HERMINE. Just give it to the chef.

BAUMANN. Oh, if her ladyship, your mother, had lived to see that! [*Exit to the right.*]

FELIX (*after a brief interval*). It is extraordinary that your family physician should have been out of town on the very day when your mother got a sick headache. I can still remember perfectly well how I was called to the Baroness in his stead.

HERMINE (*gravely*). I remember too.

FELIX. The case made a pretty deep impression on me, for it was the third since I had begun to practice, and the first two scarcely count: a servant-girl who had sprained her wrist and a young man who asked in strict confidence for a remedy to keep his hair from falling out. But a Baroness with a headache was the

decisive turning point, decisive for another reason, too. It was the beginning of our acquaintance.

HERMINE. Felix, I really believe you're growing sentimental.

FELIX. And why shouldn't I? It's only by way of a change. Yes, the beginning of our acquaintance. Your mother was then as sound as a bell. But I left the house a sick man. Even Cupid's darts have been proved by modern science to be a species of microbe. I was smitten in good earnest. And when I had paid a few more visits, to prescribe the purest Raspberry juice for your mother, a tablespoonful every hour, by that time I was no longer smitten, I was in love.

HERMINE. Won't you just put on your dress clothes before you repeat your declaration of love?

FELIX. I'll be done in a minute. That you were a true society maiden, brought up in a whirl of pleasures, who looked upon the art of sewing on buttons as black magic and upon the cookbook as a book with seven seals, that I was well aware of. But I knew too, by experience, that girls brought up in the privacy of the home generally become pleasure-seekers when married. Therefore I concluded that the reverse would be true of you; and, as I said, I loved you, and if you don't object, I still love you.

HERMINE. Well, all that may be taken for granted.

FELIX. Of course!

HERMINE. On the other hand, you haven't said one word as to whether you like my new dress.

FELIX. It always takes the tailor's bill to make me realize the value of such works of art. You'd better ask the experts who are coming this evening. I find you pretty in any dress, even in a plain one.

HERMINE. That just shows that you've no taste.

FELIX. At any rate my taste can't keep pace with the current number of your fashion paper. I am too irregular in my reading of that organ. In that field I can't com-

pete with our friend Hubert. I suppose he's coming this evening, isn't he?

HERMINE. We have invited him.

FELIX. Have we?

HERMINE. It would be an awful pity if he didn't come. He dances splendidly.

FELIX. It would be terrible. [*Suddenly stepping up to her.*] Hermine, you either do not or will not understand me. Don't you see then that this life is tormenting me, torturing me, driving me to despair? Don't you realize that my most ardent wish is to have my wife for myself alone, to feel at home in my home? If you don't realize it, so much the worse. I am neither a plaything nor a lay figure. I'll put an end to these goings on.

HERMINE. I understood you very well, but as the moralist's mask has suddenly fallen off and revealed the stern tyrant of the domestic fireside, let me tell you that you've chosen your time very badly. I have no desire to act in such a scene just ten minutes before our guests are due. I never gave you any reason to doubt the sincerity of my love for you. You know that I accepted you in preference to the most brilliant offers.

FELIX. I suppose I'm to consider that a great favor!

HERMINE. It was *not* a favor: I've just told you that it was love. But if you ask me to mope away my youth in a chimney-corner, to adore you all day long like a sentimental old maid, to die with ennui for love's sake, then I'll never give in to you, never! I have the right, the undoubted right to enjoy my youth, and you should be delighted instead of vexed, if people pay homage to your wife, and show their appreciation of her. I need this homage; it gives wings to my soul; it lends a thousand charms to my existence, charms for which your humdrum fireside would be no compensation. That social life you poke fun at, enlivens me, fills me with rapture, intoxicates me. Aren't you men ambi-

tious, every one of you? All of you are, and shan't women be ambitious too? I *am* ambitious. I want to be the queen of the ball; I want every one to envy you, because I am yours. When I'm old, there'll be plenty of time to bury myself between my four walls. But I am young, I am young! I want to dance, laugh, joke, kick over the traces, and you have no right to stop me.

FELIX. Well, it seems to me that nothing is sadder than this everlasting round of pleasures, nothing more tiresome than this systematic search for amusement. Do as you please; but from now on I shall cease to act as your bodyguard.

HERMINE. I am of age, and if you think you can justify such behavior in the eyes of the world, I'll excuse you.

FELIX. I am answerable for what I do to my conscience alone, not to this so-called world which I despise.

HERMINE. Because you never took the trouble to try to understand it without prejudice.

FELIX. It isn't worth while.

HERMINE. Perhaps better worth while than your everlasting studying and sticking indoors.

FELIX. Hermine, are you finding fault with me because I take my professional duties seriously?

HERMINE. It wasn't I who began the faultfinding, it was you.

FELIX. Under such circumstances it's a good thing that we should be alone as little as possible; for you—
(*bursting out*) you're a coquette!

HERMINE. And you're a prig!

FELIX (*taking long strides up and down*). A pleasant evening!

HERMINE (*vexed*). The evening of our first ball.

FELIX. Well, I'll put on my dress suit now [*as he goes out*] and I'll take just as long as I can to do it, just as long as I can! [*Exit quickly to the left.*]

HERMINE (*alone*). Such a scene at *this* hour! Oh, it's inexcusable! [*Looks at herself in the hand-mirror.*]

How I do look! Heated and upset! Am I to receive my guests like that? (*Calling.*) Baumann!

BAUMANN (*from the drawing-room*). I've attended to everything, Madam!

HERMINE. Quick, bring me a seidlitz powder!

BAUMANN. I'll get it right away! (*Looking out of the window.*) A carriage has driven up. How glad I am!
[*The door-bell rings.*]

HERMINE. Quick. Show the guests into the drawing-room!

BAUMANN. I'll do it right away. [*Exit to the right.*]

HERMINE (*calling after him*). And *don't* bring the seidlitz powder! (*Aside.*) What a humor I'm in! Heavens! I've got to smile, I've got to be amiable. Now all my pleasure's spoilt.

[*Goes toward the rear of the stage; VON BERKOW, for whom BAUMANN has opened the door, enters from the right in traveling dress.*]

VON BERKOW. Fair friend, first of all I crave a full pardon for appearing before you at such a late hour and in such questionable attire. But when one has been obliged to live without seeing you for a whole week, one can have no more pressing business on returning than the pleasure of kissing your hand. I have just come from the station and as your house is on my way, I stopped the carriage to — But what do I see? You are in full toilet, and this table, these elaborate preparations — you are expecting guests?

HERMINE (*very much surprised*). Didn't you get our invitation?

VON BERKOW. I'm thunderstruck, 'pon my word, I am! I have been absent for a week on business connected with my estate. I suppose your invitation has been at my house all that time, without even being opened.

HERMINE. No doubt! But we hope —

VON BERKOW. You may expect my reappearance as soon as I have made myself presentable. It was my good angel that brought me back. May one ask who is coming?

HERMINE. Only our best friends. Luckily not one invitation has been declined.

VON BERKOW. How charming!

HERMINE. Mrs. Heuer, wife of the Councillor, with her four daughters.

VON BERKOW. A heavy dose of culture. Every last one of them a walking encyclopedia.

HERMINE. Malicious but true. Next your friend Woronzow, the painter.

VON BERKOW. Properly speaking, he doesn't paint at all. He only lives here to get inspiration. For twenty years past! Must be wonderfully inspired by now.

HERMINE (*smiling*). Slander! But what fault have you to find with Count Walheim?

VON BERKOW. None, except that he pays court to you.

HERMINE. Also Baron Marling and his wife.

VON BERKOW. A beautiful woman.

HERMINE. Ah, she's to your taste? She sits on your left at table.

VON BERKOW. And on my right?

HERMINE. Myself.

VON BERKOW. Then say no more. As always you will be the fairest and most tastefully dressed.

HERMINE. You'll say that to the lady on your left also!

VON BERKOW. How cruel of you! You do me wrong. Baroness von Marling is a cold beauty, a portrait. She talks as sparingly as if every word cost her sixpence—because her husband is a telegraph-director, no doubt. While you—but I won't bother you any longer. I'll fly home and be back in a jiffy. Permit me—

BAUMANN (*from the right, with a seidlitz powder and a glass half full of water*). Here is the seidlitz powder.

HERMINE (*aside to BAUMANN*). Didn't I tell you to let it alone? How stupid of you—

BAUMANN. Well, Madam, I thought, seeing you were so excited—I hope it'll do you good.

[*Exit to the right.*]

VON BERKOW (*aside*). Something's in the wind here.
(*Aloud.*) Surely you're not feeling unwell? I do hope —

HERMINE. There's nothing the matter, nothing at all. A mistake of —

VON BERKOW. No, you can't deceive me. You are excited, out of sorts — Do, please, drink the powder.

HERMINE. Why, Baron!

VON BERKOW (*preparing the powder*). You really must let me perform this little labor of love.

HERMINE (*laughing*). Well, if you compel me —

VON BERKOW (*after putting in the second powder*). It's effervescing! Drink quickly! [HERMINE *drinks.*]

VON BERKOW. All in one draught! That'll do you good. That's right! [*Puts away the glass.*] Do you feel better?

HERMINE (*cheerfully*). Of course! How anxious you are about me.

VON BERKOW. More than about my own life! Oh, I see it all. This powder has played the traitor, it has made everything clear to me, everything. You are not happy, Hermine!

HERMINE (*with a forced laugh*). What a tragic tone. It doesn't become you at all.

VON BERKOW. No matter, if your happiness is in question. I have known Felix ever since our school-days; he is a thoroughly good, upright fellow, a strong personality in short, and I am his friend. Still —

HERMINE. Not another word, Baron von Berkow! I am his wife and I demand —

VON BERKOW. Oh, I must speak! My desire for your happiness outweighs my fear of your anger. He is a strong personality and so he is biased too, and because he is biased, he is unjust. He does not, he never will understand you, for you —

HERMINE. I forbid you —

VON BERKOW (*going on eagerly*). You — you have a strong

personality, too, but different from his. You are a gifted, high-spirited woman, meant for life in the grand style. You were born to rule, to command. The man who loved you should have lain at your feet, he should have deemed it a favor if you raised him up to you, happy mortal! Fatal error! How did this rose get into the vegetable garden? No, you can't deny that he has only offered you the well-tempered warmth of a study-grate where you expected the glowing, flaming rays of passion's sun.

HERMINE. Go, Baron von Berkow! I must not listen to another word. My husband may come at any moment! Say no more or I'll tell him everything.

VON BERKOW. Do so, if you don't feel that I've spoken the truth. But you feel it, you know it. It is no use for you to take refuge in a pride which cannot disarm me, because it is powerless against the strength of my conviction —

HERMINE. What you call pride, is only my vexation at your presumption for which —

VON BERKOW. For which you will have to pardon me.

HERMINE. Never!

VON BERKOW. Listen, Hermine, I've just one thing more to say and then condemn me if you can. You knew that I loved you, long before Felix ever entered your house. I was resolved to sue for your hand. I was ready to lay myself unconditionally at your feet. Then a dangerous illness kept me on a sick bed for weeks. When I became conscious once more you were my first thought; when I became convalescent the announcement of your engagement was the first thing that met my eyes. If I have not even yet succeeded in stifling my feelings and overcoming my grief, does that deserve your vexation? Won't you forgive me even now?

HERMINE. Perhaps!

VON BERKOW (*quickly changing his tone*). And may I beg for the first waltz this evening?

HERMINE. All right, if you go now.

FELIX (*entering from the left, in evening dress*). Good evening, Hubert.

VON BERKOW. I'm only here pro tem. I have come straight from the station and have only just heard from your wife that I'm invited.

BAUMANN (*entering from the right*). The chef wants to ask you about something, Madam. It's about the gooseliver.

VON BERKOW. This old Baumann's a delightful old chap!

HERMINE. He's scarcely any use now. Excuse me, Baron von Berkow. We'll expect you later.

VON BERKOW. My dear Madam!

[HERMINE and BAUMANN *exeunt to the right.*]

VON BERKOW (*aside*). Now, if I play my cards well, I'll win everything. (*Aloud.*) Felix, there was a little scene here a while ago, wasn't there? A sort of diplomatic explanation, eh?

FELIX. How do *you* know anything about it?

VON BERKOW. I gathered it from something old Baumann let drop. Poor friend!

FELIX. Your sympathy's rather poor taste.

VON BERKOW. Because it's sincere. Your wife's the best woman in the world, beautiful, lovable, brilliant, and a strong personality, take my word for it.

FELIX. You know her better than I do, I must admit. Though we're married, we don't see much of each other.

VON BERKOW. She's fond of pleasure, rather too fond, let us say. Why are you so weak as to let her have her way? Women like a little domineering? My wide experience —

FELIX. Will hardly serve here, I fancy.

VON BERKOW. It will serve, I assure you. Women are mysteries, but whoever has got to the bottom of one of these mysteries understands them all. I studied long enough at that school.

FELIX. And paid school fees enough, too.

VON BERKOW. Very high fees. The method's the thing. Stand on your dignity for once. Be harsh, be tyrannical, and if that does no good, make her life miserable. First she'll cry, next she'll sulk, then she'll throw her arms around your neck. (*Aside.*) Or perhaps around mine.

FELIX. Perhaps you're right. But then we'd have to be alone together for once, and there isn't the least prospect of that just at present.

VON BERKOW. Begin this very evening!

FELIX. At our first ball? We'll have little chance for private conversation then. In such cases our whole dialogue consists in her whispering me to relieve her of a lemonade-glass or to invite some neglected chaperon to join me in the quadrille. I can't possibly play the tyrant under those conditions.

VON BERKOW. Of course not; but follow my advice as soon as you can. You'll excuse me if I'm a bit late. My toilet will require much concentration of mind. Good-by for the present, my poor friend.

FELIX. Damn it all, don't bother me with your sympathy.

VON BERKOW (*aside as he leaves*). He has simply no idea how I pity him. [*Exit to the right.*]

FELIX (*alone*). Suppose I try Hubert's prescription? Or suppose I make up another for myself? It won't do now, when we may be interrupted by our guests at any moment. I am to play the host while my feelings are anything but hospitable. The best thing would be to plead illness and take to my bed; but my bed has been taken down and heaven only knows where it is now. Perhaps I might run away and sleep at a hotel. No, that would be cowardly! I'll stay. [*HERMINE appears in the drawing-room.*] There she is. She's really angry with me, I do believe.

