

# Viennese Idylls

BY

ARTHUR SCHNITZLER

*Translated by Frederick Eisemann*

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# CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

FLOWERS

THE SAGE'S WIFE

BLIND GERONIMO AND HIS BROTHER

ANDREAS THAMEYER'S LAST LETTER

THE FAREWELL

THE DEAD ARE SILENT

## ARTHUR SCHNITZLER

While a comparison of Guy de Maupassant with Arthur Schnitzler may at first seem extravagant, still the Austrian writer has brought his short story to a level high enough to dare comparison with any modern author. While de Maupassant's eroticism is very evident, Schnitzler's is far more delicate, subtle, and not so much on the surface, and there is in the French author a sameness of treatment not to be found in Schnitzler. The latter occupies a place in modern Austrian literature comparable only with the position held by Sudermann and Hauptmann in Germany.

Arthur Schnitzler was born in Vienna in 1862. The son of a physician, he followed his father's career and took his degree in 1885. His first literary attempt was made the following year, but it was not until six years later, in 1892, that he came into prominence with the publication of "Anatol." This series of episodes, which still enjoys a great vogue in Europe, has recently attracted wide attention both in England and the United States with the publication of Mr. Granville Barker's paraphrase. Some of these episodes have also been staged by the Toy Theater of Chicago. Schnitzler's masterful psychological novelette, "Dying," was also published in 1892. "Flowers" followed the next year, and "The Farewell" appeared in 1896. From that time on short stories, plays, dialogues, and several novels have come from his versatile pen.

There is a certain grace in Schnitzler's stories and plays that distinguishes him from most German and Austrian writers; a grace that is usually incompatible with the German language. His lines are filled with delicate nuances, and a subtle, and almost sensuous beauty breathes forth from his pages. Unlike Wedekind, there is something of the mystic in the Austrian master, which, had it continued to develop, might have reached the supreme heights of a Maeterlinck. But this mysticism seems to have disappeared in his later works, and it would be almost fruitless to look for any of it in such a book as "Frau Beate und Ihr Sohn," or in his latest play, "Professor Bernhardt." The following quotation from Pollard's "Masks and Minstrels of New Germany" appears to be an adequate summing up of the typical Schnitzler short story: "No grim questions of right and wrong are allowed to assail us. How, most smoothly, most politely, most delicately, is this lover to say good-by to that sweetheart; or how is this lovely lady to inform her cavalier that she is tired of him—to all appearances we are never witnessing any problems any deeper than those. We move in a realm of beauty; ugliness is never allowed to obtrude. Neither He nor She ever vows constancy; as long as the romance lasts, until the bloom of novelty and wit is off, in short, there is no more in these little love affairs than that. The etiquette of the liaison, in short, is

nowhere more charmingly expressed than in Schnitzler . . . . For Schnitzler the essential is always make-believe of one sort or another—playing at love, playing at death, playing at comedies. His materials are slight, but he uses them with finesses of artistic grace and charm that give them dignity and distinction. He voices Vienna and its refinement, as well as the simpler sentiment of the Austrian people. . . . In most of Schnitzler’s plays and stories the prevailing question is just how to be off with the old love and on with the new. It would be hard to imagine any variation in this large problem that this writer has not elaborated. I do not think that either Marcel Prevost or Henri Becque has gone farther in the finesse of the philandering mind. . . . Yet, by this very charm Schnitzler does carry danger. His eroticism is far more insidious than the brutalities of Wedekind. His pictures of the patrician fastidiousness in amatory etiquette which characterizes peculiarly the last and staunchest stronghold of aristocracy in the modern world, Vienna, are so enchanting that they lure us toward licentiousness far more temptingly than do the ruffianism and the grimaces of the author of “Princess Russalka.”

## FLOWERS

I wandered about the streets the whole afternoon, while the snow fell slowly, in large flakes—and now I am at home, my lamp is burning, my cigar is lighted and my books lie close by; in fact, I have everything that affords true comfort. Yet all is in vain; I can think of but one thing.

But had she not been dead for a long time as far as I was concerned?—yes, dead; or, as I thought with the childish pathos of the deceived, “worse than dead”? And now that I know that she is not “worse than dead,” but simply dead, like the many others who lie out there, under the ground, forever—in spring, in the hot summer, and when the snow falls, as today—without any hope of ever returning—since that time I know that she did not die a moment sooner for me than she did for the rest of the world. Sorrow?—no. It is only the general horror that we all feel when something that once belonged to us, and whose entire being is still clear in our minds, sinks into the grave.

It was very sad when I discovered that she was deceiving me;—but there was so much else with it!—the fury and sudden hatred, and the horror of existence, and—ah, yes—the wounded vanity;—the sorrow only came later! But then there was the consolation that she also must be suffering.—I have them all yet, I can reread them at any time, those dozens of letters which sob, pray, and beseech forgiveness!—And I can still see her before me, in her dark dress and small straw hat, standing at the street corner in the twilight as I stepped out of the gate—looking after me.—And I still think of the last meeting when she stood in front of me with her large, beautiful eyes, set in that round, childlike face that now had become pale and wan.—I did not give her my hand when she left me;—when she left me for the last time.—And I watched her go down the street from my window and then she disappeared—forever. Now she can never return. . . .

My knowing it at all is due to an accident. I could have been unaware of it for weeks and months. I happened to meet her uncle one morning. I had not seen him for at least a year, as he does not come to Vienna very often. In fact, I had only met him two or three times before this. Our first meeting was three years ago at a bowling party. She and her mother were there also.—And then the following summer: I was in the Prater with a few friends. Her uncle was sitting at the next table with some gentlemen. They were all gay, and he drank to my health. And before he left he came up to me and told me confidentially that his niece was madly in love with me!—And in my half-giddiness it seemed very foolish and queer that the old gentleman should tell such a thing here, midst the music of the cymbals and violins—to me, who knew it so well, and on whose lips still clung the impression of her last kiss. And now,

this morning! I almost walked past him. I asked for his niece, more out of politeness than interest. I knew nothing more about her; her letters had stopped coming a long time ago; only flowers she sent me, regularly. Recollections of our happiest days! Once a month they came; no card: just silent, humble flowers.—And when I asked the old gentleman he was all astonishment. “You don’t know that the poor girl died a week ago?” It was a terrible shock!—Then he told me more. She was ill for a long while, but was in bed hardly a week. And her illness? “Melancholia—anaemia.—The doctors themselves were not quite sure.”

I remained a long while on the spot where the old gentleman had left me;—I was enervated, as if I had just gone through some great trouble.—And now it seems to me as if today marks the termination of a part of my life. Why—why? It was simply something external. I had no more feeling for her; in fact, I seldom thought of her any more. But now that I have written this all down I feel better; I am more composed.—I am beginning to appreciate the coziness of my home.—It is foolish and tormenting to think of it any more.—There are certainly others today who have a great deal more to mourn about than I.

I have taken a walk. It is a serene winter’s day. The sky looks so gray, so cold, so far away.—And I am very calm. The old gentleman whom I met yesterday—it seems as if it had been weeks ago. And when I think of her I can see her in a peculiarly sharp and finished outline; only one thing is lacking: the anger which always associated itself with my thoughts of her. The real appreciation that she is no more on earth, that she is lying in a coffin, that she has been buried, I have not—I feel no sorrow. The world seemed calmer to me today. I once knew for just one moment that there is neither happiness nor sorrow; no, there are only the grimaces of joy and sadness; we laugh and we weep and we invite our soul to be present. I could sit down now and read deep, serious books, and should soon be able to penetrate into all of their learning. Or, I could stand in front of old pictures, which heretofore have meant nothing to me, and now appreciate their true beauty.—And when I think of certain dear friends who have died, my heart does not feel as sad as it used to—death has become something friendly; it stalks among us but does not want to harm us.

Snow, high, white snow on all the streets. Little Gretel came to me and suggested that we ought to take a sleigh ride. And we drove out into the country’, over the smooth road, the sleigh bells ringing and the blue-gray sky above us. Gretel rested against my shoulder and looked out upon the long road with happy eyes. We came to an inn that we knew well from the summer. The oven was all

aglow, and it was so hot that we had to move the table away, as Gretel's left ear and cheek became fire red. I had to kiss the paler cheek. Afterwards, the return home in the twilight! Gretel sat very close to me and held both of my hands in hers.—Then she said: “At last I have you again.” She had thus, without racking her brain, struck the right note to make me happy. But perhaps it was the biting, clear air that unchained my thoughts, for I feel freer and more contented than I have in the last few days.

A short while ago again, as I lay dozing on my couch, a strange thought came to my mind. I appeared hard and cold to myself. As one who, without tears, in fact, without any emotion, stands at the grave in which he has buried a dear one. As one who has grown so hard that he cannot reconcile the horror of death.—Yes, irreconcilable, that is it.

Gone, quite gone! Life, happiness, and a little love drives all that foolishness away. I go again among people. I like them; they are harmless, they chatter about all sorts of jolly things. And Gretel is a dear, kind creature; and she is prettiest when she stands at my window and the sunbeams shine on her golden hair.

Something strange happened today.—It is the day on which she always sent me flowers. And the flowers came again as—as if nothing had changed. They came with the first mail, in a long, narrow white box. It was quite early, and I was still sleepy. And only when I was actually opening the box did I gain full consciousness. Then I almost had a shock. And there lay, daintily tied with a golden string, violets and pinks.—They lay as in a coffin. And as I took the flowers in my hand a shudder went through my heart.—But I understand how it is that they came again today. When she felt her illness, perchance even when she felt death approaching, she gave her usual order to the florist so that I would not miss her attention. Certainly, that is the explanation; as something quite natural, as something touching perhaps.—And still as I held them in my hands, these flowers, and they seemed to nod and tremble, then, in spite of reason and will power, I looked upon them as something ghostly, as if they had come from her, as if they were her greeting—as if she wanted always, even now that she was dead, to tell me of her love—of her tardy faithfulness. Ah, we do not understand death, we will never understand it; and a person is dead only after all that have known him have also passed away. Today I grasped the flowers differently than usual, as if I might injure them were I to hold them too tight—as if their souls might begin to sob softly. And as they now stand in front of me on my desk, in a narrow, light-green vase, they seem to nod their heads in mournful gratitude. The full pain of a useless yearning spreads over me from them, and I believe that they could tell me

something if we could only understand the language of *all* living things—not only of the things that talk.

I do not want to let myself be fooled. They are only flowers. They are a message from the past. They are no call, surely no call from the grave. They are simply flowers, and some florist tied them together mechanically, put a bit of cotton around them, then laid them in the white box, and mailed it.—And now that they are here, why do I think about them?

I spend many hours in the open air and take long, lonely walks. When I am among people I do not feel compatible with them. And I notice it when the sweet, blonde girl sits in my room, chattering away about all sorts of things—I don't know about what. When she is gone, in a moment it is as if she were miles away from me, as if the flood of people had engulfed her and left no traces behind. I should hardly be surprised if she did not come again.

The flowers are in the tall, green vase; their stems are in the water and their scent fills the room. They still retain their odor—in spite of the fact that I have had them a week and that they are already fading. And I believe all sorts of nonsense that I used to laugh at: I believe in the possibility of conversing with things in nature—I believe that one can communicate with clouds and springs; and I am waiting for these flowers to begin to talk. But no, I feel sure that they are always speaking—even now—they are forever crying out; and I can almost understand them.

How glad I am that the winter is over! Already the breath of spring throbs in the air. I am not living any differently than before, still I sometimes feel as if the boundaries of my existence are expanding. Yesterday seems far off, and the happenings of a few days past are like vague dreams. It is still the same when Gretel leaves me, especially when I have not seen her for several days; then our friendship appears like an affair of the past ages. She always comes, from afar, from so far away!—But when she begins to chatter it is like olden times again, and I then have a clear consciousness of the present. And then her words are almost too loud and the colors seem too harsh. Yet as soon as she leaves me all is gone; there are no after-pictures or gradual, fading recollections.—And then I am alone with my flowers. They are now quite faded, quite faded. They have no more perfume. Gretel had not noticed them at all; but today she saw them and it seemed as if she wanted to question me, but then she suddenly appeared to have a secret horror for them;—she stopped speaking altogether and soon left me.