[*Sits down on the sofa to the right.*]

HERMINE (*entering, aside*). Half past eight already! They

are all unpunctual because no one wants to be the first arrival. [*Sits down on an easy-chair to the left, aside.*] He's vexed with me, but I can't do anything for him. Hubert's right. He doesn't understand me. I am a rose in a vegetable garden.

[*A short pause during which they watch each other.*]

FELIX. Hermine!

HERMINE. What is it?

FELIX. Aren't we going into the drawing-room?

HERMINE. As soon as anybody comes.

FELIX. All right. [*A short pause.*]

HERMINE. It's tiresome, waiting like this.

FELIX. To be sure!

HERMINE. I'm cold.

FELIX. Then have a fire made.

HERMINE. That won't do. If I did the heat would be unbearable later on. Put my ermine cape around me, please.

FELIX. With pleasure!

[*Both rise; he helps her to put on her cape.*]

HERMINE. Thanks!

[*They take their previous seats. A pause, then the door-bell rings. They jump up.*]

FELIX. Now somebody's come.

HERMINE. At last!

FELIX. Let's go and receive them.

HERMINE. It's the Marlings, I'm sure. They're punctual.

[*They go toward the drawing-room.*]

BAUMANN (*coming toward them from the drawing-room*).
They're there, Madam!

HERMINE. Who? The Marlings?

BAUMANN. No, the gooselivers; they've just come.

HERMINE (*disappointed*). Oh!

FELIX. To your post, Baumann!

BAUMANN. Right away! [*As he is about to go off to the right, he glances through the window.*] A carriage!

HERMINE. Hurry! Open the carriage door!

BAUMANN. It drove on! I just can't wait!

[*Exit to the right.*]

HERMINE (*sitting down again*). Isn't that tiresome?

FELIX. Dreadful! (*Sitting down also.*) Hubert won't be here for some time.

HERMINE. Indeed!

FELIX. It was very nice weather today, though rather raw.

HERMINE. What are you talking that way for?

FELIX. I'm trying to start a conversation.

HERMINE. A poor attempt.

FELIX. You ought to help me.

HERMINE. What could we talk about now?

FELIX. Indeed, I've no idea.

HERMINE (*rising and going to the table*). I wonder if the cards have been put in the proper places.

[*Busies herself at the right end of the table.*]

FELIX (*going to the left end of the table*). Where do I sit, anyway?

HERMINE. There, just where you're standing.

FELIX. As far as possible from you.

HERMINE. It was the only possible arrangement.

FELIX. I'm sure of it. (*Looking at the cards.*) On my right Mother Heuer, on my left Count Walheim's aunt! I'm charmed with the way you've provided for me.

HERMINE. I must provide for my guests first of all.

FELIX. Of course. [*Sitting down at the table and pretending he is speaking to a lady beside him.*] I suppose you attend a good many receptions, Madam? Will you take white wine or red?

HERMINE. Why, what are you doing there?

FELIX. I'm rehearsing our evening's conversation at table. Only by way of precaution. (*Continuing rapidly.*) Do you often go to the theatre, Madam? Don't you? Why, of course! I often see you in the lobby; and I had that pleasure at the last concert. You say the pleasure was all yours; no, it was all mine. You like the new tenor? His high C is not merely high; it's inspired. They say

he belongs to a very good family. He has a brother in Manchester, who's a rich silk-importer; millions, they say. His sister is married to a contractor whom I met at Baden-Baden. Do you like Baden-Baden?

HERMINE (*laughing*). You're very funny.

FELIX. Don't interrupt us—Yes, Madam, away down there, just above the horizon, sits my wife. Just now I'd much rather be talking to her than to you, but Fate wills it otherwise. May I help you to another slice of calf's head?

HERMINE. Your rehearsal wasn't bad at all. I'd never have thought you could be so delightfully malicious.

FELIX (*rising*). And you only realize it after we've been four months married, just a minute before the arrival of our guests. And even this time I'm merely the stop-gap, at best good enough to help you bear a few moments of ennui.

HERMINE. Did you ever take pains to entertain me?

FELIX. I only took pains to make you happy.

HERMINE. I'm happy when I have a good time.

FELIX. I'm more exacting than that; happiness to me means a great deal more. I could not prevail upon myself to trifle with you, after I had made up my mind to pass my life with you.

HERMINE. Hush! Didn't you hear anything?

FELIX. No!

HERMINE. I thought the door-bell rang.

FELIX. You were mistaken. [*A ring.*]

HERMINE. But there's a ring now.

[*Takes off her cape and goes toward the drawing-room.*]

FELIX (*aside*). What a pity?

[*Lottie enters from the right.*]

HERMINE. What is it? Who came?

LOTTIE. The hairdresser. He left his curling irons here a while ago.

HERMINE. Get them for him, then! (*Aside.*) How annoying to have to wait so. [*LOTTIE exits to the left.*]

[*HERMINE goes to the window and drums softly on the panes. FELIX sits down at the table again and pours himself a glass of wine from a decanter.*]

HERMINE (*turning round and perceiving him*). What are you doing, Felix?

FELIX. I'm thirsty. [*Drinks.*]

HERMINE. Your conduct's inexcusable.

FELIX. A lovely state of affairs. I'm in my own house and would like to have a nice comfortable evening, but I've got to sit here in my dress clothes and be bored. I have cigars and mustn't smoke; I have wine and mustn't drink; I have a wife and am not permitted to have her to myself. Everything's been taken out of my study and it's been turned into a wardrobe. My writing-desk's in the attic, my books in the linen cupboard. Heaven only knows what's become of my easy-chair! I'm choking with rage and I've got to look pleasant! And for whose sake have I to put up with all this? For people not one of whom interests me in the least, for whom I don't care a rap; who are not even my clients. Yes, my good Madam Heuer on my right and your Ladyship the Aunt on my left, you're perfectly indifferent to me. [*Rising as if about to propose a toast.*] And you, my worthy guests, just make yourselves quite at home; for I should be heartily glad if you were at home. Bearing that in mind, I raise my glass and cry: "Fareyewell!"

HERMINE (*laughing*). Your malice is irresistible.

FELIX. But all in vain. They come, one and all, they eat their fill, chat, dance; and I must grin and bear it. But the grin will be really a sugar-coated dynamite bomb. Hermine, how very different things might be! How easily we could sit here together—tête-à-tête—and chat and—

HERMINE. And yawn. A whole evening tête-à-tête. I can't imagine what we could do to pass away the time.

FELIX. Why, we shouldn't try to pass it away; we should be glad it lingered.

HERMINE. But after all one must have something to distract one's thoughts.

FELIX. On the contrary, we should concentrate our thoughts. We would lend an ear to our good spirits, to the timid Lares and Penates. They are frightened away by noise; but silence gives them confidence. They daren't enter a ballroom; but wherever two people are alone together, two people who love each other, behold! they are there too. Don't you hear?

HERMINE. Nothing yet.

FELIX. But you will hear them. There's still too much dance music ringing in your ears. They are here already, whispering of the charm and happiness of family life. And all of a sudden the hocus-pocus disappears, invitations and ballroom and long table. We are in my study. Of course I don't mean as it is now. Let's imagine it under normal conditions.

HERMINE. I'm imagining it.

FELIX. I'm sitting in my easy-chair (*sits down in an arm-chair*) and smoking a cigar. May I light up?

HERMINE. Not on any account!

FELIX. Then we'll imagine that too. You're sitting in an easy-chair at some distance from me. Will you be so kind?

HERMINE (*sitting down on an arm-chair*). Well then, I'm sitting here.

FELIX. With a bang I close a thick book which I've been reading. You put down your needlework which is, of course, a surprise for my birthday.

HERMINE. Is that all?

FELIX. First of all we say how glad we are to be sitting in this snug room when there is such a frightful blizzard.

HERMINE (*looking out*). Why, it's not snowing at all.

FELIX. That makes no difference. We'll just suppose it is. That'll give the proper atmosphere. My lamp casts its cosy glow on your dear face, and I find you charming in your simple wrapper. The snowstorm rages ever more fiercely; you feel afraid and draw nearer. [HERMINE moves her chair nearer.] The wind whistles and howls and we hear a broken pane from the second story rattling down on the pavement. You feel still more afraid and draw nearer.

HERMINE. Nearer again?

FELIX. I banish your fear with a kiss.

HERMINE. Can't we imagine that, too?

FELIX. Certainly not! I must give it to you. [Kisses her.]

HERMINE. So far your idea pleases me very well.

FELIX. You lay your hand in mine. [HERMINE does so.]

We let the past drift before our eyes and dream of the future, when we —

HERMINE (*quickly*). I'd rather keep to the past.

FELIX. As you please. We confess all kinds of little secrets from the time when our love was just waking, when you still seemed to me only an unattainable ideal, which I merely worshipped from a distance.

HERMINE. Yes, you were terribly bashful, and I used to laugh at you.

FELIX. There we are. And I bribed old Baumann to spy upon you. Then I found out —

HERMINE. What?

FELIX. That you'd told your mother I was a wretched dancer.

HERMINE. But I was painting your portrait in secret. You see, I persuaded myself at first that it was only your interesting head which appealed to me as an artist.

FELIX. Luckily you were no artist, however.

HERMINE. And you hadn't an interesting head, either. I soon realized that it was really your heart that interested me.

FELIX. And since then you've given up painting altogether.

HERMINE. Oh, I can paint still. I'll bet I could draw a portrait of you with a few strokes, which would bear a striking resemblance.

FELIX. I don't believe it.

HERMINE. You'll see.

FELIX (*taking out his note-book*). Here's my note-book. You may draw my picture in that.

HERMINE. Now, just watch. But you must keep still.

FELIX. Stock-still!

HERMINE (*beginning to draw*). Turn your head more to the left! Now a bit further to the right again! [*Arranges his head.*] That's right! Look pleasant, please!

FELIX. Even happy, if only you'll let me.

HERMINE (*drawing*). No, no, it's not a good likeness.

FELIX (*taking the book and looking*). Is that meant for me? I think it looks more like the Old Bogy in the nursery tales.

HERMINE (*with a sigh*). I'm all out of practice. Why don't I ever have any time?

FELIX. Because you've too much time.

HERMINE. It is a great pity that I never have any time.

FELIX. You'll have to pretend to be ill again some day as you did before.

HERMINE. Yes, I only did it to have a chance to see you.

FELIX. I know. "You must come to her young ladyship right away," said old Baumann. "Her ladyship has a cold in the head." I didn't need to be told twice. But instead of declaring my love, I only felt your pulse six times, which was quite unnecessary, and delivered a lecture on colds in the head and their deeper significance.

HERMINE. Thereupon you wrote me a prescription which I kept as if it had been a love letter.

FELIX. Oh, I wrote a very different prescription in secret. Well, I'll confess, but you mustn't be too frightened. It was a fearful mixture.

HERMINE. Not poison, surely.

FELIX. No, but verses.

HERMINE (*laughing*). Why didn't you show them to me?

FELIX. As low as that I never sank, fortunately. But they were touching, heart-rending. My *heart* did always sorely *smart*, and there was in my *breast* no trace of *rest*. Thou wast alone the subject of my *thought*; of course in vain for peace I *sought*, and an unspeakable desire to *weep* haunted me even in my *sleep*.

HERMINE. Oh, you poor fellow.

FELIX. But just listen to the invocations. First I simply styled you "fair creature," but later "sweet maid" or even "goddess of my songs," and once when you didn't give me any favor at the cotillion—

HERMINE (*frankly*). There wasn't a single one left.

FELIX. Then black melancholy seized me and I called you "dæmonic serpent." That rhymed with "I'd fain repent." It was charming.

HERMINE. "Dæmonic serpent!" Thus speaks true jealousy alone. I must give you a kiss for that.

FELIX. Accepted!

[*A kiss. The door-bell rings. They jump up.*]

HERMINE. Oh, these constant interruptions!

FELIX. It's really inconsiderate of our guests not to let us alone.

HERMINE. Besides, why do they come so late? They might as well stay away now.

FELIX. You can't expect that of them after inviting them yourself. [BAUMANN *enters from the right.*]

FELIX (*to BAUMANN*). Well, who is it?

BAUMANN. Nobody.

HERMINE. Who rang the bell then?

BAUMANN. I'm almost afraid to tell.

FELIX. Who was it? Out with it.

BAUMANN. I did. I went out on the street to see if there wasn't a carriage coming yet. Then the door slammed behind me and I was locked out.

HERMINE. Who ever heard of such a thing! Take care that we're not disturbed for nothing again.

FELIX. Yes, don't let a soul in! See that they pass only over your dead body! Bar the door! Raise the draw-bridge! I'll defend myself against my guests to the last drop of my blood.

BAUMANN. Of course you're joking, sir. We've already been enjoying the prospect so long—

HERMINE (*angrily*). Yes, we're enjoying ourselves awfully! Go now, Baumann!

BAUMANN. Right away. [*Exit to the right.*]

HERMINE. Felix!

FELIX. What is it?

HERMINE. Do you really think the people who are coming tonight are false friends?

FELIX. Not true friends, at any rate.

HERMINE. But Hubert's your friend, isn't he?

FELIX. Perhaps. He has reason to be grateful to me.

HERMINE. Grateful to you? Why?

FELIX. I saved his life once.

HERMINE. You did? You didn't ever tell me anything about it.

FELIX. Why should I?

HERMINE. Please tell me!

FELIX. Well, it was just before our engagement. Baron Hubert had a little affair of honor. There had long been a rumor in society that he was paying assiduous attention to a certain lady, a lady who happened to be already married.

HERMINE. Married! (*Aside.*) Oh, the hypocrite!

FELIX. One fine day, the injured husband heard of these attentions; a duel was the result and Baron Hubert was seriously wounded.

HERMINE. Go on! Go on!

FELIX. The doctors had already given him up. I was an old schoolmate of his and did my very best to save him. I succeeded. That's all.

HERMINE (*aside*). And he,—oh, fie! Was I blind, then? Is that the sort of man one tries to please? (*Aloud*.) Perhaps, Felix, the dreadful snowstorm is keeping people away.

FELIX (*gaily*). Why, it's not snowing at all.

HERMINE. If only it would snow!

FELIX. Do you really mean that?

HERMINE. There was so much I still wanted to say to you, and what do we care for those strangers, anyway?

FELIX. I can't deny you're right there.

HERMINE. Just let them come; we will act as if they weren't here at all.

FELIX. If you think—

HERMINE (*with sudden passion*). I've deserved this lesson, Felix, I—I—

FELIX. What's the matter?