The petals are slowly falling off. I never touch them; anyway, if I did they would crumble. It makes me very sad to see them faded. I do not know why I have not the courage to make an end of all this nonsense. The faded flowers make me ill. I cannot stand them and I rush out. Once in the street, I feel that I have to hurry back to them, to care for them. And then I find them in the same green vase where I left them, tired and sad. Last evening I wept before them, as one weeps at a grave. Yet I never gave a thought to the sender of them. Perhaps I am wrong, yet it seems as if Gretel feels that there is something strange in my room. She does not laugh any more. She does not speak so loud, with that clear, lively voice to which I am accustomed. And I do not receive her as I used to. Then there is the fear that she will question me; and I realize what torture those questions would be.

She frequently brings her sewing, and if I am still at my books she sits quietly at the table and sews or crochets; and she waits patiently until I have finished and put my books away and come up to her and take her sewing out of her hands. Then I remove the green shade from the lamp so that a mellow light floods the room. I do not like dark corners.

Spring! My window is wide open. Late last evening Gretel and I looked out on to the street. The air was warm and balmy. And when I looked at the corner, where the street lamp spreads a weak light, I suddenly saw a shadow. I saw it and I did not—I know that I did not see it—I closed my eyes and I could suddenly see through my eyelids. There stood the miserable creature, in the pale lamp light, and I saw her face very clearly, as if the yellow sunshine were on it, and I saw in the pale, emaciated face those wounded eyes. Then I walked slowly away from the window and sat down at my desk; the candle sputtered in the breeze. And I remained motionless, for I knew that the poor creature was standing at the corner, waiting; and if I had dared to touch the faded flowers I would have taken them out of the vase and brought them to her. Thus I thought, and sincerely thought; yet I knew all the while that it was foolish. Now Gretel also left the window and came over to the back of my chair where she remained a moment to touch my hair with her lips. Then she went and left me alone.

I stared at the flowers. There are hardly any more. Mostly bare stems, dry and pitiful. They make me ill and drive me mad. And it must be evident; otherwise Gretel would have asked me; but she feels it, too. Now she has fled as if there were ghosts in my room.

Ghosts!—They are, they are!—Dead things playing with life! And if faded flowers smell mouldy it is only the remembrance of the time when they were in bloom. And the dead return as long as we do not forget them. What difference does it make if they

cannot speak now;—I can hear them! She does not appear any more, yet I can see her! And the spring outside, and the sunshine on my rug, and the perfume? of the lilacs in the park, and the people who pass below and do not interest me, are they life? If I pull down the curtains, the sun is dead. I do not care to know about all these people, and they are dead. I close my window, and the perfume of the lilacs is gone and spring is dead. I am more powerful than the sun, the people, and the spring. But more powerful than I is remembrance, for that comes when it wills and from it there is no escape. And these dry stems are more powerful than the perfume of the lilacs and the spring.

I was pondering over these pages when Gretel entered. She had never come so early. I was surprised, astonished. She remained a moment on the threshold, and I gazed at her without greeting her. Then she smiled and approached me. In her hand she carried a bouquet of fresh flowers. Then, without speaking, she laid them on my desk. In the next moment she seized the withered stems in the green vase. It seemed as if someone had grasped my heart;—but I could not utter a sound. And when I wanted to rise and take her by the arm, she smiled at me. Holding the faded flowers high above her, she hurried to the window and threw them out into the street. I felt I wanted to throw myself after them; but Gretel stood at the sill, facing me. And on her head was the sunshine, the bright sunshine. And the aroma of lilacs came in through the window. And I looked at the empty, green vase on my desk;—I am not sure, yet I think I felt freer,—yes, freer. Then Gretel approached me, picked up her bouquet, and held in front of my face cool, white lilacs. Such a healthy, fresh perfume—so soft, so cool; I wanted to bury my face in them. Laughing, white, beautiful flowers—and I felt that the spectre was gone. Gretel stood behind me and ran her hands through my hair. “You silly boy,” she said. Did she know what she had done? I grasped her hands and kissed her.

In the evening we went out into the open, into the spring. We have just returned! I have lighted my candle. We took a long walk, and Gretel is so tired that she has fallen asleep in the chair. She is very beautiful when she smiles thus in her sleep.

Before me, in the narrow, green vase are the lilacs. Down on the street—no, no, they are not there any longer. Already the wind has blown them away with the rest of the dust.

## THE SAGE'S WIFE

I shall stay here a long while. Over this spot, between the woods and the ocean, there lies a heavy air of lassitude that does me good. Everything is quiet and silent. Only the fleeting, white clouds are moving; the wind is so high above the trees and the ocean that the leaves do not rustle, and the waves do not break. The intense solitude here is always noticeable, even when one mingles among people, in the hotel or on the promenade. The orchestra plays for the most part melancholy Swedish and Danish melodies; and even when it tries lighter things they sound sad and dreary. At the close of the concert, the musicians quietly come down the steps of the kiosk and disappear sadly and slowly down the walks.

I am writing this all on an odd piece of paper while I am being rowed along the shore.

The shore is soft and green. All along are simple country houses with their gardens; in the gardens, close to the water, stand benches; behind the houses runs the narrow, white road, and on the other side lies the forest. The forest goes a long way into the country, and where it stops there is the sun. Its evening glow illumines the small and narrow yellow island across the bay. My oarsman tells me that it takes two hours to get there. I should very much like to go there some time. But one is strangely drawn to this spot; and I am always near it, either on the shore or on my balcony.

I am lying under the beech trees. The heavy afternoon air weighs down the branches; from time to time I hear the footsteps of people who are coming through the woods; but I cannot see them, as I do not budge, and my eyes remain fixed on the heavens. I can hear also the gay laughter of children, but the solemn quiet about me soon absorbs all noises, and in a moment they seem a long way off. When I close my eyes and immediately open them again it is as if I am awakening from a long sleep. Thus I escape from myself, and sink into the great quiet.

My peace is over. And I cannot find it again, either in the rowboat or under the beech trees. Everything seems to be changed all at once. The music sounds gay and merry; the passers-by chatter unceasingly; and the children shout and laugh. Even the beautiful ocean, which always lay so calm and peaceful, now beats wildly against the rocks at night. Life has again begun for me. My home leaving had never been so easy; I had left nothing unfinished. I had got my doctor's degree; I had buried an artistic illusion that had followed me through life; and Jenny had become the wife of a watchmaker. And thus I had that strange happiness of

taking a trip without leaving a sweetheart at home, and without taking an illusion with me. I had felt well and secure in the feeling of having completed a part of my life. And now all of that is over;—for Frederica is here.

It is late in the evening. I am sitting on my balcony with a lamp at my side, writing. Now is the time to clear up everything. I am planning my speech to her—the first one after seven years, the first one since that time.

I was down by the water, seated on one of the benches, watching the people pass to and fro. A woman with a little boy stood on the landing bridge; she was too far away for me to see her face. In fact, I had hardly noticed her at all; all I knew was that she had been standing there a long while before she finally left and approached me. She was leading the little boy by the hand. Now I saw that she was young and slim. Her face seemed familiar to me. She was only ten paces away from me when I arose quickly and approached her. She had smiled and I knew who she was.

“Yes, it is I,” she said, and gave me her hand.

“I knew you immediately,” I answered.

“I trust that was not too difficult,” she went on. “And you really have not changed at all.”

“Seven years—” I said.

She nodded. “Seven years—.”

We were both silent. She was very beautiful. Now a smile spread over her face, and she turned to the little boy, whom she still held by the hand, and said, “Shake hands with the gentleman.” The little fellow gave me his hand but did not look at me.

“That is my son,” she said.

He was a pretty boy with light eyes. “It is so nice that we are again meeting in life,” she began. “I had never thought—”

“It is strange,” I said.

“Why?” she asked, smiling, and for the first time looked into my eyes. “It’s summertime—everyone is traveling, aren’t they?”

It was on my lips to ask for her husband, but I did not want to have her unbosom herself.

“How long do you expect to stay here?” I asked.

“Two weeks. Then I am going to meet my husband in Copenhagen.”

I gave her a rapid glance. She answered it with an unconcerned gaze that seemed to say: “Does that perhaps seem strange to you?”

I felt myself insecure, almost restless. It suddenly appeared incomprehensible how completely one can forget things at times. Then I first realized that I had not thought of my experience of seven years ago in such a long while that it had almost left my mind.

“But you will have to tell me a lot about yourself,” she began

again, "a great, great deal. I suppose you have been a doctor for a long time now?"

"Not so long—only a month?"

"You still have a young face," she said. "Your moustache looks as if it had been pasted on."

The dinner bell sounded loudly from the hotel.

"Good-bye," she said now, as if she had been waiting for just that.

"Can't we go in together?" I asked.

"I eat up in my room with my boy, as I do not like to be among so many people."

"When will I see you again?"

She looked smilingly at the little promenade. "One can't help meeting here," she said,—and when she noticed that her answer had annoyed me, she added, "especially if one wants to. *Au revoir.*"

She gave me her hand, and without turning again she left. But the little fellow looked back once more.

I walked up and down the promenade the whole afternoon and evening, but she did not come. Perhaps she is already gone? And that would not really surprise me.

One day has passed without my having seen her. It rained the whole afternoon, and the promenade was almost empty. I strolled past her house a few times, but I do not know which are her windows. In the afternoon the rain stopped, and I took a long walk on the ocean road as far as the next resort. It was dark and muggy.

On the way I could think of nothing else but that time. Everything stood clearly before my eyes: The friendly little house in which I lived, and the tiny garden with the green chairs and tables; and the small town with its quiet white streets; and the far-off mist-enshrouded hills. And over all there hung an expanse of blue sky, which belonged there, as if this was the only spot in the whole world where it was so blue. I could see all the people of that time; my classmates, instructors, and also Frederica's husband. I saw him differently than at that last moment; he had a soft, and somewhat tired expression, the kind with which he used to greet us boys on his way to school, the kind with which he used to sit quietly at the table between Frederica and me. I saw him as I had seen him often from my window: at the green table in the garden, correcting our work. And I remembered how Frederica had brought him his coffee, and had glanced up at my window, with a smiling countenance which I could never understand—till the last hour. But now I know too that I have often remembered all this. But not as something real; rather as a picture which hung on the wall at home.

We sat next to each other on the beach today and talked as strangers would. Her son was at our feet, playing in the sand. It was not as if something weighed upon us, but we chatted like people who meant nothing to one another, and have met as casual summer acquaintances. We spoke of the weather, of the surrounding country, of the people, of the music, and of a few new books. I did not feel uncomfortable sitting next to her; but when she rose and left me it was unbearable. I wanted to call after her: Leave something of yourself here; but she would not have understood. However, when I think it over, what else could I have expected? The very fact that she had been so sweet at our first meeting was surely due only to the surprise; perhaps to that strange feeling of happiness in meeting an old friend at a strange place. But now she had had time to reminisce as I had done; and all that she had hoped to forget forever was now suddenly brought back to her. I cannot possibly guess what she suffered, and perhaps still has to suffer on my account. That she remained with him I realize; and the little chap is proof sufficient that they also came to an understanding again—but one can make up without forgiving, and one can forgive without forgetting. I ought to leave this place, it would be better for both of us.

In a rather strange and woeful beauty that year passes through my mind, and I live through it all again. All sorts of details return to my mind. I remember the autumn morning on which I arrived with my father in the little town where I was to spend my last school year. I can see the schoolhouse clearly before me, in the center of the park, surrounded by trees. I can remember my quiet studying in the large room, the pleasant talks about my future which I had with the professor at dinner, while Frederica was smiling at us; I can remember the walks I took with my classmates on the highroad as far as the next village; and these unimportant little trifles move me as if they portrayed my whole youth. Probably all these days would lie in the dark shadows of oblivion if it had not been for that last hour, which threw an atmosphere of mystery over everything. And the strangest thing is that since Frederica has been near me those hours seem more recent than the days of last May, when I was in love with the girl who married the watchmaker.

When I stepped to my window early this morning and looked down on the large terrace, I saw Frederica at a table with her son; they were the first ones at breakfast. Their table was directly beneath my window and I called down a good morning to them. She looked up. "Already awake?" she asked. "Won't you join us?"

In the next moment I was sitting with them. It was a wonderful morning, cool and sunny. We talked about the same trivialities as before, yet all seemed different. Back of our words glowed remembrance. We went into the woods. Then she began to talk of

herself and of her home.

“Everything is the same as it always was,” she said, “only our garden has grown more beautiful; my husband has taken great care of it since our boy was born. And next year we’re going to have a greenhouse.”