HERMINE (*throwing herself on his breast*). Felix, I love you.

FELIX (*tenderly*). Hermine, my wife!

HERMINE. You silly, why didn't you open my eyes before? Could I believe in the joys of a world I had never seen. In this world which is small, yet greater than the great world. Let me be your pupil. Teach me the marvels of that profound, quiet happiness that outweighs a thousandfold the noisy intoxication of pleasure. Let us flee from everybody, far, far away!

FELIX. Do we need to flee further than our own home, Hermine? Are not these four walls protection enough? Let us live here for one another and for our true friends! That selfish and insincere crowd, those people who are agreeable only by calculation, whose attentions are prompted by vanity, who understand friendliness but not friendship, affectation but not affection, shall cross our threshold tonight for the first time and the last.

HERMINE. For the first time and the last! And now just watch!

[*Goes to the table and rearranges some of the cards.*]

FELIX (*in the foreground aside*). And yet they say there are no miracles. The first time we've been alone together in four months is the evening of our first great ball. [*Observing HERMINE, he goes up to the table.*] Why, what are you doing there?

HERMINE. Just look!

FELIX. I'm not sitting between the two relics of the good old days any longer. Where, then?

HERMINE (*triumphantly*). Here!

FELIX (*looking*). Beside you! What will people say?

HERMINE. Whatever they please. We two belong together.

FELIX. That's what I say, too.

HERMINE (*producing a little card*). And here's my program. Be kind enough to put yourself down for some dances at once.

FELIX. For which ones?

HERMINE. For as many as possible.

FELIX (*writing on the programme*). If you insist.

HERMINE. You must pay court to me, too, I insist on that. I want to vex them all.

FELIX. It shall be promptly attended to. Yes, they'll all be bored.

HERMINE. And we'll set the clocks two hours fast so that they'll leave early.

FELIX. We might also get up a little conflagration. A sort of general panic.

HERMINE. Whatever you say! I hate them all!

FELIX. Hermine, even at our betrothal I wasn't so happy. I must versify again:

Fair creature, thou hast sore sickness endured
But now, thank God, thou art quite cured.

HERMINE. Splendid. Yes, I'm cured for good.

FELIX (*looking at the clock*). Do you know what time it is?

HERMINE. No!

FELIX. It'll be ten o'clock in five minutes.

HERMINE. Impossible! And our guests—

FELIX. Let him explain who can. Could Heaven for once have worked a miracle in favor of a mere husband? Experience says no.

HERMINE. Why, it's simply extraordinary. I wrote all the invitations with my own hand.

FELIX. Did you post them yourself, too?

HERMINE. No, I gave them to Lottie. Surely she hasn't —
[Rings.]

LOTTIE (*from the drawing-room*). Yes, Madam!

HERMINE. I gave you the invitations the other day? You posted them, didn't you?

LOTTIE. I gave them to Baumann, because he happened to be going out just then.

FELIX (*opens the door to the right and calls*). Baumann!

BAUMANN (*from the right*). Yes, sir! I've seen to everything.

FELIX. The invitations, too?

BAUMANN (*taken aback*). The invitations? I don't know —

LOTTIE. Well, I gave them to you last Wednesday morning.

BAUMANN (*repeating mechanically*). Last Wednesday morning? You did — ? I must have posted them, I must — (*Remembering.*) Of course I posted them. I had the same coat on as today. This was the pocket I stuck them in and —

FELIX (*feeling in BAUMANN'S pocket*). And here they stick still.

BAUMANN. Oh, what a fool I am? [Drops to the sofa.]

FELIX (*drawing a number of little letters, all the same size from BAUMANN'S pocket*). That's delightful! It's no wonder nobody declined. Our guests are in old Baumann's pocket! (*Opening one of the letters and reading*): "Dr. and Mrs. Volkart have the honor," etc. I suppose it's the same thing in the other letters — Victory! We're saved.

HERMINE. And I've been running my feet off for a week. And all the nice things to eat.

FELIX. We'll eat them all ourselves.

HERMINE. Lottie, run to the kitchen, quick! Save whatever can still be saved. [*Exit LOTTIE to the right.*]

FELIX (*to BAUMANN, who is still lying, as if dazed, on the sofa*). Cheer up, you old brick! It's not a hanging matter.

BAUMANN (*contritely*). Oh, Madam, Sir, send me away. It's all I deserve. It's true I had the honor and pleasure of carrying you in my arms, Madam, but I'm no more good. The thought that our little baroness has now become a lady, a lady who gives great balls, that thought made me happy beyond all bounds, and in my joy, in my happiness I must have forgotten—

HERMINE. You're forgiven already, Baumann.

FELIX. Forgiven! That's not the way to put it at all. If I were a prince, Baumann, I'd certainly give you a patent of nobility at the very least. You've prepared for me the most pleasing disappointment of my whole life. Give me your hand.

HERMINE. And give me the other. [*The door-bell rings.*]

BAUMANN (*jumping up*). Some one's just come.

[*Exit quickly to the right.*]

FELIX. There's faith for you. He is still hoping.

HERMINE. But if guests were to come after all—

FELIX. Without being invited? Of course they won't! But tomorrow I'll spread the report that Dr. and Mrs. Volkart will receive this winter only from 5 to 6 A.M. And now—

HERMINE. Now we'll celebrate the occasion of our first party—*tête-à-tête*. The table's set, the rooms illuminated for the festivities, we ourselves are in evening dress, and the fun will be fast and furious.

FELIX. And we'll have an excellent supper. Now do you hear what the good Lares and Penates whisper?

HERMINE. Very well!

BAUMANN (*returning*). The pianist has come.

FELIX. Then just tell him to sit down at the grand-piano in the ballroom and play a waltz. [*Exit BAUMANN via the drawing-room with a stately bow.*] Madam, may I ask for the first waltz?

HERMINE (*showing her programs*). You have already put yourself down for it, sir!

[*Waltz is played behind the scenes.*]

FELIX. Your arm!

HERMINE. For life!

[*Exit via the drawing-room. The music continues. The stage is deserted for a moment, then the door-bell rings.*]

BAUMANN (*comes out of the drawing-room and goes to the window*). Who's that ringing now? It's Baron von Berkow; I know his carriage. But my master and mistress want to be alone. [*A louder ring; he shuts the window.*] Yes, ring till you're tired! I've no intention of answering.

[*Folds his arms and sits on the sofa. FELIX and HERMINE are seen dancing in the drawing-room. As the waltz continues and the bell is again rung violently, the curtain falls.*]

TO ADOLF WILBRANDT ON HIS SEVENTIETH
ANNIVERSARY *



ET, oh Master of Palmyra,†—
You whose strength is ever young,—
On your never-weary lyre a
Laurel crown today be hung.
Life for you is one with doing,
One with battle and with song;
In the front you'd still be hewing,
Though your day were centuries long.

Rest you never yet have captured,
Since with inner glory bright
Your great eyes beheld, enraptured,
Earth, and loved her at first sight.
Daily with unsated pleasure
You would quaff and quaff again,
That no drop of all her treasure
Might have flowed for you in vain.

Joy for you takes form, and sadness
Even to a song is made;
You, with high creative gladness,
Need no Care-Releaser's aid.
Calm you smile, when youths around you
Moan their mortal destiny;
Nature ever yet has found you
Reconciled to her decree.

* Translator: Charles Wharton Stork.

† In Wilbrandt's most famous play, *The Master of Palmyra*, the hero is miraculously endowed with eternal life and strength. In the end he is compelled to seek the aid of Death, the "Care-Releaser," later alluded to in the poem. Cf. Vol. XVI of this series.

LUDWIG VON HEIMANN

SPRING STORM



Well you know a man must think not
 That his tenure is for aye,
 But must play his part and shrink not
 As he nears the settling-day.
 Though the restless hours be flying,
 He by action frames his fate,
 And on deathless deeds relying
 Makes each passing moment great.

Constant to yourself as ever
 Go with us yet many a year;
 You to rouse our best endeavor,
 We to drink your words of cheer.
 If no festal jubilation
 Visits you with din and blaze,
 Take instead your friends' oblation,
 You who ne'er have sought for praise.

TO EDUARD MÖRIKE * †

THROUGH your quiet-souled attendance
 Upon verse and your vocation
 Runs a holy self-dependence
 And a smiling resignation.

Where's the need for you to cherish
 Far-brought beauty, far-sought treasure?
 Of your house and of your parish
 You are king by God's good pleasure.

EPISTLE TO PAUL HEYSE †

STILL in my heart the tone of your farewell
 Sounds, as at eve reëchoes to the ear
 The silver message of the matins bell.

* Mörike was a pastor-poet. Cf. Vol. VII of this series.

† Translator: Charles Wharton Stork.

And though I answered you with voice unclear,
 Stammered, and stood before you helplessly,
 Amazed with joy and awed with rapturous fear,

You felt, as hand pressed hand, how frank and free
 My soul responded to what yours had given,
 Knowing the worth that hour had held for me.

Then afterward, when you from me were riven,
 I stood a long time staring into space,
 Half blinded by the glow of that new heaven,—

Until there came a voice that waxed apace,
 A longing that in words more fitly wrought
 I should attempt my gratitude to trace.

And in my doubt and lack of skill I sought
 The *terza rima*, with whose golden chime,
 As in a cup, sweet music you had caught;

A cup wherein to this our grudging time
 You offered vintage of a nobler day
 Ripened by sunny memory sublime;

A cup which you beside the purple bay
 Wreathed with Italian roses as a gift
 From South to North to deck their bridal gay.

For thousands who in dreams alone may drift
 Down with the current to the land of flowers
 Your guiding soul to purer joy doth lift.

And thousands more, who know yon orange bowers
 By actual vision, join them to your band;
 Your Muse their eager fancy richly dowers.

You early felt the magic of that land
And gave your tribute as a vassal true,
Who pays his debt with deeds of heart and hand.

You mirrored in your verse that heaven's blue,
And yourself heard upon Sorrento's shore
The call of Mignon's longing, ever new.

The love of classic beauty evermore
Dwells in the harmony of German song
And thrills each German bosom to the core.

There grew the laurel, and with valor strong
The Teuton bled to gain the victor's prize
In cruel wars that raged for centuries long.

Vain strife! till one more happy and more wise,
A peaceful hero, won the trophy bright,—
The King of German Art with poet eyes.

He did not urge barbarian hordes to fight,
Yet none the less that famous land he won
By God's good-favor and his own good might.

He came and saw and conquered; like the sun
His mild brave look shone through the misty pall,
Which broke, and straight the time of doubt was done.

Then, like the urge of Spring pervading all,
Fresh flowers bedecked the tomb of many a sage,
And buried gods responded to the call.

Legends that slumbered in some moldering page,
Roused to new action by that glowing flood,
Revived the wonders of the golden age.

All this, too truly great to keep such good
For his own victor brow as garland meet,
He gave his people as none other could.

Laying the splendid offering at their feet,
He then led home that child of classic face,
Iphigenia, his fair daughter sweet.

There he devised and built a holy place
In which to serve his gods with fitting prayers,
A temple deftly wrought of pillared grace.

He went his way at last, and evil heirs
Came in, unapt to reverence, apt instead
To waste the mighty treasure unawares.

Where he had called up Beauty from the dead,
They found mid heaps of dust a weary task;
“Yon statue’s but a stone,” their wisdom said.

And that no breath of life might stir the mask,—
God pity them!—they bottled Art up whole
In Master Manikin’s hermetic flask.

In Goethe’s track there came a pilgrim shoal
Of students in an annual parade,
Rich in state bounty, passing poor in soul.

And everything was measured, counted, weighed,
As if old Romulus had intended Rome
To be a show-place for the pedant’s trade.

That from the Capitol to Peter’s dome,
From Palatine to Quirinal there swells
An undiminished wave of living foam,

They do not dream within their musty cells;
But bringing home dry books, they come unwet
From yon refreshing Heliconian wells.

Such did that wondrous land become (which yet
Might be a school for all the arts of life) —
Naught else now but a curio-cabinet!

A throng, for academic misdeeds rife,
Pouring through every church and art collection,
Tortured their weary souls with futile strife,—

Until at last their minds were a confection
Of busts and pictures ranged in disarray,
A tangled skein of names without connection.

But to assuage their disappointment they
Painted with many a shrewd and knavish trick
All modern Italy a lifeless gray.

They called her art a varnish, pale and thick,
And found her folk unworthy of their race,
A very villainous, unsavory clique.

Thinking the name "Italian" a disgrace,
The tourist shunned the native everywhere,
And only met the servile and the base.

He knew the people by some instinct rare,
He who in thirty days, on duty bent,
Saw every church and picture that was there!

So they deceived themselves with vain intent,
And going back no wiser than before,
Heard not the gods laugh and the Muse lament.

But then came you, modest and full of lore,
To drink of wisdom at Rome's titan breast;
You did not win so much — and yet won more.

With bookish choke-damp you were not distressed;
You gazed across your parchment to behold
The streets, the market-place with poet zest.

There 'mid the flowers and sunlight was unrolled
The primal picture, and the vital spring
Of Beauty bathed the landscape as of old.

There before church and palace hovering
Flitted madonna forms to Raphael dear,
And bards by whom the Muses once could sing.

On your receptive heart was imaged clear
The marble altar, still with glory bright,
Of inward harmony and faith austere.

And when the goal before you gleamed with light,
The power of Nature you could well invoke,
For only at her bidding would you write.

Not that at home your genius never woke,
But 'twas the soul of human purity
In Arrabiata and Annina spoke.

How seldom are we what we seem to be,
We others who 'mid labyrinthine ways
Deny our better selves continually.

But you have early won your poet bays
By conquest for humanity, no less,
And men must join in yielding you the praise.

A hero you, the Fatherland to bless,
For bravely fighting you have led us all
Where Nature bides in tranquil steadfastness.

And after, in the lofty temple hall
Of him whose wealth you guarded safe from harm
You hung your pious offering on the wall.

There unto those whose willing hearts were warm
You showed a life to noble purpose true,
Which e'en in my young mind took lasting form.

I somehow felt both far and near to you;
Surpassing far in my poor undesert,
But nearer as my love for knowledge grew.

You were my chosen guide, with wisdom girt,—
Though to be sure this modern age has grown
For gratitude and learning too inert.

The scholar now, with empty pride full-blown,
Will strike the best-won reputation dead,
And mar the master's fame to mend his own.