She went on chatting. “For two years now we have had a theatre, and there are performances the whole winter until Palm Sunday. I go two or three times a week, usually with my mother. She loves it.”

“I too theatre!” cried the little fellow, whom Frederica was leading by the hand.

“Of course, you too. On Sunday afternoons,” she explained to me, “they have children’s performances; then I take my little boy. And I love it too.”

I had to tell her of myself also. She did not ask much about my profession and serious things; she was more interested to know what I did with my spare time, and also wanted to hear about the gaieties of the big city.

The conversation went along merrily; there was not a word mentioned that could even hint at our former experience—and still I am sure she felt its uninterrupted presence as keenly as I did. We tramped for hours, and I was almost happy. Sometimes the little fellow would walk between us, and then our hands would meet on his curls. But we both pretended to take no notice of it, and kept on talking unconcernedly.

When I was again alone, I lost my happy mood. For then once more I suddenly felt that I knew nothing of Frederica. It seemed incomprehensible that this uncertainty had not tortured me during our conversation, and it also seemed strange that Frederica had not felt the need of speaking of it. For even if I took it for granted that for years there had been no thought of that hour between her and her husband—still she could not have forgotten it. Something earnest must have followed my silent departure at that time—why had she not had the power to speak of it? Had she perhaps waited for me to do so? And what had kept me back? Were we both afraid to touch on that subject? That is possible. But still it must eventually happen; for until then, something that separates us will stand between us. And the thought that there is something that keeps us apart hurts me more than anything.

In the afternoon I tramped over the same road that we had followed in the morning. There was a terrible yearning in my breast. Late that night I walked past her house, after having looked everywhere for her in vain. She was standing at the window. I called up to her, as she did to me that morning, “Aren’t you coming down?”

She answered in what I thought a cool manner, “I’m tired. Good-night”—and closed the window.

In my mind Frederica appeared to me in two forms. I see her mostly as a pale, soft woman, sitting in the garden in a morning dress, smoothing my cheeks in a motherly way. If I had only met her here in that form my peace would have been undisturbed, and I should have lain under the beech trees in the afternoons as I had done before she came.

But she appears to me in another and totally different form, a form in which I really only saw her once, and that was during the last hour I spent in the little town.

It was the day on which I received my degree. According to my custom, I had lunched with the professor and his wife, and as I did not want any one to see me off, we had said good-bye immediately after we arose from the table. I felt no emotions at all. Only when I was sitting on the bed in my bare room, before my packed trunk, looking out across the pretty little garden at the white clouds, which hung motionless over the hills, did I experience that light, almost soft, sad feeling of saying farewell. Suddenly the door opened. Frederica stepped in. I arose quickly. She approached me, leaned against the table, and grasped the edge with her hands while she gazed at me so seriously. Very softly she murmured: "Today then?" I nodded, and for the first time felt how sorry I was to leave. She gazed at the floor for a while and said nothing. Then she raised her head and drew near me. She placed both of her hands softly on my head, as she had often done before; but in this moment I realized that today the action had a new significance. Then she passed her hands slowly over my cheeks, and looked at me in a soulful manner. She shook her head painfully, as if there was something that she could not fathom. "Do you really have to leave today?" she asked softly. "Yes," I answered. "Forever?" she cried, and I replied, "No." "Oh, yes," she said, her lips twitching, "it is forever. Even if you do come to visit us again—in two or three years—today you are leaving forever." She spoke with a tenderness that was not motherly. It made me shudder. And suddenly she kissed me. At first I thought: she has never done that before. But when her lips remained pressed to mine I understood the true meaning of this kiss. I was confused and happy; I could have wept. She had thrown her arms about my neck, and I sank, as if she had forced me, into the corner of the divan. Frederica lay at my feet and drew me down towards her. Then she took my hands and buried her face in them. I whispered her name and was astonished at the sweet sound of it. The perfume of her hair filled my nostrils; I drank it in with pure delight. At this moment—I thought I should become paralyzed from fear—the door, which was ajar, opened very softly, and there stood Frederica's husband. I wanted to cry out but could not utter a sound. I stared at him—I could not see whether his expression had changed—for in the next moment he was gone, and the door was closed. I tried to rise, and free my

hands, in which Frederica's face was still buried; I wanted to speak. With an effort I pronounced her name—then she suddenly jumped up—pale as death—and whispered, "Be quiet!" She stood for a moment motionless, her face turned towards the door as if she wanted to listen. Then she opened it part way and looked through the crack. I stood there breathless. Now she opened the door wide, took me by the hand and said, "Go quickly, quickly!" She pushed me out—I crept down the little hallway, as far as the stairs, and then turned around. I saw her standing at the door in terrible fear. She made a violent motion with her hand, which meant that I should go on. And I rushed away.

And what happened next seems to me like a mad dream. I hurried to the station, filled with the most horrible fear. I rode all night, and tossed about the coupe without being able to sleep. On arriving at home, I expected that my parents would already know about it, and I was almost surprised when they received me with open arms. For quite a while afterwards I was in a frightfully nervous state, determined to do something reckless; every ring at the door and every letter made me tremble. Finally, word came to calm me: It was a postal card from one of my classmates, whose home was in that place, telling me some perfectly harmless news. Then nothing terrible had happened! At least there had been no public scandal! I was made to believe that the matter had passed off quietly between husband and wife: he had forgiven her, and she had repented.

In spite of this, my first adventure seemed to me for a while to be something sad, almost gloomy, and I appeared to myself as one who, in entire innocence, had denied a household its conjugal peace. Gradually this feeling disappeared, and only later on, when through new experiences I began to understand that adventure better, did a yearning for Frederica steal over me sometimes—like the pain of an unfulfilled promise. But this yearning also passed away, and thus it was that I had almost forgotten the young woman. But now, suddenly, all is here again; and all is more intense, for I love Frederica.

Today everything that has been so mysterious to me in the last few days is cleared up. We were sitting on the beach together late at night, just the two of us; the little chap was in bed. In the morning I had entreated her to come; I had told her of the nightly beauty of the ocean, and how wonderful it would be, when all was quiet, to gaze out into the darkness. She had said nothing, but I knew that she would come. And then we sat on the beach, saying very little, holding each other's hands, and I felt that when I wanted to, Frederica must belong to me. Why talk about the past, I thought—and I knew that she had thought the same. Are we still the same as we were at that time? We are so gay, so free; the

recollections flit high above us, like distant butterflies. Perhaps, like me, she has had many other experiences during those seven years; but what business is that of mine? Now we are creatures of today and are striving towards each other. Yesterday she was perhaps unhappy, perhaps foolish; today she sits quietly at my side on the shore and yearns to be in my arms.

Slowly I accompanied her the short distance to her house. The trees cast long, black shadows on the road.

“Tomorrow we’ll go sailing,” I said.

“All right,” she replied.

“I’ll wait for you on the bridge, at seven o’clock.”

“Where will we go?”

“To the island over there—where the lighthouse is. Do you see it?”

“Oh yes, the red light. Is it far?”

“An hour; we can be back early.”

“Good night,” she said, and stepped into the house.

I left. In a few days you may have forgotten me, I thought, but tomorrow will be a glorious day.

I was on the bridge before her. The little boat was waiting; old Jansen had hoisted the sail, and was sitting at the rudder, smoking his pipe. The street by which she was to come was still quite empty. After a quarter of an hour Frederica appeared. In the distance it seemed to me that she was walking quicker than usual; when she reached the bridge I arose; only now she could see me, and she greeted me with a smile. At last she reached the end of the bridge, and I helped her into the boat. Jansen weighed anchor and we were off. We sat close together, and she held my arm. She was dressed all in white, and looked like a girl of eighteen.

“What is there to see on the island?” she asked.

I smiled.

She blushed and said: “There’s the lighthouse, isn’t there?”

“Ask the man.” She pointed to Jansen.

“How old is the church on the island?” I asked.

But he understood no German; and after this we felt ourselves even safer than before.

“Over there,” she asked, and glanced in that direction, “is that also an island?” “No,” I answered, “that is Sweden, the mainland.”

“That would be even nicer,” she said.

“Yes,” I replied, “but one would have to be able to remain there—a long time—forever.”

If she had now said to me: “Come, let us go to another country and never return,” I would have gladly acquiesced. As we sailed along in the boat, the fresh air blowing about us, and the clear sky above us and reflected on the water, it seemed to me like a royal voyage, with Frederica and me as the kingly pair, and all the earlier conditions of our existence lost and forgotten.

Soon we were able to distinguish the little houses on the island; and the white church on the hill; gradually the hill seemed to run from one end of the island to the other, and stood out in sharp outlines. Our boat sailed straight for the shore. Little fishing smacks closed in about us; some drifted lazily along on the water. Frederica was looking mostly in the direction of the island, but she saw nothing. In less than an hour we were in the harbour, which was so surrounded by wooden bridges that one could imagine oneself in a pond.

Some children were standing on the bridge. We got out and walked slowly towards the shore; the children came along back of us, but they soon grew tired of following. The whole village lay before us; there were not more than twenty houses, and these were scattered about in a circle. We sank into the soft brown sand which recently had been covered by the waves. On one sun-beaten bit of beach, which stretched far out, nets were hung to dry; a couple of women were sitting in front of their houses mending nets. After walking but a hundred steps we were quite alone. We had reached a narrow path which led to the lighthouse at the other end of the island. On our left, past some almost barren fields, which always grew narrower, was the ocean; on our right rose the hill on whose ridge we saw the path which led to the church. Over everything lay the hot sun, and peace. Frederica and I had not said a word the whole time. And I had no desire to do so; I felt strangely happy to be wandering with her through this great quiet.

But now she began to speak.

“A week ago today,” she said—

“Well?”

“I knew nothing—not even where I was going.”

I did not reply.

“Ah, how wonderful it is here,” she cried, and grasped my hand.

I felt myself drawn to her; I should have liked to press her in my arms and cover her eyes with kisses.

“Yes?” I asked softly.

She grew silent and became serious.

We had arrived at the little cottage which was built on to the lighthouse; this was the end of the road; we had to turn. A narrow and fairly steep path led up the hill. I hesitated.

“Come,” she said.

As we now walked, we had the church ahead of us. We were approaching it. It was very warm. I laid my arm around Frederica’s neck. I touched her hot cheeks with my hand.

“Why didn’t we hear from you all this time?” she asked suddenly. “At least why didn’t I hear?” she added, and looked up at me.

“Why,” I repeated, in a strange voice.

“Why yes!”

“How could I?”

“Why, were you injured?”

I was too much astonished to reply.

“What did you really think?”

“What did I—”

“Yes—or don’t you remember any more?”

“Of course I remember. But why do you speak of it now?”

“I have wanted to ask you for a long while,” she said.

“Well, speak,” I replied, very much moved.

“You took it for a mood—oh, yes you did!” she added quickly, when she noticed that I was about to protest. “But I tell you that it was not. I suffered more in that year than any one can possibly imagine.”

“In what year?”

“Why—when you were with us. Why do you ask? At first I—but why am I telling you all this?”

I grasped her firmly by the arm. “Tell me—I beg you—I love you.”

“And I love you,” she cried suddenly; then she took my hand in hers, covered it with kisses and murmured: “I always have—always.”

“But please tell me everything,” I entreated.

She spoke as we walked along the little path with the sun streaming down upon us.

“At first I said to myself: He is a child. I love him in a motherly way. But the nearer your hour of departure came—”

She interrupted herself for a bit; then she continued:

“And finally the hour had come. I did not want to go up to you—I don’t know what force swept me up there. And once I was with you I did not want to kiss you—but—”

“Go on, go on,” I begged.

“And then I suddenly told you to go—you probably thought that the whole thing was a comedy, didn’t you?”

“I don’t understand you.”

“That is what I thought the whole time. I even wanted to write to you. But what was the use? Well then—my reason for sending you away was—I suddenly became frightened.”

“Yes, I know that.”

“If you knew—why didn’t I ever hear from you again?” she cried, with much animation.

“Why did you become frightened?” I asked, gradually beginning to understand.

“Because I thought some one was near.”

“You thought so? How did that happen?”

“Why, I thought I heard steps in the hall. That was it. Steps! I thought it was—then fear seized me—for it would have been terrible

if he—I don't want to even think of it. But no one was there—no one. He did not return until late that evening, and you had been gone a long, long time.”

While she was telling me this, I felt that something inside of me was becoming paralyzed. And when she had finished I looked at her as if I had to ask her: “Who are you?” Unconsciously I turned towards the harbour where I saw the sail of our boat shimmering in the sun, and I thought: What a long time ago it was that we landed on this island! For I came here with a woman that I loved, and now a stranger walks at my side. I could not utter a word. But she hardly noticed it; she had her arm in mine, and probably took my silence for tender affection. I thought of him. So he had never told her! She does not know, she never knew that he saw her lying at my feet. He had crept away from the door, and had not returned until later—not until hours later, and had said nothing to her! And he had gone on living with her during all these years without saying a word! He had forgiven her—and she did not know!

We had arrived near the church; it was hardly ten paces ahead of us now. Here was a steep path that must have led to the village. I turned in. She followed me.

“Give me your hand,” she said, “or I'll slip.” I gave it to her without turning around. “What is the matter with you?” she asked. I could not answer, and only pressed her hand, which seemed to calm her. Then I said, only to make some conversation: “It's too bad that we did not look at the church.” She laughed: “Why we passed by without even noticing it.”

“Shall we return?” I asked.

“Oh no, I'm anxious to be in the boat again. Sometime I'd like to go sailing alone with you, without this man.”

“I don't know how to sail.”

“Oh,” she said, and suddenly stopped, as if she had had an idea that she did not want to tell me. I did not ask her anything. Soon we were on the bridge. The boat lay in readiness. The children who had welcomed us were there again. They gazed at us with their great blue eyes. We sailed off. The ocean had become calmer; when one closed one's eyes one could hardly notice that the boat was moving.

“I want you to lie at my feet,” said Frederica, and I stretched myself out on the bottom of the boat, and put my head, in her lap. I was glad that I did not have to look into her face. When she spoke it seemed to me like some voice out of the distance. I understood everything, but could still keep on thinking my own thoughts.

I shuddered before her.

“Tonight we'll sail out on to the ocean,” she said.

Something ghostly seemed to surround her.

“Tonight on the ocean,” she repeated slowly, “in a rowboat. Just you and I. You can row, can’t you?”

“Yes,” I said. I was tortured at the idea of the forgiveness that hung about her without her knowing of it.

She continued. “We’ll drift out to sea—and be alone. Why don’t you say anything?” she asked.

“I am happy,” I said.

I shuddered at the silent destiny that had surrounded her for so many years without her knowledge.

We sailed on.

For a moment the thought went through my head: Tell her. Take this horror from her, and then she will be a real woman again for you, and you will desire her. But I did not dare. We came to the pier.

I jumped out and helped her alight.

“My boy will look after me. I have to hurry. Now leave me.”

It was quite lively on the shore; and I noticed several people watching us.

“And tonight,” she said, “at nine I’ll be—but what is the matter with you?”

“I am very happy,” I said.

“Tonight then at nine,” she said, “I’ll be here on the beach, with you. *Au revoir*.”

And she hurried away.

I also said, “*Au revoir*,” and remained standing. But I shall never see her again.

While I am writing these lines I am already far away—and am further at every second; I am writing them in the coupe of a train which has just left Copenhagen. It is exactly nine o’clock. Now she is standing on the beach, waiting for me. When I close my eyes I can see her before me. But it is not a woman that walks up and down—no, only a shadow is wandering on the shore.

## BLIND GERONIMO AND HIS BROTHER.

Blind Geronimo arose from the bench and took up his guitar which was lying in readiness next to his wineglass on the table. He had heard the rumble of wheels in the distance. Now he groped his way to the door and walked down the narrow wooden steps which led into the covered courtyard below. His brother followed him, and both stood on the steps, their backs to the wall, so that they would be protected from the cold, damp wind which blew through the yard.

All the carriages that came over the Stilfser Pass had to drive under the gloomy gateway of the old inn. For those who were going from Italy into the Tyrol this was the last resting place before the summit. It was not inviting for a lengthy sojourn, as just at this spot the narrow road ran between high, bare rocks. But the blind Italian and his brother Carlo practically made their home here during the summer months.

The stage drove in and was soon followed by other carriages. Most of the travelers remained seated, huddled up in their heavy wraps; some got out and paced impatiently up and down. The weather grew worse, and now a cold rain beat down relentlessly. After several beautiful, mild days, autumn seemed suddenly to have come.

The blind man sang, accompanying himself on the guitar; his voice was uneven; sometimes he would suddenly screech. But that was when he had drunk a lot. Now he lifted his head with an expression of fruitless supplication. But the lines of his face, with the black stubble and the bluish lips, remained firm. The older brother stood next to him, almost motionless. When any one threw a coin into his hat he would nod his thanks, and look at the donor with a quick, uncertain gaze. But immediately, almost fearfully, he would turn away and stare into the open. It was as if his eyes were ashamed of the light that they could see, since they could not give the blind brother even a ray of it.

"Bring me some wine," said Geronimo; and Carlo went in, obedient, as always. As he was going up the steps Geronimo began to sing again. He had long since learned not to hear himself, and could easily understand what was going on about him. Now he heard the whispering of a young man and woman. He wondered how often this couple had passed over the same road; for sometimes in his blindness and intoxication it seemed to him as if every day the same people came over the Pass, going South or going North.

Carlo came down bringing him a glass of wine. The blind man lifted it to his lips, and said to the young couple, "To your health!"

"Thank you," answered the young man; but his companion drew away, for the old man was almost repulsive to her.

A carriage drove in filled with noisy passengers. In it were a father, a mother, three children, and a governess.

“A German family,” Geronimo murmured softly to Carlo.

The father gave each one of the children a coin to throw into the begger’s hat, and Geronimo each time nodded his head in thanks. The oldest boy gazed at the blind man with frightened curiosity. Carlo looked at the boy. Whenever he saw children of that age he never could help thinking of his brother Geronimo who had lost his eyesight at just that period of his life. For he remembered that day, although it was twenty years ago, in every detail. Even today there still resounded in his ears the childish scream with which Geronimo sank down on the lawn; still today he saw the sun playing on the white garden wall, and he again heard the church bells, which started ringing at that awful moment. How often had he shot at the ash tree with his bow and arrow! As soon as he heard the screams he immediately thought that he must have hurt his little brother who was running by at just that time. He dropped his bow, jumped through the window into the garden, and hurried to Geronimo, who lay on the grass, his hands before his face, sobbing. Blood was flowing over his cheek and down his neck.

At that same moment their father came home from the fields, and now both of them knelt, stupefied, at the side of the suffering child. Old Vanetti was the first one who succeeded in forcing Geronimo’s hands away from his face. Then came the blacksmith, whose apprentice Carlo was at that time, who knew a little about medicine; and he immediately saw that the right eye was lost. And the doctor who came from Poschiavo that evening could not help any. He even warned them about the danger of the other eye. And he was right. A year later Geronimo was quite blind. At first they tried to persuade him that he would regain his sight, and he seemed to believe it.

Carlo, who at that time knew the truth, used to wander for days and nights over the highroad and almost committed suicide. But the holy father told him that it was his duty to live that he might devote his life to his brother. And Carlo understood. He was seized by enormous compassion. And his sorrow only grew less when he could be with his blind brother, stroke his hair, kiss his brow, tell him stories, and take him out into the fields. He had neglected his lessons at the blacksmith’s because he did not want to be separated from his brother; and later he could not decide to take up his work again, in spite of the fact that his father was not doing at all well.

One day it struck Carlo that his brother never mentioned his misfortune any more. But soon he knew the reason: Geronimo realized that he would never see again. And now Carlo suffered more than ever, even though he tried to pacify himself by the

thought that the whole thing had been an unfortunate accident. And sometimes, in the early morning, when he would look at his brother who slept next to him, he feared so to see him awoken that he would run out into the garden to avoid being present when those eyes seemed to search for the light that could never again be theirs.

It was at that time that Carlo noticed Geronimo's pleasing voice, and the idea struck him that it ought to be cultivated. The school teacher of Tola, who sometimes came over on Sundays, taught him the guitar. But at that time the blind boy never thought that his new accomplishment would ever serve him as a life's means.

That sad summer day seemed to be the forerunner of bad luck for the house of Lagaretti. The crops were bad one year after another, and the little bit of money that the father had stored away was taken from him by a swindling relative. And thus when, one hot day in August, he had a shock and died, he left behind him nothing but debts. The little place was sold, and the brothers, now homeless, left the village.

Carlo was twenty, Geronimo fifteen. It was then that their wandering and begging life began. At first Carlo thought of taking some position that would allow him to support his brother, but it could not be done. And besides, Geronimo was never contented in one place; he always wanted to be on the road.

For twenty years now they had been wandering over the passes and highways of northern Italy and southern Tyrol, always taking their stand where the stream of travelers was the greatest.

And even if Carlo no longer felt that terrible sorrow, a sorrow that was made keener by each sunbeam and every lovely bit of landscape, there was still that great sympathy within him, as constant, though unknown, as his heart beats and his breathing. And he was always glad when Geronimo got drunk.

The carriage with the German family had driven on. Carlo sat down, as he was fond of doing, on the bottom step; but Geronimo remained standing, his arms at his side, gazing upwards.

Marie, the maid, came out of the inn.

"Did you make a lot of money today?" she called.

Carlo did not even turn. The blind man picked up his glass and drank to Marie. She sometimes sat next to him at the table in the evening; and he knew that she was pretty.

Carlo leaned forward and looked up the highroad. The wind blew and the rain beat down, drowning out the rumble of the approaching carriage. Carlo arose and took his place at his brother's side.

Geronimo began singing even before the carriage, in which there was but one passenger, had come to a stop. The driver quickly unharnessed the horses and then ran up to the inn. The

traveler remained seated in his corner for a while, all huddled up in his gray raincoat. He did not seem to hear the singing. After a while he jumped out and began to pace up and down, without ever going far away from the carriage. He kept rubbing his hands together to keep warm. Now, for the first time he seemed to notice the musician and his brother. He stood opposite them and gazed at them steadily, as if he were testing them. Carlo nodded gently.

The traveler was a young fellow, with a pretty, smooth-shaven face and restless eyes. After he had stood in the one spot for quite a while he hurried again to the gate through which he was to depart, and at the rainy, foggy prospect, he shook his head sadly.

“Well?” asked Geronimo.

“Nothing yet,” answered Carlo. “But he’ll probably give us something when he drives off.”

The traveler returned and leaned on the carriage shafts. The blind man began to sing again. Now the young fellow seemed to be listening with real interest. A groom appeared and hitched the horses. And only now, as if he had just thought of it, the traveler put his hand in his pocket and gave Carlo a franc.

“Many thanks!” said the latter. The traveler got into his carriage and again enveloped himself in his coat. Carlo picked up the wineglass and went up the wooden steps. The traveler leaned out of the carriage and shook his head with an expression of confusion and sadness. Suddenly he seemed to have an idea and he smiled. Then he said to Geronimo, who was but two paces from him:

“What’s your name?”

“Geronimo.”

“Well, Geronimo, do not let yourself be deceived.”

At this moment the driver appeared on the top step.

“What do you mean, sir, by ‘deceive’?”

“I gave your companion a twenty franc piece.”

“Oh, thank you, sir; thank you, sir!”

“That’s all right, but look out.”

“Oh, he’s my brother, sir, and he wouldn’t deceive me.”

The young man pondered a bit, but while he was still thinking the driver had jumped on the box and they were off. The traveler leaned back with a shake of his head, as if he meant to say: Fate, take your course! And the carriage rolled away.

The blind man waved his hand as a token of thanks. Now he heard Carlo who called: “Come up here, Geronimo, where it’s warmer. Marie has lighted a fire.”

Geronimo nodded, took his guitar under his arm and felt his way up the steps. Even before he was inside, he called: “Let me feel it! How long it is since I’ve felt a gold piece!”

“What are you talking about?” asked Carlo.

Geronimo had reached the top step and now he took his

brother's head between his hands, which was his way of expressing tenderness or joy. "Carlo, my dear brother, there are good people in the world after all."

"Of course," said Carlo. "Up to the present we have two liras and thirty centesimi; and there is perhaps half a lira of Austrian money too."

"And twenty francs—and twenty francs!" cried Geronimo. "I know it." He tottered into the room and sat down heavily on the bench.

"What do you know?" asked Carlo.

"Now stop fooling! Give it to me! How long it is since I've felt a gold piece!"