They tear the crown from every worthy head—
For so they think to serve the cause of Art—
And insolently crown themselves instead.

This mob in every tumult plays its part;
And though forsooth all other gods they doubt,
Believing in themselves with all their heart,

They run to each new idol with the rout.
They sit enthroned in desert vacancy
Whence all true wonder has been rooted out.

But it appeared a worthier course to me
To bend both head and heart before my guide.
The man who dedicates himself is free.

Thus, even ere the alternating tide
Of life had brought me near you, I had made
My stand by you and trusted there to bide.

You let me stay beside you, and I stayed;
I drew from out your treasure to my fill,
While with my little you appeared well paid.

And when I doubted of my slender skill,
When the goal seemed too distant from my clutch,
When nerveless and despairing sank my will,

You would sustain me with a single touch
And send me on my way with strong intent.
Courage you gave, and courage is so much!

And when I took my staff once more and went
To follow out my traveler's vocation,
I felt—how deeply!—what the parting meant.

It was a parting, but no separation;
For no mere stretch of space can break the bond
That holds two men with willing obligation.

Therefore I thought of you, as late mine eye
Beheld for the first time the sacred town
And palace-bordered Arno gliding by.

For then that medieval world looked down
And spoke to me, till fables became true
Which to my childhood told of high renown,

And with the old enchantment charmed anew,—
A magic that, when life grew dark with cloud,
Poured rays of sunlight through the rifts of blue—

I half divined the wondrous living crowd
Of visions, with whose undiminished grace
Your genius had our modern world endowed.

The first great masters of the poet race
Prepared a path with sunshine ever fair,
And the Muse led you to your destined place,—

High on whose summit through the glowing air
Shines the commandment: Follow thy desire,
Trust thy true self, and have no other care.

Who in his heart can cherish not the fire
Which from that beacon streams in living flame,
Let him not touch the chisel or the lyre.

If e'er to me a flash of genius came
I know not yet. The world sees only deeds;
You test the will, if it be free from blame.

So, when I carried back the garnered seeds
Which in the south had ripened into grain,
And brought it back to serve my country's needs,

I humbly made a vow that no poor strain
Of song I had should, like a jester's bell,
Be tuned to serve the idols Lust and Gain.

It was a providence which then befell,
That on the threshold you should meet me, who
With song and praise had led to Beauty's well.

And 'twas my happy fate that firmer grew
 The earlier bond, and that you then should speak
 The one word " friend " which raised me close to you.

Full many an hour, full many a day and week
 Have drifted by, and still with shamefast pride
 I thank the day which then for me did break.

For a bright star is now my earthly guide,
 Circling above me with its glittering ray,
 And though my feeble strength be sorely tried,

I hold my head erect and go my way.
 And still a deep desire my soul doth lift,
 That by the end of this my mortal day

I may be worthy of your princely gift.

HUMOR *

GOD HUMOR is a sturdy sprite,
 To him my faith I proffer;
 And though the world go far from right,
 I'll leave him for no scoffer.
 For he who knows not how to laugh,
 He is forsooth a man of chaff,—
 Let him not nurse his sorrow,
 But drown himself tomorrow.

And though it thunders, and the rack
 Of clouds be thick and gloomy,
 If I've the rascal on my back,
 My comfort's not far from me;
 For with his beaming smile of mirth
 The contradictions of the earth
 He well knows how to banish,
 As clouds in sunlight vanish.

* Translator: Charles Wharton Stork.

And where a dandy, cringing sly,
Some great man's train would follow,
Or where a pack of fools go by
With heads as proud as hollow,—
God Humor sets, as sure as fate
A cap and bells on every pate,
For he's an unseen agent
In every earthly pageant.

He offers spectacles to all
And each who boldly asks there;
He sees the world as carnival,
And all the men as masks there.
The beggar's rags, the prince's braid
Are naught but merry masquerade;
He laughs till tears come dancing
At all such petty prancing.

God Humor is a sturdy sprite,
And why should men abuse him?
His mischief helps the world go right,
So why should we refuse him?
Who lightly smiles, has hope of wit,
Who freely laughs has all of it,
And he who takes it evil,—
I wish him at the devil.

HUGO VON HOFMANNSTHAL

By PHILIPP SEIBERTH, A.M.

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THE Viennese poet, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, born February 1, 1874, occupies a unique position in the literature of this age. Until quite recently he has stood wholly apart from the leading movement in modern European literature, known as "Naturalism." Realistic presentment of life was demanded by an age in which scientific facts threatened to discredit every other view of things. This scientific revaluation and the social upheaval that came with it, took possession of literature for their own ends. Thus the drama and the novel were enlisted in a movement aiming at a telling exposition of actual conditions and problems rather than at artistic representation. Literature proved a very effective means to these practical ends. With a close reproduction of reality for its object, "art" came to mean the best technique for naturalistic representation. In this new phase literature was in a literal sense the result of life, and found its justification in the needs of life.

Meanwhile poetry as the presentment and interpretation of things under the form of beauty was falling into neglect. Hofmannsthal's manner of writing appears in part as a reaction against this high tide of ultra-realism. He is a man of leisure and wealth, of a pronounced aristocratic temper; a poet-nobleman with an aversion to close contact with work and practical action, at a time when his type is felt to be a decided anachronism and is virtually threatened with extinction. But his love of what is specifically poetic and purely artistic makes him the most conspicuous adherent of classical and romantic tradition of our time. The affinity most uniting him with romanti-

cism is his sensitiveness to every impression of beauty. Romanticist he is also by his aloofness from real life, amounting to nervous self-seclusion, which is certainly one of the specific qualities of the romantic temper.

The question of moment, and the interpreter's hardest task, is the poet's personality and outlook upon life. Hofmannsthal is a serious and reflective poet. His earlier verse is overcast with a haunting melancholy which admits of no humor nor of any healthy view of things. Since this sad humor is really the dominant note in his disposition, a brief analysis of it must be attempted. He is under a heavy and persistent sense of the futilities of existence. In view of the uncertainty of life, the pessimistic mood is intelligible enough. Hofmannsthal's melancholy is at bottom the consciousness of the discrepancy between the real world and the poet's vision of a world of perfection and beauty. He contemplates life under the aspect of beauty mainly, and upon that score disappointments are many, since life is largely without beauty. Esthetic enjoyment, moreover, is rarely complete and the nervous analyst of experience must arrive at discouraging conclusions. The superlative of skepticism is reached when Hofmannsthal declares that "no direct way leads from poetry into life, nor from life into poetry." In his dramatic scenes which are crystallizations of the poet's own inner experience he wears quite habitually the inky cloak of the "great melancholy that is mixed in with all we do." It is hardly necessary to say that in the poet of psychological impressionism, for whom a life of esthetic sensations is the be-all and end-all, melancholy is not the ghastly thing of horror and gloom, but a "Goddess that dwells with Beauty—Beauty that must die, and Joy whose hand is ever at his lips bidding adieu—ay, in the very temple of Delight veiled Melancholy has her sovereign shrine." This melancholy has a psychological value of great poetical power and not without intellectual meaning, but as an all-pervasive, ever-present state of feeling it seems an unfortunate habit of mind, weak and enervating.

It is therefore pleasing to observe in Hofmannsthal's recent comedies a strain of excellent humor, surprising in one hitherto so utterly devoid of it. It seems that the maturing intellect has again proved its sanative power.

As a thinker Hofmannsthal is not in any definite sense a didactic or philosophical poet. The true poet is temperamentally incapable and impatient of close, systematic thinking. We get from Hofmannsthal something like scattered philosophical impressions, entirely without firm cognitive foundations for a rational interpretation of experience. While it is true that poets are not philosophers and should not seek in an emotional and amateurish way to encroach upon the domain of clear thinking, it is imperative that they cleanse their reflection into sound wisdom and truth by severe mental discipline. Schiller and Goethe are the illustrious examples to be followed by all poets who wish to achieve greatness in this way. Hofmannsthal's habit of philosophizing and analyzing inner experience, in a purely subjective manner and with sincere introspection, makes many of his productions singularly interesting as human documents, good material for the psychologist of the poetic mind. It may be said of Hofmannsthal, after all, that he is preëminently an artist, and that implies that he is a master of form, and as regards pure form Hofmannsthal and Stefan George are today unrivaled. Nor is their astonishing facility and elegance a mere virtuosity of words, as the detractors of these poets are pleased to stigmatize it. Form is indeed never anything purely external. Formal beauty cannot be dissociated from the content or substance of the art-work; in all genuine art they are one. Hofmannsthal has expressed this convincingly and simply enough in one of his finished essays: "I believe, or rather I hope, that we have at last got beyond seeking to make a distinction between 'inward' and 'outward' in art or in life." The content of Hofmannsthal's art consisting essentially in subtle reflections and impressions of a very self-conscious poet, with a large capacity for the esthetic valu-



HUGO VON HOFMANNSTHAL

ation of life in the highly-cultivated, reserved, aristocratic sphere, has for its necessary and close correlative a refined aristocratic form. His avowed cult of the word, notably of the adjective, which has fallen under the censure of some critics, is the very quintessence of his verse. An artistic web of words is to Hofmannsthal the most perfect thing conceivable—and rightly so, for the magic of the word is the beginning and end of the poet's art.

The poetical compositions of Hofmannsthal admit of a clear division into two groups. In the first are his original pieces, poems and dramatic scenes; in the second, translations and poetical reproductions of old plays. The body of his lyrical verse is rather small; there are a few short stories; everything else is in the dramatic form. The dramatic pieces are not plays for the stage; they are short scenes of a very lyrical character. It is difficult to say and perhaps useless to speculate as to whether Hofmannsthal lacks the gift of invention and construction for larger and specifically dramatic productions. The comedies at least seem to be good acting plays. His poetic one-act plays and scenes, by their concentration and intimacy, appear to stand to the drama of the normal length in the same relation as the short story stands to the novel. The form seems to be natural and adequate for the substance of which these playlets are made. Their reflective cast and lyricism, together with the usual absence of action, remove them from the categories under which the drama is usually discussed in dramatic theory and criticism. They are a variation of the species *Seelendrama* ("Drama of the soul"). Hofmannsthal creates situations in which the characters are under severe strain of suspense or psychological trial, vibrating with nervous cerebration and emotion and under a strong sense of fate. Usually a long soliloquy is the heart of the scene. It is extremely hard to bring into clear feature the elusive symbolism, dreamlike unreality, pensive melancholy and artistic *finesse* which are the essence of Hofmannsthal's art. They are the *imponderabilia* which are spoiled by clear definition.

One is astonished to find in his first work, *Yesterday* (1891), the same maturity of artistic finish and psychological discernment as in any of the later ones. Hofmannsthal's beginning was quite precocious and there is not much evidence of change or growth. In *Yesterday* a young nobleman is cured of the crotchet of believing that the present moment alone has reality and that yesterday is dead. He learns to understand the power of the past by the discovery of his wife's unfaithfulness. The setting is in the Italian Renaissance, Hofmannsthal's favorite *milieu*. After the fashion of a true romanticist he looks wistfully back upon this period of great artists and of reckless, unrestrained enjoyment of life. It is scarcely unjust to recognize a trait of weak sentimentalism in the romanticist's eagerness to invest the past with an excess of radiant beauty which in the light of modern knowledge does not belong to it. An implicit disdain is thereby shed upon the present. Fundamentally, romanticism is reactionary and hostile to a healthy absorption in the present life. However, the Italian Renaissance, notwithstanding its corruption and criminality, is entitled to a large portion of admiration, and its romantic revival is far more justified than the glorification of the Middle Ages in German romanticism. Hofmannsthal really enriches us by taking from this period what has lasting value and fascination.

The *Death of Titian* (1892) is a glowing panegyric of Renaissance art. The dying master is within the house at work upon his last canvas, while his disciples are assembled on the terrace of the garden overlooking Venice and conversing together on the great Venetian's art. It is an unforgettable scene which endears itself by the sincerity of its enthusiasm, couched in language of the highest beauty.

Death and the Fool (1900) is a modern morality-play. The death of the wealthy and over-refined aristocrat is the theme of the scene, a situation recalling the medieval *Everyman*, that most remarkable dramatic crystallization of the medieval view of life and death. When *Everyman*

is on the last steps of life the things of earth leave him sadly in the lurch; Good Deeds alone accompanies him into eternity. An austere *memento mori* speaks from this epitome of medieval piety. Hofmannsthal's Dives has nothing in common with his medieval cousin. As an intellectual aristocrat he has always stood aloof from life—a spectator, not a participant. His long monologue, resembling in many features that of Faust, is a confession of a lost life wasted in egotistical self-seclusion.—“What do I know of life; I seem to have lived it, but at best I was an observer, unable to enter in. When others gave and received, I stood aside, born mute of soul. I have utterly lost myself in artificial things, until I saw the sun with dead eyes and heard with dead ears, under an inexplicable curse, at no time fully conscious, nor ever without consciousness.” He is a melancholy, bitter fool of life. Death comes to him not as a gruesome spectre, but as a great god of the soul who is present in the falling of leaves, and in the great moments of life is felt as a sacred, mystic power. The fool is utterly terrified at the thought of parting from life without having lived it. Death cannot grant respite or delay, but he will teach him to know and honor life before the end. The dead who loved him, the mother, the girl, and the friend, appear, revealing to him their world of intense feeling which he in cold indifference never understood nor shared. This vision of the meaning of life frees his dead heart and he dies relieved of the curse. The play is not without serious faults. It is not altogether convincing. Is it probable that, after a life of no genuine emotion, the man temperamentally incapable of healthy and sincere feeling should suddenly at death apprehend what by the very predestination of his character he could not know? Such a man would die as he lived. But aside from this, the poem is valuable enough through the truthful self-analysis of the Fool, whose experience is typical of the disabilities of those who are barred from life by many inward and outward inhibitions, and who feel the curse of hopeless isolation.

The main import of this modern interlude is the significant ethical inference that we must not withdraw nervously and haughtily from humanity. It is a *memento vivere* wholly in keeping with the modern gospel of life.

The Woman in the Casement (1899) is one of three pieces in a volume entitled *Theater in Versen*. Again the setting is Italian. It is a scene of tragic life. In the evening twilight the woman stands in the balcony awaiting her lover. Out of amorous expectation mixed with a bodeful sense of impending evil Hofmannsthal creates a subtle monoscene of strained suspense and changing psychological tints. "I understand so well the unfaithful women, as though I had the gift of reading in their souls. I see in their eyes desire to yield themselves, to tremble in unknown forbidden pleasure; their love of play and willingness to venture all; how they delight in triumph and in sensuousness, in plotting and in giving pain."—(Andrea in *Yesterday*.) When the husband suddenly comes in she knows her fate. In hysterical defiance she unfolds the whole truth, and he, silent, unrelenting, strangles her with the silken ladder which she had suspended for her lover.