"Why, what do you mean? Where should I get a gold piece from? All I have is two or three [lire]."

The blind man struck the table with his fist.

"Now we've had enough of that! Are you trying to hide something from me?"

Carlo looked at his brother with wonder. He sat down quite close to him and took hold of his arm entreatingly.

"I'm not hiding anything from you. Why how can you even think of such a thing? No one ever thought of giving me a gold piece."

"But he told me he did!"

"Who?"

"The young traveler who kept pacing up and down."

"What? I don't understand, you."

"Well, first he asked me: 'What is your name?' and then he added, 'Look out, look out, do not let yourself be deceived.'"

"You must have been dreaming Geronimo—why it's all foolishness!"

"Foolishness, is it? Why I heard it, and my hearing is good. 'Do not let yourself be deceived; I gave him a gold piece . . . —no, he said: 'I gave him a twenty franc piece.'"

The innkeeper entered the room. "Well, what's up between you? Have you retired from business? A four-horse just drove up."

"Come!" cried Carlo. "Come!"

Geronimo remained seated.

"Why? Why should I come? What good does it do me? You stand there and—"

Carlo touched his arm.

"Be quiet now and come down." Geronimo was silent and obeyed his brother. But on the steps he said: "We still have something to say to one another, we still have something to say to one another."

Carlo could not understand what had happened. Had Geronimo suddenly lost his mind? For, even if his temper did get the best of him occasionally, he had never spoken in this manner

before.

There were two Englishmen in the carriage. Carlo held the hat and Geronimo sang. The one traveler had got out and he threw a coin into the hat. Carlo thanked him, and then murmured as if to himself: "Twenty centesimi." Geronimo's face remained motionless; he began a new song. Meanwhile the carriage drove off.

The brothers walked silently up the steps. Geronimo sat down on the bench, while Carlo remained standing at the oven.

"Well, why don't you speak?" asked Geronimo.

"Well," answered Carlo, "it can only be as I said." His voice trembled.

"What did you say?"

"Perhaps he was a madman."

"A madman! That would be fine! When a person says: 'I gave your brother twenty francs,' he is a madman.

—Eh, and why did he say, 'Do not let yourself be deceived'—eh?"

"Perhaps he wasn't a madman . . . but there are people who like to play jokes on the poor. . . ."

"Eh!" cried Geronimo. "Jokes?—Yes, that was a fine thing to say—I was just waiting for something like that!"

He emptied his wineglass which stood before him.

"But Geronimo!" murmured Carlo, and he felt that he could hardly speak. "Why should I . . . how can you believe . . . ?"

"Why does your voice tremble . . . eh . . . why?"

"Geronimo, I assure you, I . . ."

"Eh—and I don't believe you!—Now you're laughing! I know you're laughing!"

One of the servants called up from below: "Hey, blind man, people are coming!"

Mechanically the brothers rose and went down the steps. Two carriages had come at the same time. In the one there were three gentlemen; an old married couple occupied the other. Geronimo sang. Carlo stood next to him, abashed. What should he do? His brother did not believe him! How could that be?—And he gazed fearfully at Geronimo, who was singing in a cracked voice. It seemed to him that he could see thoughts in that head that he had never before even imagined.

The carriages were gone, but Geronimo kept on singing. Carlo did not dare to interrupt him. He did not know what to say and he was afraid that his voice would tremble again. Then the sound of laughter was heard from above, and Marie called down: "Why are you still singing? You'll get nothing from me!"

Geronimo stopped in the middle of his song. It sounded as if both his voice and the strings had been suddenly cut. Then he went up the steps again. Carlo followed, and sat down next to him. What should he do? There was nothing left; he would have to try

once more to make his brother understand.

“Geronimo,” he said, “I swear to you . . . just think, Geronimo, how can you believe that—”

Geronimo was silent. His eyes seemed to be piercing the window, into the fog. Carlo continued: “Well, he didn’t have to be a madman; he simply made a mistake; yes, that’s it, he simply made a mistake.” But he felt that he himself did not believe what he was saying.

Geronimo moved impatiently away. But Carlo continued with sudden vivacity: “Why should I—you know I don’t eat or drink any more than you do, and when I buy a new coat you know about it. . . . For what then should I need so much money? What should I do with it?”

Then Geronimo muttered between his teeth: “Don’t lie! Don’t lie!”

“I’m not lying, Geronimo, I’m not lying,” replied Carlo, frightened.

“Eh! Have you given it to her already, or does she get it later?” shrieked Geronimo.

“Marie?”

“Who else? Ah, you liar, you thief!” And as if he did not even want to sit at the same table with him, he pushed his elbow into Carlo’s side.

Carlo arose. At first he gazed at his brother; then he left the room and went down into the courtyard. With wide open eyes he looked up the highroad which lost itself in the fog. The rain had stopped. Carlo thrust his hands into his pockets and walked out into the open. It was as if his brother had driven him away. What had happened? He still could not fathom it. What kind of person could that have been? He gives a franc and says it’s twenty. He must have had some reason. . . . And Carlo tried to think if he had ever made any enemies. . . . But as far back as he could remember he had never insulted any one, and had never had a fight with anybody. All that he had done for the past twenty years was to stand in courtyards, his hat in his hand. . . . Was any one angry with him on account of a girl? . . . But what a long time it was since he had anything to do with any of them . . . the waitress in La Rosa had been the last—and that was in the preceding spring . . . but no one could have been jealous of her. . . . It was incomprehensible! . . . What strange kinds of people there must be out there in the world. They came from all over. . . . What did he know of them? . . . That stranger must have had some whim to tell Geronimo: “I gave your companion twenty francs.” . . . But what was to be done? . . . All at once it was evident that Geronimo did not trust him! . . . That he could not stand! Something had to be done. . . . And he hurried back.

When he entered the inn, Geronimo lay stretched out on the

bench and did not seem to notice his coming. Marie brought them food and drink. During the meal neither of them said a word. As Marie was clearing away the plates, Geronimo suddenly laughed and asked her: "What are you going to buy with it?"

"With what?"

"Well, what? A new skirt, or earrings?"

"What's he talking about?" she asked Carlo.

In the meantime there were noises in the courtyard; loud voices could be heard, and Marie hurried down. In a few moments three draymen came in and took their places at the table. The innkeeper came up to greet them. They were scolding about the bad weather.

"There'll be snow tonight," said the one.

Then the second one told of a terrible snowstorm that had taken place ten years before. Marie joined them. And the groom came too, and asked for his parents who lived down in Bormio.

Now other carriages drove up. The brothers went down; Geronimo sang while Carlo held the hat, and the travelers gave their alms. Geronimo now seemed quite calm. Sometimes he would ask, "How much?" and would nod his head at the answer. During the time Carlo tried to collect his thoughts. But he only had that vague feeling that something terrible had happened, and that he was quite defenseless.

As the brothers were going up the steps they heard the draymen talking and laughing. The youngest called to Geronimo: "Sing something for us! We'll pay you for it!—Won't we?" he asked, turning to the others.

Marie, who was just coming in with a bottle of red wine, said, "Don't begin anything with him today, he's in a bad humor!"

Instead of answering, Geronimo stood in the center of the room and began to sing. When he had finished, the draymen applauded.

"Come here, Carlo!" called one. "We want to throw money into your hat as the travelers do below," And he took a small coin, and held it up as if he were going to throw it into Carlo's hat. Then Geronimo grasped the drayman's arm, and said, "Better give it to me! It might roll away—away."

"How, 'away'?"

"Ah, well! It might roll in between Marie's legs."

Everyone laughed, the inn keeper and Marie included; only Carlo stood there, motionless. Never had Geronimo spoken like that before! . . .

"Sit down and join us," called out the draymen. "You're a jolly fellow!" And they moved closer together so as to make room for Geronimo. Their talk grew louder and louder; Geronimo was in the thickest of the chatter and kept on drinking besides. When Marie returned he tried to draw her towards him. Then one of the

draymen asked him: "Do you perhaps think that she is pretty? Why, she's an ugly old hag!"

But Geronimo drew Marie on to his lap. "You're all fools!" he said. "Do you think I need my eyes to see? And I know where Carlo is now—eh!—he's standing over there by the oven, his hands are in his pockets, and he's laughing."

Every one looked at Carlo, who, with open mouth, was standing at the oven, and now really made sort of a grimace, as if he could not allow his brother ever to be in the wrong.

A servant entered and told the draymen that if they wanted to reach Bormio by nightfall they would have to start very soon. All arose and noisily bade each other good-bye. The brothers were again alone. It was the hour at which they sometimes slept; for the whole inn settled down to quiet during the early hours of the afternoon. Geronimo, his head on the table, seemed to be sleeping. At first, Carlo paced up and down; then he sat down on the bench. He was very tired. It seemed to him as if he were in a dream. He had to think of all sorts of things: of yesterday, of the day before, and all the days of the past—especially of summer days and white highroads, over which he and Geronimo used to wander. And everything seemed so far away and intangible, just as if it could never be so again.

Late in the afternoon the stage came from the Tyrol, and then, at intervals, carriages that were also going south. The brothers had to go down into the courtyard four more times. When they went up for the last time it was twilight, and the little oil lamp that hung from the ceiling was smoking. The men who were laboring at a near-by quarry, and who had built little huts for themselves close by, now came to the inn. Geronimo sat down with them; Carlo remained at his own table. It seemed to him as if his loneliness had already lasted a long time. He heard Geronimo talking loudly about his childhood; saying how distinctly he remembered what he had seen before his accident: his father, the fields, the little garden with the ash, his own little hut, the shoemaker's two children, the vineyards behind the church, yes, and even his own childish face. How many times Carlo had heard this all before! But today he could not bear it. It sounded different than usual; each word seemed to be a direct thrust at him. He crept out, and again walked on the highroad, which now lay in total darkness. The rain had stopped, the air was cold, and the idea of going on, on, into the night, finally to lie down in some ditch, then fall asleep and never awaken, seemed to fascinate Carlo. . . . Suddenly he heard carriage wheels, and saw the light of two approaching lamps. In the carriage that drove by him there sat two men. One of them, a man with a thin, smooth shaven face, gave a start when he saw Carlo suddenly loom up out of the darkness. Carlo, who had remained standing raised his hat. The carriage and the lights disappeared

into the night. Now Carlo again stood in total darkness. Suddenly he started. For the first time in his life he was afraid of the dark. He felt he could not stand it another minute. Strangely mingled in his thoughts were the horror he had for himself and his tender compassion for Geronimo. These thoughts made him turn back.

When he stepped into the inn he saw the two travelers who had passed him on the road. They were chatting over a bottle of red wine, and scarcely looked up when he entered.

Geronimo was still sitting at the other table with the laborers.

"Where have you been, Carlo?" asked the innkeeper. "And why do you leave your brother alone?"

"Why, what's happened?" asked Carlo, frightened.

"Geronimo is treating them all. It makes no difference to *me*, but *you* ought to look out for the future." Carlo stepped up quickly to his brother, took him by the arm and said: "Come!"

"What do you want?" cried Geronimo.

"Come to bed," said Carlo.

"Leave me alone! Leave me alone! I earn the money, and I can do what I want with it, what I want with it—so!—you know you can't put it all in your pockets. You people think he gives me all we make. Oh, no! I'm nothing but a blind old man! But there are people—there are people who say to me: 'I gave your brother twenty francs!'"

The workingmen laughed.

"That's enough," said Carlo, "Come!" and he drew his brother after him, almost dragging him up the steps, up to their bare little room. The whole way up Geronimo cried "Yes, now the day has come, now I know it! Ah, just wait. Where is she? Where is Marie? Or do you put it all in the bank for yourself? . . . Ah yes, I sing for you, I play the guitar for you, and you live on me—and you are a thief!" And he fell down on his straw bag.