In the *Marriage of Sobeide* (1899) the *milieu* is oriental. Because her parents wish it Sobeide has married an elderly merchant who is a good and a wise man. When she confesses to him that she has long loved a poor young man, he releases her and she goes at once to her lover's house, to find that she has been deceived by a heartless fellow who had never thought of marrying her. She returns to her husband and in his garden she kills herself. A meagre account of the plot, inadequate as it always is, can convey no idea of the psychological fabric which the poet has made.

The third piece of this group, *The Adventurer* (1899), is the apotheosis of the epicurean man of the world and adventurer of love. The unconcealed admiration for the man of the Casanova type is one of the least edifying things which we get from the mundane esthete Hofmannsthal.

It is difficult to regard without aversion this purely hedonistic philosophy and practice of life, and it is here that one might wish that the poet had set himself a worthier aim. As to dramatic structure and artistic workmanship, it is one of his best performances.

The Emperor and the Witch (1906) and *The Mine at Falun* (1906) are symbolical fairy-plays, so allegorical and abstract as to be nearly unintelligible. In German literature, at least, such an extreme of highly-wrought symbolism has not been attempted before except, perhaps, in Hauptmann's *Pippa*. In an age of clear thinking such perplexing mystic things seem anomalous. For those who love it there is here both obscurity of presentment and presentment of obscurity.

The totality of Hofmannsthal's original compositions leaves one under a sense of indecision and doubt. Notwithstanding so much that is interesting and beautiful in them, they have no healthy life. He who looks for a wholesome philosophy of life or for an invigorating ethical idealism, through which the great poets of the world have been leaders in the education of mankind, will find this poet rather disappointing. Pessimistic resignation and fatalism underlie his representation of life, and his cult of the beautiful is mingled with misgivings and doubt.

It remains briefly to speak of the poetical reproductions into which Hofmannsthal has turned a large part of his energies. We are now in the period of "World-literature" predicted and inaugurated by Goethe. By the study and revival of older literature and in the cosmopolitan literary exchange of the present time, we are carrying out the program which he outlined. By his wide acquaintance with foreign literature, ancient and modern, together with his exceptional gift of recasting old dramas into the modern mold, Hofmannsthal has become conspicuous in this field of poetic activity. His method is not that of translating or rewriting with historical fidelity, but rather of freely adapting the original to the taste of the modern period.

He appears to follow the example set by Goethe in his *Iphigenia* where the Greek heroine is completely transformed into the modern poet's ideal of perfect womanhood. In a similar way Hofmannsthal transforms Electra, Œdipus, and Alcestis, his procedure varying somewhat in each play. Electra is changed into a hysterical superwoman, a demon of hate and revenge, with a decidedly psychopathic cast. Œdipus impresses one as a symbolical phantasmagoria of blind fate, while Alcestis is invested throughout with modern thought and feeling. Little of the specifically Greek is left. Hofmannsthal manifestly takes these ancient subjects wholly in a typical sense, and does, as a poet, what any modern reader will instinctively do — that is, he reshapes the behavior of the characters in accordance with modern norms of conduct; and since Hofmannsthal is the artist of psychological impressionism he sees and presents them under the forms of this art. This is an altogether legitimate thing for the poet to do. The result may not be satisfactory to those outside of this sphere of art, but it is certainly very interesting and not without a larger significance. In the same spirit he has made his paraphrase of Otway's *Venice Preserved*, and we can accept his version all the more readily since the psychological foundations of this drama are modern, the transformation being therefore less radical than in the plays from the Greek. One might rightly say that it has been made into a better play by as much as the modern poet possesses greater skill of psychological and artistic presentation. Quite recently Hofmannsthal has re-wrought the old morality of *Everyman* in a singular way. Here he uses the idiom of Hans Sachs with great skill and, while the plot is essentially taken over, it is stripped of what not unfrequently seems awkward and crude in the medieval play and elevated into the freer atmosphere of universal humanity.

Traits have lately appeared in Hofmannsthal's poetical makeup of which there was no trace in his earlier produc-

tions. There is, notably, a vein of fine and unexpected humor in his two comedies, *The Rosenkavalier* (1911) and *Christina's Homecoming* (1910). They give us a sense of a permutation of temper and of open possibilities and, at any rate, of a happy triumph over the onesidedness of the poet's earlier phase. As Hofmannsthal is still a young man we may, in view of his achievement thus far, venture the prediction that he will, eventually, be among the greater German poets.

HUGO VON HOFMANNSTHAL

DEATH AND THE FOOL

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

DEATH

CLAUDIO, *a nobleman*

HIS SERVANT

CLAUDIO'S MOTHER

A YOUNG GIRL *abandoned by* CLAUDIO } *Departed Spirits*

ONE OF CLAUDIO'S EARLY FRIENDS

DEATH AND THE FOOL (1900)

TRANSLATED BY JOHN HEARD, JR.

CLAUDIO'S HOUSE. TIME — THE TWENTIES OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

CLAUDIO'S *study furnished in the Empire style. In the background, right and left, are large windows; in the centre a glass door leading out to a balcony, from which some wooden stairs descend to the garden. On the left is a white folding door; on the right a similar one, concealed by a green silk curtain, leads to the bedroom. By the window, on the left, stands a desk with an armchair before it. Along the window-pillars are glass cabinets filled with curios. Against the wall, on the right, stands a darkened shrine, carved in Gothic style; above it hang ancient musical instruments, and a portrait by one of the Italian Masters; it is almost black with age. The color of the wall paper is light, almost white. Stucco with gilt decorations.*

CLAUD. (*sitting by the window. The evening sun shines in*).

Behold, the distant hills stand clothed with light,
As though enameled by the sunset haze,
And o'er them, hanging, alabaster white,
A crown of clouds with golden tips ablaze.
Thus painted masters, in the days of yore,
The bed of clouds, that their Madonnas bore.
The shades of drifting clouds, a soft, deep blue,
Pass o'er the rocky walls of the abyss,
While shadows of the crags, of darker hue,
Cloak the broad valleys 'neath the precipice,
Changing the prairies' emerald green to gray,
And paler colors of the waning day;
While peak to peak flashes the sunset's fire.
How closely knit to mine own heart's desire
Are they who dwell upon those hillsides gaunt,
Whose meagre acres, tilled and reaped by hand,
Give rest from labor, and supply each want!
All wild and wondrous, ranging o'er the land,

The winds of early dawn which barefoot come,
 Laden with all the fragrance of the heather,
 Arouse them from their sleep; the wild bees hum,
 And round about them is God's bright, warm
 weather.

Their very life is one with Nature's self,
 And Nature is the goal they strive to reach.
 The weariness of toil brings rest itself,
 And thus they live, finding rewards in each.
 Down from the vault of Heav'n, the sun's great ball
 Rolls headlong, plunging in the distant waves,
 And sinks from sight amid the crystal caves;
 Behind the trees the twilight shadows fall,
 The wind blows hot, as from a fiery wall,
 Built high along the shore. There cities stand;
 A tall ship is the cradle of their young,
 Rocked by some Sea-nymph's wave-encircled hand.
 A bold, high-minded race, crafty of tongue,
 That sails o'er distant, wonder-teeming seas,
 Seas of vast silence, where no keel has been;
 High swells the bosom of the angry seas,
 Then falls, calmed of its wrath. 'Tis so I've seen
 Life's blessings stretched afar, and all Life's grace,
 While Life's great yearning stared me in the face.
 And then, as I approach what seemed so near,
 The world grows empty, and forlornly drear,
 My whole existence but a hollow dream;
 Old passions, but half-felt, and tears unshed
 Hang o'er this house, and o'er these streets, and
 seem

The ghosts of possibilities long dead,
 And stir again that yearning without rest
 Which drives me forward on my fruitless quest.

[*Standing by the window.*]

The neighbors light their lamps, and round them
 glow
 Their narrow lives, within their narrow walls,

Where joy and sorrow alternating flow,
With each sensation that man's heart enthralls;
Wherefore they deem their souls are closely bound,
And loudly do they mourn some absent friend.
Or, if some one of them receives a wound,
They comfort — word I ne'er could comprehend! —
For some vain phrase to them communicates
All that their sorrow and their grief demands.
They do not batter at sev'n fast-closed gates
Forevermore, with bruised and bleeding hands!
What know I of men's life, or yet of them?
I seemingly have stood there with the rest,
Not feeling, only knowing it at best,
And could not make myself a part of them.
I've never plunged, nor lost myself therein.
When others give and take, I stand apart
With untouched spirit and with empty heart,
And from the lips of those I held most dear
I've never drawn Life's essence sweet and clear;
I've never staggered down the lonely road,
Shattered by sorrow, sobbing as I went.
If through my heart some breath of Nature flowed,
Or through my being some slight tremor sent,
My over-active brain gave it a name,
Nor could my wakeful memory forget;
And swift comparisons by thousands came,
Killing all confidence and joy; nor yet
Did suffering stay behind for me to grasp,
Dismembered though she was, disfigured, torn,
Pale from long thinking, and by study worn.
E'en this against my breast I'd gladly clasp! —
Gladness from sorrow's self I could have drawn;
With its great wings, Grief barely brushed my face;
I quailed beneath the touch, and could not mourn,
For discontent alone took sorrow's place!

[Starting up.]

My fruitless meditation's checked by night;

Strange are the thoughts of men 'twixt dark and
light.

But I am weary, and must go to bed.

[*The servant brings a lamp and goes out again.*]

The lamp's pale glimmer brings to light again

My study, filled with relics of the dead,—

Vain splendors, by whose help I thought to gain

That life on which I'd set my yearning mind,

Although the road thereto I could not find!

[*Standing before the Crucifix.*]

O Christ, how many, many men have knelt

Before Thine ivory feet, together nailed,

Praying to know those strange, sweet fires that melt

Our hearts deep in our breasts! Yet each has
quailed

When lonely chills instead of fire forth came,

And gone his way in anguish, pain, and shame!

[*Before an old painting.*]

And thou, who star'st at me, thou, Gioconda,

Painted against a background of deep wonder!

Thy body shines as though a soul were hid

Behind those lips, that smile so bitter-sweet,

Or 'neath thy glowing eye's dream-heavy lid;

Just so much of this life thou teachest me

As by my questions I have taught to thee!

[*Turning aside to a cabinet.*]

Ye goblets, to whose silver brim have hung

The lips of many, in joy absolute,

And ye, whose strains from many a heart have
wrung

Emotion's deepest pangs! O cup! O lute!

How gladly would I change my lot with you,

And in the past become imprisoned too!

Ye shields of wood and bronze, that years have worn,

Where imagery of strange, confused designs

Of toad and angel, griffin and gay fawn

With quaint old birds, and ropes of fruit combines

To form a mass of soul-perplexing lines!
And yet, ye strange devices, ye have known
The throb of life, with all its changing moods,
As strange as though thrown up by some wild
floods!

Then, like a netted fish, Form took you for her own!
Vainly have I pursued you, vainly sought,
By your elusive subtleties too firmly caught;
For when I learned your soul's capricious art,
Piercing its mask, mine eyes, grown dim by thought,
No more could find the world's great doors,
And hidden from me were its life and heart.
I stood encompassed by your fickle bands
Like Harpies, pitiless, whose ruthless claws
Uproot each new-sprung flow'r, that stands
In simple beauty by a stream's cool bed.
So lost was I in art's dim, tortuous maze
That I saw light through eyes that were as dead,
And through dead ears heard what was round me
said.

I dragged this curse along my weary ways,
An unsolved riddle, yet not quite unguessed!
With half-felt gladness, and with little strife
I lived my days, most like a book at best,—
A book half-understood, yet half-unknown,
Whose meaning but to living men is shown.
And that which caused me joy or grief in life,
Ne'er seemed to me to be its very self,
But more a vision of a life to be,
The hollow likeness of another self.
And so, while phantoms mocked my baffled feet
I've floundered through a life of love and woe,
Consuming, but not tasting sour and sweet,
Haunted by dreams that come and never go!
Then I arose and looked Life in the face:
The swiftest-footed do not win the race,
Nor by the bravest is the battle won;

Joy brings not laughter, nor do woes bring tears;
 Vain answer at vain question loudly jeers!
 Above the sombre threshold, one by one,
 Intricate dreams arise, where Joy seems all,
 Yea, wind and wave, and fills each passing day!
 Rudely deceived I am, yet, Wisdom's thrall,
 Consumed by empty pride, I go my way
 Of sad renunciation, nor complain.
 The people round from questions now refrain,
 And think me just an ordinary man!

*[The servant brings in a plate of cherries which
 he puts on the table, and starts to close the door
 to the balcony.]*

CLAUD. Leave the door open. What affrights thee so?

SERV. Your Grace would scarce believe me if I told.

(Half to himself, as if in fear.)

They've hid themselves within the summer-house.

CLAUD. Who's hidden?

SERVANT. Pardon me, I know not, Sir.

A crowd of people — an uncanny lot.

CLAUD. Beggars?

SERV. I cannot say.

CLAUD. Then lock the door

That opens from the garden on the street,
 And go to bed, and trouble me no more.

SERV. That's what affrights me so; I've locked the door
 But —

CLAUD. Well?

SERVANT. They're sitting in the garden now!

On yonder bench where the Apollo stands,
 Close by the curbing of the well there sits
 A couple in the shadow. Another one
 Is sitting on the Sphinx; we cannot see
 Him; for the hedge of yew stands close between.

CLAUD. Are they all men?

SERVANT. Some men, some women too.

Not like poor beggars, but in ancient style,

Such as one sees in etelings, are they clad.
 Yet men they cannot be, who sit and stare
 At one, as if they stared at empty space
 In such a gruesome way, with cold, dead eyes!
 No, they're not men. Yet, be not angry, Sir!
 For nothing in the world would I go near!
 Pray God, that in the morning they'll be gone!
 With your permission, I will bolt the door
 And sprinkle holy water on the lock.
 I've never seen such men as these before;
 And men have no such eyes as these folk have!

CLAUD. Do what thou wilt. Good night.

[For a few moments he walks up and down the room thoughtfully. From behind the scene sound the longing and touching strains of a violin; at first, faint and distant; the music draws nearer and nearer until, at last, it rings deep and full, as if from the next room.]

CLAUD.

Ha, I hear music!

Ay, and it speaks most strangely to my soul!
 Has that man's foolishness disturbed my heart?
 And yet, methinks, I never heard such tones
 Drawn from a violin by mortal art.
 In deep and throbbing strains sweet and wistful
 It echoes in mine ears with power divine;
 It seems like endless hope at Pity's shrine,
 And promises relief from all my pains.
 Now from the ancient walls, so still and stern,
 It flows, and fills my soul with peaceful light,
 As did my tender Mother's fond return,
 My mistress', or some friend's, long lost from sight;
 It raises thoughts that cheer me, and bring joy.
 This music takes me back to childhood days.
 So stood I in the springtime once, a boy
 Who thought to find all Life in pleasant ways.
 And then the wish to pass all bound'ries came,
 And swept my soul with dim, unknown desire;

And days of wandering came, with passion's flame,
 That set the whole wide world and sea afire;
 The roses blossomed, and the bells chimed bright,
 As though rejoicing in this new-sprung light.
 A thrill of life passed through each living thing,
 As striving to draw near to him who loved!
 How stirred was I in soul, how deeply moved
 To be a living part of Life's great ring!
 Then I approached, whereto my heart did guide
 That surging stream of love which feeds us all.
 Contentment filled my mind and kept it wide,
 Which now not e'en my dream can understand.
 Ring on, sweet music, still a little while,
 And touch my heart with thy mysterious hand,
 For then my world seems brightened with a smile,
 And life, entranced, re-lives its earlier years;
 Then, flame on flame, the fires of joy glow bright,
 And melt the stones of life, and dry my tears.
 Old and confusèd Wisdom, hoary white,
 Which bows my back beneath his heavy weight,
 Loosens his strangling clutch, charmed by the sound
 Of childish ignorance, which holds him bound
 In its simplicity so deep and great.
 From far away, the peal of many bells
 A life scarce thought of in our dreams foretells,
 A life, where Form in all-importance lives,
 Austerely kind in what it takes and gives!

[*The music stops suddenly.*]

The music stops which deeply moved my mind,
 Wherein both God and man I seemed to find,
 And he who worked this spell in ignorance,
 Some beggar-minstrel, holds his cap for pence!

[*Standing by the window on the right.*]

'Tis strange, he is not standing in the street!
 Perhaps I'll see him from this window here.

[*As he goes to the door on the right the curtain is silently thrown back and DEATH stands in the*

doorway. He holds the violin bow in his hand, while the violin hangs from his belt. He looks quietly at CLAUDIO who steps back in horror.]

CLAUD. A horror seizes me, a damp, cold fear.
 Since thy strange fiddle sounded then so sweet,
 Whence comes this awful dread at seeing thee?
 My throat is dry, my hair stands all on end.
 Away! For thou art Death! What would'st of me?
 I fear thee; go away! I cannot scream;
 My grasp on light and life fails like a dream!
 Go, go! Who called thee, or who let thee in?

DEATH. Arise, and cast this fear inherited
 Aside, I'm not a skeleton of dread;
 Of Dionysus' and of Venus' kin
 I am; the God of human souls stands here.
 Thou'st felt my touch when some warm summer
 night
 Through golden rays, a leaf fell dead and sere,
 My breath passed by thee in the waning light,
 For 'twas the wind that breathes on all ripe things.
 When thy emotions fluttered up to fill
 Thy soul, with warm and beating wings,
 And when thy heart stopped, with a sudden thrill
 At finding this strange monster kith and kin,
 When in Life's dance thou stood'st against thy will,
 And took'st as thine the world and all therein,
 Each time thou'st faced some all-important hour
 Which made thy mortal body quake with fear
 I've touched thy inmost self, and standing near,
 I've breathed upon thy soul with secret power.

CLAUD. Enough, and though unbidden, welcome, friend!
[After a short pause.]

But pray, why camest thou, and to what end?

DEATH. My coming means but one same thing to all.

CLAUD. And yet my life's thread is not nearly gone,
 For mark me well: ere any leaf doth fall
 It is decayed, and its life-sap is drawn.
 Not so with me; I've never lived my day.

DEATH. Yet like all others thou hast gone thy way.

CLAUD. As flowers, growing by a river's flow,
 Are by the sombre waters swept away,
 My youthful days slipped by; I did not know
 That time was called our life's all glorious day.
 And then I stood outside life's fast-closed door,
 Aghast with wonder, and with yearnings wrung,
 Hoping that 'mid the storms' majestic roar
 It would burst open, by some power sprung.
 It came not so to pass; but once inside
 I stood unconsecrate and unaware,
 Helpless to breathe my deepest wish in prayer,
 Shadowed by fate, from which I could not hide,
 My soul distraught, and in the twilight lost,
 Afraid, disturbed in my heart's innermost.
 Half-heartedly, oppressed in mind and mood,
 Strangely imprisoned in the wondrous whole,
 True fire I never felt inflame my soul
 Nor Life's great waves rush surging through my
 blood!

That God I never found upon my quest
 With whom we must do battle to be blessed.

DEATH. To thee was given as much as to all men:
 An earthly life, to live in earthly wise!
 For, in the heart of each, a Spirit lies
 Who with his breath establishes again
 A ruling in this chaos of dead things,
 By which each one his garden is to sow,
 Wherein his power, his pain and joy must grow.
 Woe then if I'm the first this news that brings!
 Man binds, and man is bound; wild lonely hours
 Bring these discoveries. The tears of sleep,
 And utter weariness corrode your powers.
 Still willing, but oppressed with yearnings deep,
 Though half refused, with aching, long-drawn breath,
 And while warm life still throbs within each vein
 Ye fall into my arms, for I am Death,
 Yet each of you is ripe.

CLAUDIO.

Not so with me!

I am not ripe, so let me still remain!
 Let me live on; no more will I complain.
 Firmly I'll grasp the sod of earth; for see,
 A great desire to live cries out aloud,
 And Terror's touch has torn the veiling cloud.
 At last I feel! O leave me, let me live!
 I feel it by this crumbling of all walls.
 To earthly things my heart I now can give,
 And thou shalt see, no more dumb animals
 I'll think this world of men, no longer dolls!
 Their every sentiment shall touch my heart;
 In grief and sorrow I will take a part;
 With all my being Faith I'll strive to learn,
 Since on this life, through Faith, we gain our hold.
 So will I live, and so my life I'll mould
 That good and evil rule me turn by turn
 With equal power to make me laugh and burn.
 Then will these lumps of clay take fire and live;
 Along Life's road, real living men I'll find;
 No more with silent sneer I'll take and give,
 But will be bound, and mightily will bind!

*[As he sees the unmoved countenance of DEATH
 he speaks with rising agitation.]*

Believe me, 'twas not so before; for see,
 Think'st thou that I have loved or hated? Nay!
 Not e'en the seeds thereof have been in me;
 Illusions were they, empty words' vain play!
 It's true! I'll prove it! Here these letters, see!

*[He throws open a drawer and takes out packages
 of old letters.]*

The words and vows of passion, Love's complaint!
 But thinkest thou that I could ever know
 What she felt; what my answers seemed to paint?

*[He throws the packages at DEATH's feet. The
 letters scatter on the floor.]*

There hast thou this love-episode's whole life,

Where I, and only I, swept to and fro
 As following the throbs of inner strife,
 Now good, now bad, I throbbed with them again,
 With every noble impulse scoffed to shame!
 There hast thou it! the rest is all the same,
 Devoid of meaning, joy, or any pain,
 And where true love or hatred never came!

DEATH. Thou fool, thou wicked fool, before thou die
 I'll teach thee to revere the life thou leav'st!
 Stand silently, and mark with careful eye
 That those, whom thou but barren clods believ'st
 Were filled with Life's great joy, or bitter sting,
 And thou alone wast void of everything!

[DEATH plays a few notes on his violin as if to call some one forth. He stands by the bedroom door near the front of the stage on the right. CLAUDIO stands by the wall on the left in the semi-darkness. From the door on the right comes the MOTHER. She is not very old and wears a long dress of black silk, with a cap of the same material, and a white ruche which fits closely around her face. In her delicate, pale hands she holds a white lace handkerchief. She comes quietly from the door and walks silently about the room.]

MOTHER. How many sad, sweet sorrows I breathe in
 With this room's atmosphere, for half my life
 On earth hangs here like lavender's faint breath,
 So delicate, yet dead. A mother's life
 Was mine; one-third was pain, one-third was care,
 Anxiety one-third. Unknown to man
 Are these? [Standing by the chest.]

And is the corner's edge still sharp?
 He struck it once, and made his temple bleed.
 Ay, ay, he was a little child, but wild,
 He ran so fast, and was so hard to hold.
 And, oh, that window! I have stood there oft
 And listened in the night to hear his step,

Aroused from sleep by fond anxiety
 When clocks struck two, then three, and it was dawn,
 And still he had not come! How oft — But he,
 He never knew it! I was much alone
 As well by day as night. My hands, indeed,
 Could water flowers, dust, and polish brass
 Until it shone, throughout the dragging day,
 But all the time my mind had naught to do.
 A blank wheel in the circle spins around
 With undefinèd fears, and secret dreams
 Of pains but dimly felt, that are a part
 Of that strange and mysterious holiness,
 Which is the secret of maternity,
 And interweaves itself with Life's great woof!
 But I may now no longer breathe this air,
 Oppressive, sweet, yet sadly nourishing —
 The air of life that's passed — for I must go,
 And go for evermore!

[*She goes out by the middle door.*]

CLAUD. Ah, Mother, come,

DEATH. Hush, be still!

Thou canst not bring her back.

CLAUD. Ah, Mother, come,

And let me, humbly kneeling by thy side,
 Express with these my lips, close pressed together,
 Yet trembling, trembling in their silent pride —
 Let me but speak! Ah, hold her firmly! Call her!
 She did not wish to go. Could'st thou not see?
 Why dost thou force her, Horror? Answer me!

DEATH. Leave me what's mine; it once was thine.

CLAUD. O God,

I did not feel it! Withered, barren, sere,
 What have I ever felt, that my whole heart
 Reached out and yearned to her, when she was near?
 As in the presence of divinity
 She made me shudder, and there ran through me
 Man's longings, man's desires, and all man's fears!

[DEATH, *unmoved by his complaints, plays an old Volkslied. Slowly a young girl comes in. She wears a simple dress, with large flowers on it, sandals with crossed laces. Around her neck she has a bit of fichu. Her head is uncovered.*]

THE YOUNG GIRL. 'Twas fair! Dost thou no more remember it?

Oh, thou hast made me suffer cruelly,
 But what is there in life ends not in tears?
 The happy days I've seen were very few,
 But they were fair, ay, fair as in a dream!
 The flowers on the window-sill! My flowers!
 The little shaky spinet, and the desk
 Wherein I kept thy letters, and the things
 Thou gavest me!—Nay, nay, deride me not!—
 These trifles were all beautiful to me,
 And spoke to me with loving, living lips!
 When in the sultry evening it had rained,
 And we were standing in the window here
 The fragrance of the rain-drenched flowers — !
 'Tis gone,
 And everything that was alive is dead,
 Buried within our fond love's little grave!
 Ah, 'twas so beautiful! Thine is the blame
 That it was fair, and thine, too, is the shame
 For casting me aside, a thoughtless child
 That, wearied of the play, unheeded drops
 His flowers. God! I'd naught to bind thee with!

[*After a short pause.*]

And then, when thy last cruel letter came,
 I wished to die! I do not say this now
 To cause thee grief. I wished to write to thee
 A farewell word, but not to chide thee, dear,
 Not full of anger, or of wild distress,
 But that thou mightest long for me once more,
 And for my love; to make thee shed one tear
 Because it was too late. I did not write;

Indeed why should I, for how did I know
 How much of thy great heart was in the things
 Which filled my little mind with feverish joy,
 Until I walked by day as in a dream!
 Good-will cannot make faith from faithlessness,
 And tears bring not what's dead to life again!
 But people do not die of wounds like these.
 'Twas not till later, after misery,
 And long, gaunt years of pain, that I could die,
 And then I begged that when thine hour should come
 I might be with thee then, not to reproach,
 Nor raise the ghastly past with words; but more
 As when one drains a goblet of rare wine
 The fragrance calls to mind with fleeting thought
 Some old desires, half faded and forgot.

[*She goes off; CLAUDIO hides his face in his hands.
 As she goes out a man enters. He seems to be
 of about CLAUDIO's age. He wears a disordered
 and dusty traveling suit. From the left side
 of his chest protrudes the wooden handle of a
 dagger. He stands in the middle of the stage
 facing CLAUDIO.*]

THE MAN. Dost thou still live, thou everlasting mummer?
 Still reading Horace! Dost thou still rejoice
 At clever cynicisms void of heart?
 Thou mad'st approaches to me with fair words,
 Saying that I had brought things to thy mind
 Which slept within thy soul, as speaks at times
 The night-wind of far distant lands. Ah, yes!
 A harp's fair music in the wind wast thou,
 The amorous wind was some one else's breath
 Exhausted quite, now mine, another's now!
 Long were we friends! Yes, friends! That is to say,
 In common was our talk by day and night;
 Our intercourse with other men, nay more,
 In common trifled we with one same girl!
 But our community was that of lord
 And slave, who share in common house, and chair,

Dog, mid-day meal, or whip; to one the house
Is happiness, a prison to the other.
The litter carries one, its carven pole
Bruises the other's shoulder; for the one
The dog does tricks upon the garden walks,
But 'tis the other one who feeds the brute!
The half-developed feelings of my soul,
Pearls of great sorrow born, thou took'st from me,
To throw them like cheap playthings in the air!
Swift to make friends or conquest e'er wert thou,
My soul in silent supplication yearned,
Aloof and shy, with close-set teeth, while thou
Boldly didst lay thine hand on everything!
For me the word, shy, hesitating, died
Ere it was born. A woman crossed
Our path. And, lo, it seized me as disease
Strikes down a man, when all our senses reel,
Blinded from staring long at one same goal,
A goal of heavy sweetness, of wild flames,
And drowsy fragrance flashing like fool's-fire
In the black darkness! Oh, thou saw'st it all!
It charmed thee! "Yes, since oft I feel the same,
The girl's sophisticated ways have charmed
My mind! Her blasé air, her bitter pride,
So cynical, and yet so young!" Didst thou
Not so describe her to me afterward?
It charmed thee, but to me 'twas more than soul
And body! Wearied of the doll, in time
Thou gavest her to me! But by disgust
For thee how changed in face, how haggard, worn,
Stripped of her former grace and wondrous charm,
Her features lifeless, and that mass of hair
Hanging as dead!—A mask, and nothing more
Thou gavest me; worthless, contemptible,
The work of thy vile art which, acid-like,
Had seared and scarred that strange, sweet being.
For this I hated thee as bitterly

As I instinctively had loathed thy face;
And I avoided thee.