From the hallway a weak light streamed in; across the way the door to the only guest room in the inn stood ajar, and Marie was opening the beds for the night. Carlo stood in front of his brother and saw him lying there. Geronimo's face was sad, his lips blue, his damp hair pasted on his brow, and he looked many years older than he really was. And slowly he began to understand. His brother's suspicion could not have dated from today; it must have been kindled in him a long time ago. He had not admitted it; perhaps the courage to speak about it had failed him. And everything that Carlo had done for him was in vain; in vain was his repentance, in vain the sacrifices of his whole life. What should he do?—Should he keep on day after day, indefinitely, keep on leading him through this everlasting night. Should he be faithful to him, beg for him? Should he be content with nothing but suspicion and scoldings as his reward? If his brother held him for a thief, surely any stranger could offer him the same or even better

guidance. In truth, to leave him alone, to separate from him forever, that would be the best thing to do. And then Geronimo would see how wrong he had been, for then he would realize what it means to be deceived and to be robbed, and to be alone and miserable. But what should he do? He was not yet old; if he was alone there were lots of things he could do. He could find work as a servant almost anywhere. But as these thoughts went through his head, his eyes were always fixed on his brother. And all at once he seemed to see him, sitting on a rock at the edge of a hot street, his white eyes wide open, staring up at the heavens, groping about in the night that was always his. And he felt that the blind man had no one else in the world but him, and moreover, that he had no one else but Geronimo. He understood that his love for this brother was the whole essence of his life, and he knew for the first time with absolute certainty that the blind man responded to this love and had forgiven him. He could not deny himself this hope. He felt that he needed his brother just as much as his brother needed him. He could not, he did not want to leave him. He had either to suffer the suspicion or to find a means to make his brother see how groundless was his accusation . . . yes, if he could only get a gold piece in some way! If, on the morrow, he could say to the blind man, "I only saved it so that you would not get drunk with the workingmen, so that they would not steal it from you". . . or something like that . . .

Some one was coming up the steps; the travelers were retiring for the night. Suddenly the idea flashed through his mind to go across the hall, knock at the door, tell the strangers just what had happened and ask them for the twenty francs. But he immediately realized that that was out of the question. They would not believe him. And now he also remembered how frightened one of them had been when he saw Carlo suddenly loom out of the darkness.

He stretched himself out on his straw bag. The room was pitch dark. He heard the workingmen, talking loudly, going down the steps. Almost immediately afterwards the gates were locked. The groom went up and down the stairs once more and then all was quiet. Now all Carlo heard was Geronimo's snores. Soon his thoughts drifted, and he fell asleep. When he awoke it was still very dark. He looked at the spot where the window was; when he strained his eyes very much he could see a dark gray opening. Geronimo still lay in a heavy drunken sleep. And Carlo thought of the morrow and shuddered. He thought of the next night, and then of the day after that, and of the future that dragged out before him, and anguish filled him at the thought of the loneliness awaiting him. Why had he not had more courage? Why had he not gone to the strangers and asked them for twenty francs? Perhaps they would have given it to him out of pity. And then—perhaps it was for the best that he had not asked. Yes, why was it

for the best? . . . He suddenly sat up and felt his heart beating. He knew why it was for the best: if they had refused him it would have seemed suspicious—but now . . . He stared at the gray spot that began to grow lighter. . . . That which in spite of himself now kept going through his head was impossible, quite impossible! . . . The door across the way was bolted—and besides, they might awaken. . . . Yes, there . . . the gray spot in the midst of all the surrounding darkness was the herald of the new day—

Carlo arose, as if drawn there, and touched the cold pane with his brow. Why had he arisen? To deliberate? . . . To try it? . . . What then? . . . Why it was impossible—and besides it was criminal. Criminal? What do twenty francs mean to people who travel a thousand miles just for pleasure? They would not even notice their loss. . . . He went to the door and opened it softly. Opposite was another door, but two paces away, and it was locked. On a hook outside hung some clothes. Carlo passed his hand over them. . . . Yes, if people left their purses in their pockets, life would be easy and no one would have to beg any more. . . . But the pockets were empty. What was there left to do? Go back to the room on the straw bag? But perhaps there was a better way in which to get twenty francs. If every time he kept a few centesimi from the alms until he had accumulated the twenty francs, and then bought the gold piece. . . . But how long that would take—months, perhaps a year. Ah, if he only had courage! He was still standing in the little hallway. He gazed over at the door. . . . What sort of a shaft was that which fell below the door? Was it possible? The door was not really bolted? . . . But why was he wondering about it? That door could not be locked now for months. And why should it be? Then he remembered that only three times during the summer had the room been occupied. The door was not locked—now all he needed was courage—yes, and luck! Courage? The worst that could happen would be that both of the travelers might wake up and then he could always find some excuse. He peeked through the crack into the room. It was still so dark that all he could see was the outline of two figures in the bed. He listened: they were breathing evenly. Carlo opened the door and with his bare feet stepped into the room without making a sound. The beds were opposite to the window. In the middle of the room stood a table. Carlo crept up to it. He passed his hand over it and suddenly felt a key-ring, a penknife, a small book—nothing else. . . . Why of course! . . . How could he even for a moment think that they would leave their money on the table! And now he could go again! Still, perhaps with luck it could be done. . . . And he approached the bed nearest to the door; there on the chair there lay something—he grasped it—it was a revolver. . . . Carlo gave a start. . . . Should he have kept it? And why did this man leave his revolver lying there? If he should awaken and notice

him. . . . But no, he would simply say, "It is three o'clock sir; time to get up!" . . . And he left the revolver where it was.

And he crept further into the room. There on another chair beneath their underclothes. . . . Heavens! . . . there it was ... a purse! He held it in his hand! . . . At this moment he heard a creaking. Quickly he threw himself on the floor. . . . Once more the squeaking . . . a deep sigh . . . a slight cough . . . and then quiet. Carlo remained on the floor, the purse in hands, and waited. There were no more sounds. Already the dawn was in the room. He did not dare to rise but crept along the floor towards the door, which was open wide enough to allow him to pass through. He crawled into the hallway, and not until he was there did he rise with a deep sigh. He opened the purse, which had three compartments, and found on the left and right only small coins. Then he opened the middle part and felt three twenty franc pieces. For just a moment he thought of taking two, but immediately banished this thought, took one gold piece and closed the purse. Then he knelt down, peeked through the crack into the room where quiet still reigned and gave the purse a shove so that it fell under the bed. When the stranger awakened he would believe that it had fallen down from the chair. Carlo rose slowly. Then the floor creaked softly, and at the same instant he heard a voice from the room say "Who's there? What's the matter?" Carlo stepped back quickly, and with drawn breath glided into his own room. He was in safety and listened . . . once more the bed creaked and then all was quiet. Between his fingers he held the gold piece. He had the twenty francs and could say to his brother, "You see, I am not a thief." And they would go on the road today—towards the south, to Bormio, and then through Veltlin . . . then to Tirano . . . to Edole . . . to Breno . . . to the sea of Iseo as they had done the year before. . . . That would not look at all suspicious, for already on the day before he had said to the innkeeper: "In a few days we are going on the road again."

It was getting lighter and lighter. Ah, if only Geronimo would awaken! It is good to be on the road early in the morning! Even before sunrise they would be on their way. A good morning to the innkeeper, to the groom, and also to Marie, and then away, away . . . and only when they had been gone two hours would he tell Geronimo.

The blind man stretched and yawned. Carlo called him.

"Well, what's the matter?" And he raised himself up with both hands. "Geronimo, let's get up."

"Why?" And he looked at his brother with his dead eyes. Carlo knew now that Geronimo was thinking of what happened yesterday, but he also knew that he would not say a word about it till he was drunk again.

"It's cold, Geronimo, let's go away. It won't be any better

today; I think we had better go. We can be in Boladore by noon.”

Geronimo arose. The noises of the awakening household were beginning to be audible. Down in the courtyard the innkeeper was talking to the groom. Carlo went down. He was always awake early and often went out on the highroad before dawn. He stepped up to the innkeeper and said “We are going to say good-bye to you.”

“Ah, are you going to leave us already?” asked the innkeeper.

“Yes. It’s too cold to stand here in the courtyard any more, and the wind is too sharp.”

“Well, give my regards to Baldetti when you get to Bormio, and tell him not to forget to send me my oil.”

“Yes, I’ll give him your regards. Oh, by the way—I owe you for our lodging.” And he put his hand into his pocket.

“Never mind, Carlo,” said the innkeeper. “I’ll give your brother the twenty centesimi; besides, I listened to his singing.”

“Thank you,” said Carlo. “Anyway, we are not in such a hurry. We’ll see you when you come back from the huts; Bormio is always on the same spot, isn’t it?” He laughed and went up the steps.

Geronimo was standing in the middle of the room and said. “Well, I’m ready.”

“Right away,” said Carlo.

From an old bureau, which lay in the corner of the room, he took out a few odds and ends which were almost sacred to him, and packed them in his bundle. Then he said: “It’s a nice day but very cold.”

“I know it,” said Geronimo. Both left the room.

“Go softly,” said Carlo, “because here are the two strangers who arrived last night.” Softly they went down the stairs. “The innkeeper sends you his regards,” said Carlo. “He made us a present of our night’s lodging. Now, he is out at his cottages and won’t be back for two hours. But we’ll see him next year again.”

Geronimo did not answer. They stepped out on to the highway, which lay in the morning glow. Carlo took his brother’s left arm and both walked silently down towards the valley. Mists rose up towards them and the peaks above them seemed to be lost in the clouds, and Carlo thought: Now I’ll tell him all.

But Carlo did not say a word; he took the gold piece out of his pocket and handed it to his brother. The latter took it between the fingers of his right hand, then placed it on his cheek and on his brow. Finally, he nodded. “I knew it,” he said.

“Well, yes,” answered Carlo and looked strangely at Geronimo.

“Even if the stranger had not told me anything, I would have known it.”

“Well, yes,” said Carlo, at sea. “But you understand why up there—I was afraid, that you would spend the whole at once—and

anyway, Geronimo, it was really time, I thought, that you should buy yourself a new coat, and a shirt, and shoes, too; and that is why . . .”

The blind man shook his head. “Why?” And he smoothed his coat with his hand. “Good enough, warm enough; now we’re going southwards.”

Carlo did not understand why Geronimo did not seem to be happy, why he did not apologize. And he went on: “Geronimo, wasn’t I right to do it? Aren’t you glad? Now we have it, haven’t we? Now we have it all. If I had told you about it up there, who knows. . . . Oh, I’m glad I didn’t tell you—I’m glad.”

Then Geronimo cried: “Stop lying, Carlo: I’ve had enough of that.”

Carlo stood stock-still and let go his brother’s arm. “I am not lying.”

“But I know that you’re lying! . . . You always lie. . . . You’ve lied a hundred times. . . . And you even wanted to keep that for yourself, but fear got the better of you.”

Carlo lowered his head and did not answer. He again took his brother’s arm and they walked on. It hurt him that Geronimo spoke thus; but he was surprised that he did not feel sadder.

The mists separated. After a long while Geronimo said: “It’s getting warm.” He said it indifferently, as he had said it a hundred times, and Carlo felt in this moment that for Geronimo, nothing had changed. For Geronimo he had always been a thief.

“Are you hungry?” he asked.

Geronimo nodded, and took some bread and cheese out of his knapsack. Then they went on.

The stage from Bormio met them. The driver called to them: “Going down already?” Then came other carriages.

“Truly—nothing is changed,” thought Carlo. . . . “Now, I even went and stole for him—and that was in vain.”

The mists below grew thinner and thinner; as if the rays of the sun were tearing holes in them. And Carlo thought: “Perhaps it wasn’t wise to have left the inn so soon. . . . The purse lies under the bed, and that is certainly suspicious.” . . . But what matters all that! What worse could happen to him? His brother believed that he had been stealing from him, and had believed it for years, and would always believe it—what worse, then, could happen?

Down below he could see the large white hotel bathed in the morning sunlight, and below that, where the valley begins to grow broader, there lay the village. Silently the two walked down, and Carlo never took his hand from Geronimo’s arm. They went through the hotel garden, and Carlo saw guests sitting on the terrace, dressed in light clothes, eating their breakfast. “Where do you want to rest?” asked Carlo.

“Why, at the ‘Eagle,’ as always.” When they arrived at the little

inn at the end of the village, they went in and sat down and ordered wine.

“How does it happen that you are with us so early this year?” asked the innkeeper.

The question frightened Carlo a little. “Why, is it so early? It’s the tenth or eleventh of September, isn’t it?”

“Last year, it was much later.”

“It’s awfully cold up there,” said Carlo. “Last night, we almost froze to death. Oh, and that reminds me, don’t forget to send them their oil.”

The air in the room was sultry and muggy. A strange unrest fell over Carlo; he wanted to be out in the open again, out in the broad highway that led to Tirano, to Edole, to the sea of Iseo. Suddenly, he stood up.

“Are we going already?” asked Geronimo.

“We want to be in Boladore by noon; all the carriages stop there for luncheon; it’s a good place.”

And they left. The barber Benozzi stood in front of his shop, smoking. “Good morning,” he called out. “Well, how is it up there? Did it snow last night?”

“Yes, yes,” said Carlo, and he hastened his step.

The village lay behind them, and the highroad ran on between the meadows and the vineyards, close to the rushing river. The sky was blue and still. “Why did I do it?” thought Carlo. He looked at the blind man from the side. “Does his face look any different than usual? He always believed it,—I have always been alone—and he has always hated me.” And it seemed to him as if he were walking under a heavy burden which he could never throw off, and as if he could see the night in which Geronimo was living, while the sun was bright in the heavens.

And they walked on for hours. From time to time Geronimo would sit down on a milestone, or both of them would lean on a bridge railing to rest. They passed through another village. In front of the inn stood carriages; travelers had gotten out and were walking up and down; but the two beggars did not stop. Away again—out upon the open highroad. The sun rose higher and higher; it was almost noon. It was a day like thousands of others.

“The tower of Boladore,” said Geronimo. Carlo looked up. He wondered how Geronimo could estimate the distance so accurately, for, in truth, the tower of Boladore had appeared on the horizon. Some one was approaching them from a distance. It seemed to Carlo as if he had been sitting on the roadside and had suddenly risen. The figure came nearer. Now Carlo saw that it was a policeman, one that they met so often on the highroad. In spite of it, Carlo started. But as the man approached, he recognized him, and he felt relieved. It was Pietro Tenelli; only last May they had sat at the same table with him in Morignone, and he had told

them a horrible story of how he had almost been stabbed once by a tramp.

“Some one’s coming,” said Geronimo.

“Tenelli, the policeman,” replied Carlo.

Now they had reached him.

“Good morning, Tenelli,” said Carlo, and stood before him.

“I’m sorry,” said the policeman, “but I’ve got to take you down to Boladore temporarily.”

“Eh!” cried the blind man.

Carlo grew pale. “How is that possible?” he thought. “But it can’t have anything to do with that. They can’t possibly know about it.”

“Why, it seems to be on your way,” said the policeman smiling, “so it really can’t make any difference, to you.”

“Why don’t you say something, Carlo?” asked Geronimo.

“Oh, yes, I’ll talk. . . . Please, Tenelli, how is it possible. . . . What should we . . . or what is more, what shall I . . . but really, I don’t know . . .”

“Well, perhaps you are innocent. How should I know? Anyway, we received a telegraphic report to stop you, because you are under suspicion, very much so. They suspect that you stole some money up there. As I said, it’s possible that you’re innocent. Now, forward march!”

“Why don’t you speak, Carlo,” asked Geronimo.

“Oh, I’ll speak—oh, yes, I’ll speak . . .”

“Well, come on, now. What’s the sense of standing here on the street? The sun is hot. In an hour we’ll be there.”

Carlo as usual took Geronimo’s arm, and thus they walked on, with the policeman following in the rear.

“Carlo, why don’t you say something?” asked Geronimo again.

“But what do you want, Geronimo, what shall I say? Everything will come out; I don’t know myself . . .”

And he thought: “Shall I tell him before we go to Court? But it can’t be done. The policeman is listening. Well, what difference does it make. I’ll tell the truth down there, anyway. ‘Judge,’ I’ll say, ‘this isn’t a regular theft. It happened in this way: . . .’” And now he tried to find words that would be clear. ‘Yesterday, a gentleman drove over the pass . . . perhaps he was a madman—or he just made a mistake . . . and this man . . .’

“But what foolishness! Who will believe it? They won’t even let me talk that long—no one would believe such a silly story . . . even Geronimo doesn’t believe it.” . . . And he looked at him from the side. The blind man’s head, as usual when he walked, moved up and down in measured tempo, but his face was motionless, and the sightless eyes of the blind man stared into the open space—and Carlo suddenly knew what thoughts there were behind that brow. “So that’s the way things stand,” Geronimo must

have thought—"Carlo does not only steal from me, but he robs other people too. . . . Well, he's lucky, he has eyes that can see, and he uses them. . . . Yes, that's what Geronimo thinks, that is what he must think . . . and the very fact that they can't find any money on me won't help—no, it won't help me in Court, and it won't help me with Geronimo. They will lock me up, and him . . . yes, they'll lock him up, too, because he has the money"—but he could not go on thinking, he was so bewildered. It seemed to him as if he did not understand anything more about the whole thing; all he knew was that he would be glad to be in jail for a year . . . or for ten, if only Geronimo would know that it was for his sake alone that he became a thief.

And suddenly Geronimo stood still, so that Carlo held his breath.

"Well, what's the matter?" asked the policeman crankily. "Forward, forward!" But then he saw with wonder that the blind man had let his guitar fall, and was feeling his brother's cheek. Then he pressed his lips on Carlo's mouth, who at first did not know what was happening to him, and kissed him.

"Are you mad?" asked the policeman. "Forward, forward! I don't want to be roasted alive!"

Geronimo picked up the guitar, without saying a word. Carlo breathed deeply, and again placed his hand on the blind man's arm. Was it possible? His brother did not despise him any more? He finally understood? And doubtfully, he looked at him.

"On! on!" cried the policeman. "Well, will you!" and he gave Carlo a push.

And Carlo, firmly holding his brother's arm, went on. His step was quicker than before; for he saw Geronimo smiling as he had never smiled since their childhood days. And Carlo smiled too. It seemed to him as if nothing bad could happen—neither from the law, nor from any other cause in the whole world. He had his brother again . . . no, he had him for the first time. . . .

## ANDREAS THAMEYER'S LAST LETTER.

I cannot go on living. For as long as I live people would scoff at me, and no one would believe the truth. But it is the truth that my wife was faithful—I swear it by all that is holy and I am sealing the oath with my death. I have also read through many books which treat of this curious and difficult material, and, even if there are people who doubt, there are others of great learning who are fully convinced. And I shall quote examples which must convince every fair-minded person. Thus Malbranche tells us that a woman looked at the picture of the Canonization Celebration of the Holy Pius so sharply that the child which she soon bore looked exactly like the holy man;—yes, his face showed the tired lines of the old man's face, his arms were crossed over his breast, and his eyes turned toward Heaven; and finally, on his shoulder, there was a birthmark in the shape of the tiara. If there is any one who is not yet convinced, in spite of the authority of this witness, who is the follower of the famous philosopher, Cartesius, perhaps he will believe Martin Luther to be sufficient authority. For Luther—so they tell—knew a citizen in Wittenberg whose head was like a dead man's, and it was proved that the mother of this deplorable man, during her pregnancy, had been terribly frightened by the sight of a corpse. But the story which seems to me to be of greatest import, and which cannot be doubted by any reasonable person is told by Heliodorus, in his *"Libri aethiopicorum."* According to this famous author, the Queen Persina, after ten years of childless marriage, bore the Ethiopian King Hydaspes a white daughter, which for fear of her husband, she sent out to nurse immediately after its birth. Along with her daughter she sent her belt on which the real reason of the curious happening was written: In the gardens of the palace where the Queen received the embraces of her dark-skinned husband, stood magnificent statues of Greek gods and goddesses, on which Persina cast her enraptured glances.

But the power of the spirit goes still further, and superstitious and uneducated people are not the only ones to do homage to it, as can be shown by the following story, the events of which happened in France in the year 1637. There, a woman, after the four years' absence of her husband, bore a boy, and swore that in the intervening time she had dreamed with the most perfect vividness that she was in the arms of her husband. The physicians and midwives of Montpellier declared on oath that the thing was possible, and the Court of Havre gave the child the rights of legitimacy. To go further, I find in Hamberg's "Curious Happenings of Nature" (p. 74) the story of a woman who bore a child with a lion's head, after she had, in the seventh month of her pregnancy, gone with her husband and mother to see a lion-tamer. I have also read a story—you can find it in Limböck's "On the Care

of Women,” Bale, 1846, p. 19—that a child was born with a large brand on his cheek because the mother, a few weeks before its birth, had seen a house burn to the ground. In this book there are other very wonderful things. While I am writing this, it lies before me on a table; I have just looked through it again, and there are authentic, scientific facts stated in it, just as authentic as the thing that I have lived through, or, I should say that has been lived through by my wife, who remained faithful, as truly as I am living this moment. Will you pardon me, my dear wife, for my determination to die? You must do so. It is only out of love for you that I am going to die; for I cannot stand the way people scoff, the way they laugh at you and me. But now they will stop laughing; now they will understand as I understand it. You who find this letter know that while I am writing it, she is in the next room asleep quietly as only a good wife can sleep; and her child—our child—which is only two weeks old, lies in the cradle next to her bed and is also asleep. Before I leave this house I will go in and kiss my wife and child on their brows without waking them. I write this all in detail so that no one can think I was insane . . . no, I have thought it all over, and I am very calm. As soon as I have finished this letter, I will go out into the night, along the empty streets, always farther and farther—farther on the road on which my wife and I in the first year of our marriage walked so often. And I will walk on and on, into the woods. Yes, I have thought it all over, and I am in full possession of my senses. And thus the matter stands. My name is Andreas Thameyer. I am thirty-four years old, an official in the Austrian Savings Bank, and I live at number 64 Harnalser Hauptstrasse. I have been married for four years. I have known my wife seven years, and before she married me, she refused two other offers because she loved me and was willing to wait for me. One was from a commissary with eighteen hundred gulden income, and the other was from a handsome young doctor of Trieste, who boarded in her house. Notice, that she refused them for my sake, although I was neither handsome nor rich, and in spite of the fact that our marriage was postponed from year to year. And now people want to assert that this woman was unfaithful, this woman who waited patiently for me for seven years. But people are stupid, and they cannot, as I should like to say, peer into our inner selves. They are malignant and mean. But now they will all be quiet. . . . Yes, now they will all say: “We have done wrong, we see now that his wife was faithful and it was not necessary for him to do away with himself.” . . . But I tell you it is necessary! For as long as I live you would scoff, all of you. Only one of you is good and noble, and that is old Dr. Walter Brauner. . . . Yes, he told me at once; before he took me in, he said: “My dear Thameyer, do not be frightened, and do not excite yourself or your wife. Such things have often happened. Tomorrow I’ll

bring you Limböck's book, and others about the care of pregnant women." These books are lying in front of me—yes, and I beg my dear ones to return these books with many thanks to the excellent Doctor Brauner. I have no other orders. My will has been made out for a long time, and I have no reason to change it, for my wife has been faithful, and the child that she has borne is my child. And I can explain in the simplest way why its skin is of such a queer color. Only ignorance and meanness can refuse to accept this explanation, and I dare to assert that, if we did not live among people who were mean and stupid, I could go on living, for then every one would see the truth. But as matters are no one believes it, and they smile and laugh. Even Mr. Gustav Rengelhofer, my wife's uncle, for whom I have always had the greatest respect, looked at me in an injured way when he saw my child for the first time; and my own mother—shook my hand in the queerest manner, as if I merited her sympathy. The men at the office whispered among themselves when I came in yesterday, and the janitor, to whose children I gave my broken watch at Christmas—for as a plaything, a watch like that always is of some good—even the janitor bit his lips to keep from laughing when I passed him yesterday. Our cook makes a face as if she were intoxicated, and three or four times the grocer at the corner has watched me go down the street. Recently he stood at the door and said to an old lady, "That is he." As a proof of the quick spreading of gossip: There are people whom I have never known who have heard of it and I do not know where they learned it. As I was coming home in the street car the other day I heard three old women talking about me; I heard my name mentioned, I am sure of it. Therefore, I asked out loud (I use this expression on purpose)—I asked in an audible voice: "What shall I do? What is there left for me?" I cannot say to every one: "Read Hamberg's 'Wonders of Nature,' and Limböck's excellent 'On the Care of Women.'" I cannot get down on my knees and cry to them: "Do not be so cruel. . . . Can't you see? . . . My wife has always been faithful to me." It was all a mistake when she was with her sister in the Thiergarten last August where those miserable blacks had their encampment. I can swear that it was a mistake; for the way it happened was as follows: I was spending that day—as I had several days—with my parents in the country—my father was sick, very sick. . . . You can believe this, for he died a few weeks later. But that does not belong here. Well, Anna was alone. And when I came back, I found my wife in bed—yes, from excitement, from yearning. And I was gone only three days. You see how much my wife loves me. And immediately I had to sit down at her bedside and hear how she had spent the three days. And without my asking her, she told me everything. I am putting this all down with special accuracy. All of Monday morning, she stayed at home; in the afternoon she went with