And then my fate,
Which blessed the broken bits of me at last,
Drove me with one fixed purpose in my breast
On to a goal! One impulse still remained
Unblighted by thy poisonous influence,
And for a noble aim my fate drove me
Upon the grim point of a murderer's knife,
And left me, slowly rotting in a ditch
Beside the road; rotting because of things
Thou can'st not understand, and yet which are
Thrice blessed as compared to thee, who art
To others naught, who nothing are to thee!

[*He goes off.*]

CLAUD. To others naught, who nothing are to me!

[*He raises himself slowly.*]

As on the stage a low comedian
Who has his cue, and speaks his part, and goes
Indifferent to others and untouched
Alike by his own voice and others' cries,
Who are, in turn, not moved at all by him!
Just so upon Life's stage I've played my part,
But badly, without power!— Why was it so?
And why, O Death, dost thou teach me to see
This life, not darkly, through a veiling cloud
But clearly, rousing something in my heart
As it goes by? Why in our childish thoughts
Do we form such ideals of this life
That when, if e'er, it comes to pass, it leaves
Us but the hollow shudder of sad thoughts?
Why doth no music echo in our ears
To raise a magic spirit-world around,
Within whose secret grasp our heart is bound,
Outpoured, to us unknown, as secretly
As flowers beneath the brown earth hidden lie?
Could I but be with thee, there where thou art

But heard, and not forever torn apart
 By endless trifles! Oh, I can! Grant thou
 All that wherewith thou now hast threatened me!
 My life was dead, O Death, be my life now!
 What, since I recognize them both, makes me
 Call this one Life, and that one Death, since thou
 Canst press more of this life in one short hour
 Than was contained in my whole life before!
 I will forget dim darkness and its lore,
 And consecrate myself to thy great power!

[*He pauses for a moment in thought.*]

Maybe that this is but a dying mood
 Caused by the watchfulness of dying blood;
 Yet in this life I've never understood
 As much, and so, O Death, I bless thy power.
 If, like a candle, I must die, snuffed out,
 My mind still overflowing with this hour,
 With me let all this pallid life go out!
 I knew not that I lived until I die.
 As when one sleeps the power of what he dreams
 May waken him, so is it now, and I,
 Fulfilled of feeling never felt before,
 Awake in Death from Life's compelling dreams!

[*He falls dead at the feet of DEATH.*]

DEATH (*as he moves away, shaking his head*).

How wonderful this mortal seed
 Who the invisible can see,
 Who Life's unwritten book can read,
 Who scattered things can firmly bind,
 And paths in the impenetrable darkness find!

[*The room remains silent; outside one can see
 DEATH go past, playing the violin. Behind him
 walk the MOTHER, the YOUNG GIRL, and close
 beside them a figure which closely resembles
 that of CLAUDIO.*]

THE DEATH OF TITIAN

By HUGO VON HOFMANNSTHAL

A DRAMATIC FRAGMENT

ENACTED AT MUNICH IN MEMORY OF ARNOLD BÖCKLIN

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

THE PROLOGUE

FILIPPO POMPONIO VECELLIO (CALLED 'TITIANELLO'), *the Master's son*

GIOCONDO

DESIDERIO

GIANINO (*He is sixteen years old and very handsome*)

BATISTA

ANTONIO

PARIS

LAVINIA, *a daughter of the Master*

CASSANDRA

LISA

The time of the action is 1576 when Titian died in his ninety-ninth year.

[511]

THE DEATH OF TITIAN (1901)*

TRANSLATED BY JOHN HEARD, JR.

SCENE

The curtain, a tapestry, hangs as a background. In front of it stands a bust of Böcklin on a pillar at the foot of which there is a basket of flowers and blossoming branches.

At the last measure of the music the PROLOGUE enters, followed by his torch-bearers. He is a young man dressed as a Venetian mourner, completely in black.

PROLOGUE. Be silent, Music, for the stage is mine,
And I will mourn; 'tis proper that I should!
The blood of all the Youth of these our times,
Flows in my veins; and he, whose statue stands
Beholding me, was my soul's dearest friend.
Great solace have I drawn from this good man,
For deep the darkness of the present age!
And, as the swan, most blessèd bird that lives,
With gentle, amorous kisses takes its food
From Naiads' hands, that shine with pearly
drops,
So, bending o'er his hands, I drank in dreams,
My soul's sustaining draught. Shall I then
deck,
With blossoms only, thy dear likeness now,
While thou hast decked the likeness of the
world
And all the blossoming things therein for me,
With such a wond'rous sheen of light, that I,
Entranced, now cast myself upon the ground,
And, in my joy, can feel great Nature's self
Enfolded in her cloak of mystic light?

Hear me, sweet friend, I'll send no herald forth
To cry thy name to the four winds of Earth,
As when a sovereign dies! Kings' names
remain,

* *The Death of Titian* was written in 1892 and appeared, in part, in 1894. The Prologue was added for the Böcklin memoria' in 1901.—Ed.



Permission Berlin Photo. Co., New York

LUDWIG VON HOFMANN

PARADISE

Descending to their heirs; and marble tombs
 Proclaim the glory of their fame! But thou
 Wast a magician of such awful power
 That, though thy earthly body pass from sight,
 I know not what of thee still lingers here,
 Undying in its might, to raise an eye
 Of flashing darkness from the sombre stream,
 Or, from the ivy, hark with listening ear!
 I never shall believe, that I'm alone,
 Where trees or flowers are, or even stones
 Lie noiselessly, or little clouds that drift
 Across the sky; and I shall always think
 That something brighter than bright Ariel,
 Flits after me. I know that secretly
 Thou mad'st alliances with Nature's self!
 For, see, the meadows decked in Spring's green
 cloak
 Smile back at thee, as smile a woman's lips
 On him, to whom she gave herself, last night!

I came to mourn for thee, but from my tongue
 Fall words of ravishing, voluptuous joy,
 So 'tis not proper that I linger here.
 But I will smite the ground thrice with this rod
 And summon ghostly figures to this spot;
 And them I will so burden with my woe
 That they shall stagger as they walk,—that
 each
 May weep aloud, and deep within him feel
 How great the blow that's fallen on our life
 And on our every act.

Behold a play

In these sad hours of darkness and cold dread,
 And learn the worth of him, Master of All,
 From shadowy lips and words of those long
 dead!

[He goes off followed by his torch-bearers.]

The proscenium is dark; the music begins again; the statue vanishes. Three blows of a staff resound; the tapestry divides, and discloses the scene.

The scene is on the terrace of TITIAN'S villa near Venice. In the background a stone railing terminates the terrace. It is broken here and there, and over it the tops of pines and poplars wave in the distance. On the left, a flight of steps (invisible from in front), runs backward into the garden; two marble urns on the railing mark the spot where the steps descend. The left side of the terrace falls off sharply to the garden below. The balustrade is concealed at this point by ivy and trailing rose vines, which, with the tall shrubs of the garden, form an impenetrable thicket.

In the background, on the right, a flight of steps, shaped like a fan, leads upward to an open balcony from which one passes, through a door, into the house. In front of the door a curtain now hangs. The walls of the house are covered with rose bushes and vines, and are decorated with busts, and with vases at each of the windows, from which vines trail down. The house forms the background on the right.

It is late on a summer's afternoon. DESIDERIO, ANTONIO, BATISTA and PARIS sit about the steps, on cushions and mats. All are silent. The wind sways the curtain in front of the door. After a short time TITIANELLO and GIANINO enter from the door on the right. DESIDERIO, ANTONIO, BATISTA and PARIS hasten anxiously over to them, and look at them questioningly as they crowd around. A short silence.

PARIS. Not worse?

GIANINO (*in a subdued voice*).

Ay, very bad.

(*To TITIANELLO, who begins to weep.*)

Poor, dear Pippo!

BATISTA. Sleeps he?

GIANINO. Alas, he is awake and raves,
Calling for brushes and for paints.

ANTONIO. Methinks

We must refuse him—

GIANINO. So the doctor says.

Yet we'll not cross him, and whate'er he craves
We'll give him. Think'st thou not the same,
dear friend?

TITIANELLO (*breaking out passionately*).

Tomorrow, e'en today, must be the end!

- GIANINO. He may no longer hide from us, he says —
- PARIS. Our dearest Master must not die! Nay, nay!
The doctors lie; they know not what they say!
- DESIDERIO. If Titian, who creates this life, should die,
Whose, then, the right to live beneath the sky?
- BATISTA. How nearly spent his life he cannot know!
- TITIANELLO. In his wild fever he is painting now
With ghastly, breathless haste on his new work.
The maids are with him, and must stand; he
sent
Us all away.
- ANTONIO. Has he the strength to work?
- TITIANELLO. He paints, and with such passion is he rent
As I've not seen at any other hour —
As tortured by some strange, mysterious
power!
*[A page enters from the right, followed by
servants. All start up anxiously.]*
- TITIANELLO, GIANINO, and PARIS.
What is it?
- PAGE. Nothing; but the Master calls
For his old paintings, from the garden walls.
- TITIANELLO. Why wants he them?
- PAGE. He wishes them, he says.
“The pitiful, pale works of earlier days!
I would compare them to this last I paint!”
For many things appear to him, he says.
“Things of great import — a clearer sight —”
Till now he has but botched, and squandered
paint.
Shall we do as he bids?
- TITIANELLO. Go, go! Make haste!
Ye cause him pain each moment that ye waste!
*[The servants have passed over the stage;
the page rejoins them beside the steps.
TITIANELLO raises the curtain and softly
enters the house. The others walk nervously
to and fro.]*

ANTONIO (*half aloud*).

Unutterably sad is this last hour!
Our honored Master speechless, reft of power!

TITIANELLO (*coming back*).

He's quiet now; a radiance, as a saint's,
Shines through his pallor, as he paints and
paints

And from his eye streams forth a hopeful ray,
He talks to the young maids as is his way.

ANTONIO. Come, let us here upon the steps remain,
Hoping—until the Master's worse again.

[*They settle down on the steps. TITIANELLO,
his eyes half closed, plays with GIANINO'S
hair.*]

BATISTA (*half aloud*).

Worse! Then the worst! It cannot be that
way.

The worst must come, though no worse come
before;

Then dead and hollow, endless Evermore—
And yet it seems impossible today,
Although tomorrow 'twill be so!

[*A pause.*]

GIANINO.

I'm tired.

PARIS. 'Tis the hot, sultry air by south winds fired.

TITIANELLO (*laughing softly*).

Poor boy. Throughout the long night's hours
he watch'd!

GIANINO (*leaning on his elbow*).

Ay, friend; the first whole night I've ever
watch'd.

But, yet, how did'st thou know?

TITIANELLO.

Oh, I could feel,
First by thy slow-drawn breath; then, standing
here,
Thine eyes toward yonder steps would ever
steal.

GIANINO. Methought that through the night, so blue and
 clear,
 That breathed around, a mystic voice I heard,
 For naught in Nature tempted me to sleep;
 With moistened lips, and sighs long-drawn, and
 deep
 She lay, and nothing in the darkness stirred.
 She hushed to hear dim, secret things afar,
 Like pearls of silver dew flashed every star
 Above the peaceful meadows soft and damp.
 The sap flowed in each fruit, and made it swell
 Beneath the yellow moon's great, golden lamp
 In whose pale, mystic light bright gleamed each
 well.
 Afar, strange, heavy harmonies awoke,
 And, where the shadows of the clouds soft glide,
 The tread of naked feet the silence broke —
 Then I awoke, and I was by thy side.

[He stands up as he speaks and bends toward

TITIANELLO.]

Then through the night a distant music rang
 As though the magic flute with soft notes sang
 Which yonder fawn holds in his marble hands,
 As in the laurel grove, half-hid, he stands.
 Beside the bed of nightshades drenched in dew
 I saw him stand, and bright the marble shone
 Like pale, damp silver in the night's deep blue,
 Where red pomegranate blossoms open blown
 Wave softly, to and fro. The heavy drone
 Of many bees I heard, who sucked the dew
 And honey from the cup of each red flower,
 And fell, o'ercome by its dull, fragrant power.
 Then, as the breath of darkness brushed my
 face,
 With all the garden's air, so dull and sweet,
 It seemed to be that floating through dim space
 A wondrous garment touched me, passing fleet,

Like gentle hands, so tender and so warm!
 Through pallid moon-beams, white as samite
 sheen,
 A myriad amorous gnats danced in a swarm.
 A glistening light lay on the lake serene
 That floated rippling in the placid night.
 Whether 'twas swans I saw, I cannot say,
 Or snowy limbs of bathing nymphs at play—
 Then fragrance as of women's golden hair
 Was mingled with the scent of aloes' flowers,
 Until all faded, tingling, through the air
 In languorous splendor, deadening all my
 powers,
 And thoughts were numb, and words grew
 meaningless.

ANTONIO. I envy thee, who'st known such wondrous bliss,
 And in the darkness dreamest dreams like this!

GLANINO. Half dreaming, and half waking, thus I passed
 To yonder spot, where one may see the town,
 That rests, soft whisp'ring, in its flashing
 gown,
 That moon and water round its sleep had cast.
 Its slumberous murmurs oft the night wind
 brought
 With ghostly, distant sounds, in echoes dying,
 Where strange, appealing fear oppressed each
 thought.
 Oft heard I it, no meaning sign descrying;
 But now I felt its sudden thrill: methought
 That through the magic silence, still as stone,
 From mystic Night's blue flood-gates upward
 thrown,
 I felt the bacchanalian dance of blood
 Rush through its veins; and dazzling phos-
 ph'rous lights
 Flashed round its roofs; in which reflected flood
 There shone the image of strange, secret things!

Dim giddiness o'ercame me, as I stood,
 The old town slept — intoxication brings
 A soothing of all pain, of grief and strife,
 And Life awakes — almighty, seething Life!

[*A pause.*]

Yet, having it, we may forget 'tis ours!

[*He pauses a moment.*]

'Tis thus has come this weariness, I ween,
 For in one night too much I've felt and seen.

DESIDERIO (*standing by the balustrade to GIANINO*).

See'st thou the city as it rests below,
 Veiled in the golden sunset's fragrant glow,
 Where rosy safrans, and pale shades of gray
 About its feet, with deep blue shadows play
 To weave a cloak of dew-drenched purity,
 Alluring in its calm serenity?

Alas! in yonder mystic haze there lies
 A world of ugliness and moral blight,
 Where madmen live like swine in filthy sties!
 But distance has concealèd from thy sight
 This place of loathing, hollow in its shame,
 Yet thronged with men by Beauty quite
 unstimul'd —

Though using words which from us they have
 learned.

But only similarity of name
 Exists between their joy and grief and ours.
 For, though we slumber deep in midnight hours,
 Our very slumber differs from their sleep:
 Full, purple blossoms in our sleep we see,
 And serpents that on gilded evils creep;
 And there a mountain, rising from the sea,
 Wherein a thousand giants' forges gleam!
 But they, they sleep and dream as oysters
 dream!

ANTONIO (*half rising*).

Therefore tall, slender palings stand about

The garden that the Master planted here,
 Through which sweet, flowering vines trail in
 and out
 That one may feel the world—not see, nor
 hear.

PARIS (*rising*).

This is the lore of alleys without end . . .

BATISTA (*rising*).

The wonder of, the background's sombre depth,
 The secret art uncertain lights to lend . . .

TITIANELLO (*with eyes closed*).

The half lost sweetness of a distant note,
 The beauty of the words some poet wrote
 In ages passed . . .! This lesson we should
 learn

From all we cannot see, but yet discern!

PARIS.

And therein lies the magic of the Past,
 And boundless Beauty's never-parchèd
 well . . .

Art's great soul stifles there where voices
 dwell!

[*All remain silent for a time; TITIANELLO
 weeps quietly.*]

GIANINO (*soothingly*).

Thou should'st not in such meditation sink,
 Nor ceaselessly of this one matter think!

TITIANELLO (*laughing sadly*).

As if our pain were aught besides this strength
 And power that makes us ponder endlessly,
 Until all meaning vanishes at length . . .!
 I pray thee, let me ponder aimlessly,
 For long ago from fleeting Joy and Woe
 Their many-colored cloaks I've torn asunder,
 'Twas my simplicity clothed them with wonder;
 And simple thinking I no longer know!

[*A silence. GIANINO has sunk down on his
 side along the steps and, resting his head
 on his arms, has fallen asleep.*]

PARIS. Where can Giocondo be?

TITIANELLO.

Long before light

He slipped out through the door ere ye awoke;
On his pale brow the kiss of Love's delight,
While his thin lips of jealous Passion spoke.

*[Pages carry two paintings across the stage,
— that of "Venus with the Flowers," and
the great "Bacchanalia." The pupils rise,
and, while the paintings are carried past,
stand with heads bowed, holding their caps
in their hands. A moment of silence.]*

DESIDERIO. Who lives when he is gone, Master of Art,
A conqueror of matter, great of heart,
Yet, like a child, wise in simplicity?

ANTONIO. Who doth not trust his word implicitly?

BATISTA. Or tremble at his knowledge infinite?

PARIS. Who now shall judge us masters of our art?

TITIANELLO. He filled with life the sombre, lifeless grove,
And, where the yellow waters silent slept,
And clambering ivy round the beeches crept,
A host of gods from nothingness he wove;
While satyrs raised their sounding horns on
high,
Till yearning grew, and earthly happiness,
And every shepherd sought his shepherd-
ess . . . !

BATISTA. And to the clouds that float across the sky,
In idle reveries, a soul he gave;
And in the pale expanse of filmy white,
Meaning he found, and yearning in each wave,
In every sombre mass, rimmed with gold light,
In soft gray mountains that go rolling by,
All rose and silver through the evening sky;
Each has the soul which to each one he gave!
From naked cliffs, gray, desolate, forlorn;
From each dark-green, foam-crested, roaring
wave;

From dreams that in black, lifeless woods are
born;

E'en from the sorrow of each blasted oak
Through his great art some human soul
awoke —

Something of Life that made us understand,
And know the Soul of Night where'er it spoke!

PARIS.

We were aroused from darkness by his hand;
'Twas he that filled us with the golden light,
And taught us to enjoy the passing hours
As though they were a pageant of delight;
The hidden beauty and the shape of flowers,
Of women, and of rolling waves to see!
Above all else our own life to behold;
To grasp the flash of jewels, silk, and gold;
To understand what each man looks to see —
As lofty bridges, or Spring's early gleam —
Or yet the dreams we dream in sleeping hours
Of light-haired nymphs beside a crystal stream.
And what is round us in our waking hours
Nought of its mystic beauty had received
Till in his wondrous soul it was conceived!

ANTONIO.

What dancing for fair, graceful bodies is;
What torch-light for the joyous masquerade;
What music for the soul that sleeping lies,
Soothing it by its rhythmic harmonies;
Or what a mirror to a fair, young maid;
What to the flowers the sun's bright, warming
light —

An eye, a medium suited to the end —
Wherein all beauty saw herself aright!
This nature found in his great spirit's height!

“Arouse us; make of us a Bacchanal!”

Cry all the living, that before him bend,
And quail before his eye, and prostrate fall!

*[While ANTONIO is speaking the three girls
have stepped silently from the door and*

stand listening. Only TITIANELLO, who has been standing absent-mindedly, and a little to one side, without taking any part in the conversation, seems to notice them. LAVINIA'S blond hair is inclosed in a golden head-net; she wears the rich costume of a Venetian Patrician. CASSANDRA and LISA, young girls of nineteen and seventeen, wear simple white dresses made of soft, clinging material; they have gold arm-bands shaped like snakes on their bare arms above the elbow; sandals and gold belts. CASSANDRA'S hair is light blond, and LISA wears a yellow rose-bud in her dark hair. There is something about her which resembles a boy, just as GIANINO reminds one of a girl. Behind them a page enters, bearing a wine pitcher and cups of chased silver.]

ANTONIO. To us those distant trees how wondrous fair,
All waving in the dreamy twilight air!

PARIS. What beauty we can find in yon blue bay
Where white-winged ships smooth gliding sail
away!

[TITIANELLO, to the maidens whom he has greeted with a slight inclination of the head. All the others turn.]

TITIANELLO. How we admire the lustre of your hair,
The fragrance it exhales through all the air!
The ivory whiteness of each pure-shaped limb,
The golden girdle that surrounds your form
We feel, as we feel music, deep and warm,
Because our understanding came from him!

(Bitterly.)

Yet they'll ne'er understand it there below!

DESIDERIO *(to the maidens).*

Is he alone? Shall we not go to him?

LAVINIA. He wishes no one, friends, so none need go.

TITIANELLO. Could Death in this great silence but unfold
His wings above him in the sunset's glow,
'Mid this wild beauty, strange, divine!

[*All are silent. GIANINO has awaked, and, during the last words, has risen to his feet. He is very pale, and looks anxiously from one to the other.*]

[*All are silent. GIANINO takes a step toward TITIANELLO; then stops, shuddering. Suddenly he throws himself at LAVINIA'S feet, — who is standing a little in front of the others, — and presses his face against her knees.*]

GIANINO (*slowly*).

Death! Death, Lavinia! Horror seizes me!
I've never stood so close to Death before!
I never shall forget that we must die,
And I shall stand aloof with gloomy stare,
Where others laugh aloud, and silently,
Forevermore, shall think that we must die!
For once I saw how men went singing past,
And led with them a man condemned to death;
He staggered by, and saw about him stand
A host of living men, and trees that swayed,
And heard the wind that whispered in their
boughs!

And we, Lavinia, we too go that road!
I slept, Lavinia, but a little space
There on the steps, and yet, when I awoke
The first word that mine ear perceived was
"Death!" [He shudders.]

An awful darkness settles on the world!

[LAVINIA stands erect, her eyes fixed on the clear and brilliant sky. She strokes GIANINO'S head.]

LAVINIA. I see no darkness, but a butterfly
 Unfolding brilliant wings; yonder a star
 Begins to shine on high, while there, within,
 An old, old man goes to his peaceful rest!
 'Tis not the last step brings our weariness,
 But rather makes us feel it . . .

[*While she is speaking with her back to the door of the house an unseen hand has drawn the curtain aside, silently, but violently. All hurry up the steps in breathless silence and, TITIANELLO leading the way, enter the house.*]

LAVINIA (*speaks on with growing emotion*).

Greet this life!

Hail, hail to him who, caught in Life's great net
 Breathes deep, nor meditates upon his lot,
 Abandoning himself to that great stream
 Which bears him to the further shore . . .

[*She stops suddenly, and looks around; realizing what has occurred, she turns, and follows the others.*]

GIANINO (*still kneeling, and shuddering [his voice is muffled].*) 'Tis done!

[*He rises and follows the others. The curtain falls.*]

ON MUTABILITY *



TILL, still upon my cheek I feel their breath:
How can it be that days which seem so near
Are gone, forever gone, and lost in death?

This is a thing that none may fully grasp,
A thing too dreadful for the trivial tear:
That all things glide away from out our clasp;

And that this I, unchecked by years, has come
Across into me from a little child
Like some uncanny creature strangely dumb:—

That I existed centuries past—somewhere,
That ancestors on whom the earth is piled
Are yet a part of me like my own hair.

INTERDEPENDENCE *

MANY men no doubt must die below-decks
Where the heavy oars of the ship are plying;
Others dwell above beside the tiller
Know the flight of birds and the lore of star-lands.

Many with weighted limbs must lie forever
At the roots of the labyrinthine life-tree;
Others have their place appointed
With the sibyls, the queens of vision,
Where they bide as in seats accustomed,
Head untroubled and hand unburdened.

Yet from yonder lives a shadow falleth
On the happier lives of the others,
And the light unto the heavy
As to air and earth are fettered:

* Translator: Charles Wharton Stork.

From the weariness of forgotten peoples
Vainly would I liberate mine eyelids,
Or would keep my startled soul at distance
From the silent fall of far-off planets.

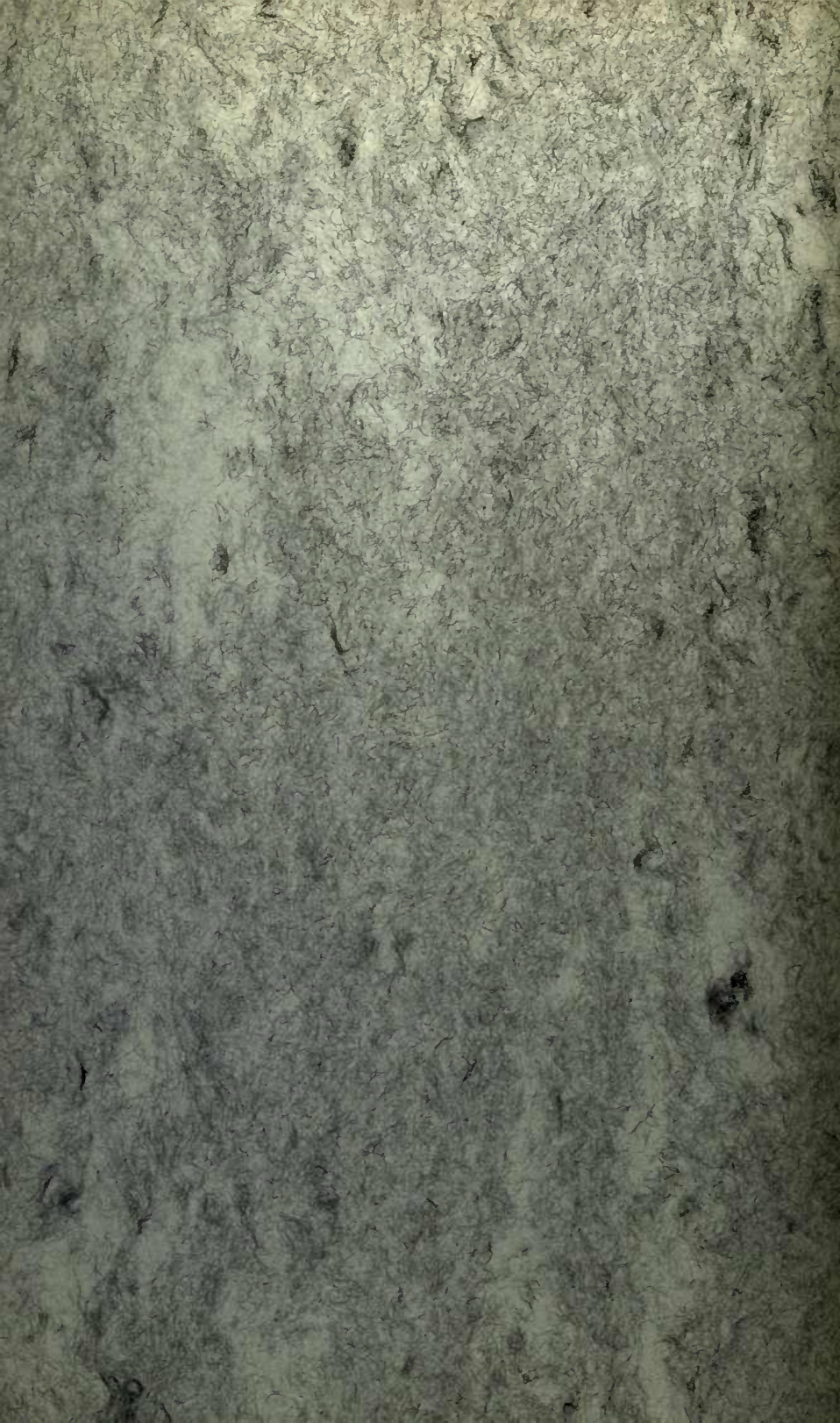
Many fates with mine are interwoven,
Subtly mingled flow the threads of being,
And my share in it is more than merely
One life's narrow flame or thin-toned lyre.

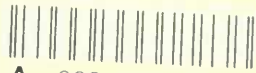
TRAVEL SONG *

MAD the torrent foams below us,
From the crags the boulders leap,
Eagles, threatening to o'erthrow us,
Down the ravine boldly sweep.

But before us lies a land
Where the ripened fruits reflected
In the tranquil waters glow.
Marble fount and statue stand
Deep in groves of bloom protected,
And the gentle breezes blow.

* Translator: Charles Wharton Stork.





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