Fritzi—that is what we call my unmarried sister, although her real name is Frederica—to the inner city, to attend to a few things. Fritzi is engaged to a very nice young man who has a position in Germany, in a large house in Bremen, and Fritzi is to join him soon and become his wife. . . . But this is also beside the point. I know it only too well. All of Tuesday my wife remained at home, for it was raining—yes, and it rained in the country, too, on that day, as I clearly remember. Then came Wednesday. On this day, my wife and Fritzi went towards evening to the Thiergarten, where the blacks had pitched camp. And here let me add that I myself saw these people later; it was in September, and I was going down there with Rudolph Bittner and his wife, one Sunday evening. Anna absolutely refused to go, as she still shuddered whenever she thought of that Wednesday. She told me that never in her life had she felt such a fear as when she found herself on that evening alone with the blacks. . . . Alone, for she had suddenly lost Fritzi. . . . I cannot hide this fact. I do not want to say anything against Fritzi, as this is my last letter. But this seems to be the place for me to warn Fritzi not to annoy her future husband, for he, as a perfectly respectable man, would be very unhappy about it. But the fact remains that on that evening Mr.— but why mention his name here? On that evening, this gentleman and Fritzi suddenly lost themselves and left my wife alone. It was a foggy evening, as one often finds in the late summer; I for my part never go to the Prater in the evening without an overcoat . . . for I remember that there are often gray mists rolling over the fields. . . . Well, Wednesday was that sort of an evening, and Fritzi was suddenly gone, and my Anna was alone—all at once alone. . . . Who cannot conceive what a terrible fear she must have had to find herself among these giants with their glowing eyes and long black beards! . . . For two hours she waited for Fritzi and was hoping that she would return. Finally, the gates were locked and she had to go. That is the story. Anna told me all this early in the morning, as I sat at her bedside. . . . She had her arms about my neck and she trembled; her eyes were sad and I myself became frightened, although I did not know then what I knew later, nor did she. For, had I realized that she was with child, I would never have allowed her to go with Fritzi to the Prater on a foggy evening, and expose herself to all sorts of danger. For, to a woman in that condition, everything is dangerous. . . . Of course, if Fritzi had not lost her, my wife would never have had such a terrible fright; but that was the great misfortune—that she was all alone. . . . Although now that it is all over, I do not blame any one. But I have written this all down, for I want it to be perfectly clear to the world. If I did not do it, who knows but that people in their wickedness would say: “He killed himself because his wife deceived him.” . . . No, I repeat that my wife was faithful, and that the child she has borne is my child,

and I love them both to the last moment. You are driving me to death, all of you, who are either too miserable or too mean to believe or understand. And the more I should try to talk to you, to explain the facts by science . . . I know, that you would laugh and scoff all the more, even if not to my face—or you would say: “Thameyer is mad.” But now you can’t say that, my dear people; I am dying for my conviction, for the truth, and above all, for my wife’s honor; for when I am dead, you will not scoff at my wife, and will not laugh about me; you will see that such things happen as are reported by Hamberg, Heliodorus, Malebranche, Welsenburg, Preuss, Limböck, and others. And you, too, Mother dear—really, you should not have pressed my hand as if I were to be pitied! You will beg my wife’s pardon—I know it. . . . Now, it seems that I have nothing more to say. The clock is striking one. Good-night, my dear ones. I shall go into the next room once more, and kiss my wife and child for the last time—then I shall depart. God bless you.

## THE FAREWELL.

He had already been waiting for an hour. His heart was beating fast, and at times it seemed to him as if he had forgotten to breathe; then he would draw a very deep breath; but that made him feel no better. He really should have been used to it by this time, for it was always the same; he invariably had to wait one, two, three hours, and often in vain. And he could not even reproach her, because when her husband stayed at home longer she did not dare to leave. And only when he had once left would she fly to him, all excited, press a kiss on his lips and be off again in a moment. Then, when she was gone, he would lie down on the lounge, worn out by the excitement of waiting for hours, hours that made him useless for all work, hours that were ruining him. This had been going on now for three months, since the end of spring. Every after noon, from three o'clock on, he was in his room with the shades drawn, and he could do nothing. He did not have the patience to read a book, and hardly even a newspaper; he could not write a letter, and he consumed one cigarette after another until a gray-blue haze hung over the room. The door to the anteroom always stood open, and each day he was at home alone, for his valet could not be there when she came. And when the bell rang suddenly he always started. But if it were only she, if she would only really come, then everything would be all right. And sometimes he wept from pure joy that she was at last with him again, and that he would not have to wait any longer. Then he would draw her quickly into his room, close the door, and let happiness reign.

It was understood that he should remain at home every evening until exactly seven o'clock; because after that she could never come—he had plainly told her that he would leave at precisely seven because the waiting made him so nervous. Yet he always remained an hour longer, and he never went out until eight. Then he would think of the wasted hours and longingly dream of the last summer when he had had the whole time to himself, and used to drive out in the country, go to the seashore in August, and enjoy health and happiness; and he yearned for freedom, for the privilege of being alone, but he could not leave her, for he adored her.

Today seemed to him to have been the worst of all. Yesterday she had not come at all, and he had received no word from her. It was almost seven, but he was terribly upset. He did not know what to do. The worst of it was that he had no means of communicating with her. All he could do would be to walk up and down in front of her house; but he could not make inquiries about her. For no one knew that they were acquainted. They loved one another with a restless, fearful, glowing tenderness, and were always afraid of

being found out. He was very glad that their relationship was kept secret, but such days as today were all the worse for that.

It was eight o'clock—she had not come. He had been standing at the door uninterruptedly for the past hour, and had been looking out through the little window into the hall. Now he went back into his room and threw himself on the lounge, thoroughly exhausted. It was very dark in the room and he fell asleep. A half hour later he arose and decided to go out. He had a headache, and his legs were sore, as though he had been walking for hours.

He took the road to her house. It calmed him to see that all the shades were drawn. He could perceive rays of light in the dining room and bedroom. He walked up and down on the opposite sidewalk for a half hour, his gaze always on the windows. There were few people in the street. Only when the maids came out to the gate did he finally leave, so as not to be noticed. That night he slept well.

He lay in bed until late the next morning; he had left a note telling his valet not to waken him. At ten o'clock he rang for his breakfast. His mail was on the tray, but there was no letter from her. But he told himself that that was a sign that she would not fail him in the afternoon. And he remained calm until three o'clock.

At exactly three, and not a minute sooner, he returned from dinner. He sat down in a chair in the anteroom so he would not have to run backwards and forwards when he made a mistake as to a noise on the steps. He was quite gay when he heard footsteps, for they always brought new hope. But all was in vain. The clock struck four, five, six, seven, and yet she did not come. Then he paced his room, groaned softly, became dizzy and threw himself on his bed. He was at his wits end; he could not stand this any longer. The best thing was to go away—he was paying too high a price for this happiness! Or he would have to adopt a new plan: just wait one, or at the most two, hours. But things could not go on as they were at present for he would lose all his power to work, he would ruin his health, and perhaps annihilate his love for her. He noticed that he never thought of her any more; his thoughts whirled about as in a dream. He jumped up from his bed. He threw open the window and looked into the street, into the twilight. Ah—there—there at the corner—he seemed to recognize her in every woman that approached. He drew away from the window; she could not come any more for it was too late. And suddenly it seemed ridiculous to him that so few hours had been set apart for his waiting for her. Perhaps only now she might have had an opportunity—perhaps she might have been able to have come to him that very morning—and he already knew just what he would say to her at their next meeting. He would whisper to her: “I am going to stay at home and wait for you the whole day, from morning till evening.” But then he laughed out loud and

murmured to himself:

“But I’ll go mad, mad, mad!” And again he rushed to her house. All was the same as the day before. Lights gleamed through the drawn blinds. Again he walked up and down for a half hour—and again he left when the maids came out to the gate. It seemed to him that today they had noticed him, and he was sure that they would say: “That is the same man who walked up and down here last night at just this time.” He wandered into the neighboring streets, but when the clock in the church steeple struck ten and the gates were locked, he came back again and looked up at the windows. Now the only light that was visible came from the bedroom, her bedroom. There he stood, helpless, and could neither do nor ask anything. He shuddered when he thought of the hours that lay ahead of him. A night, a morning, and a day until three o’clock. Yes, until three—and then—if she did not come again? An empty carriage was going by; he beckoned to the driver, and drove about for a long time in the dark streets. He thought of their last meeting—no, no, she had not stopped loving him—no, not that! Or perhaps her husband suspected something? But that was not possible—there was no trace of it, and anyway she was so careful. There could be but one reason: she was ill. And that was why she could not let him know. And tomorrow she would get up and immediately send him a few lines to put him at his ease. Yes, but if it would be two days or even longer before she could get up—if she were seriously ill—my God—if she were fatally ill. No, no, no,—why fatally ill!

Suddenly a brilliant idea struck him. Since she was certainly ill, he could send and find out how she was doing. The messenger would not have to know from whom the order came—he could forget or not quite remember the name. Yes, yes, that is what he would do! He was quite happy over the thought.

And thus, in spite of the fact that he received no news from her, the night and the next day passed quietly, and he even spent the afternoon in a quieter frame of mind—he knew that in the evening the uncertainty would be ended. And he yearned for her in a better and more tender manner than he had in the last few days.

He left his house that evening at eight o’clock. He took a messenger from a district where he was not known. He then walked with him to within a short distance of her house, and gave him exact directions.

He looked at his watch by the lamp light and then began to walk up and down. But the thought immediately came to him: if her husband had a suspicion anyway and would take the messenger into his confidence, and have him lead him to this spot? He started after the messenger; then he walked slower and stayed a short distance behind him. At last he saw him disappear

into the house. It was but three minutes later that the messenger appeared again. Albert waited a few seconds to see if any one was following, and then he rushed forward—"Well," he asked, "what's the news?" "The gentleman thanks you for your kind message. His wife is not any better and will not be able to get up for a few days yet."

"Whom did you speak to?"

"To the maid. She went into the room and came right out again. I think the doctor was there—"

"What did she say?" He had the message repeated several times, and finally realized that he knew little more than before. She must be very ill, for it seemed that everybody was making inquiries—and that was why no particular significance was attached to the messenger. And for that very reason he was in a safer position. He ordered the messenger for the same hour on the next day.

She would not get up for a few days—and that was all he knew. He wondered whether she was thinking of him, and whether she realized how much he was suffering through her illness.

He wondered whether she had guessed that the last message had come from him. "The gentleman thanks you!" It was not she who thanked him; perhaps they had not even been allowed to give her the message. Yes, and what was the matter with her? The names of a hundred maladies tore through his head. Why, she was going to get up again in a few days—so it could not be anything very serious. But they always say that! Why, even when his father was on his deathbed, they said the same thing. He noticed that now that he had arrived in a more crowded street he was running because the people got in his way. He knew that the hours till the next evening would drag terribly.

Time went by, and he wondered that he could not believe that she was seriously ill. Then it seemed a sin that he was so calm. And in the afternoon—a thing that had not happened for many a day—he read for hours, as if there were nothing in the world to fear or wish for.

The messenger was waiting for him at the corner. Today he told him, that besides asking for the health of the lady, he should try to engage himself in conversation with one of the maids and find out what illness her mistress was suffering from. The messenger was gone longer than usual. Albert began to grow nervous, and when the messenger finally came out Albert rushed towards him.

"They say that the lady is very ill today—"

"What?" shrieked Albert.

"They say that the lady is very ill today—"

"Whom did you speak to? What did they say?"

"The maid told me that it was very dangerous. There were

three doctors there today, and they say that her husband is almost frantic.”

“Go on—go on—what’s the matter with her? Didn’t you ask? I told you—”

“Of course. She has typhoid fever and has been unconscious for two days.”

Albert stood still, and gazed at the man absent-mindedly. Then he asked:

“Is that all?”

The messenger began to repeat his story from the beginning, and Albert listened as if every word was bringing with it something new. After paying the man he returned to her house. Now he could stand in front without fear—who up there bothered or cared for him? And he looked up at her bedroom and wanted to penetrate both the windows and the draperies with his eyes. He saw a carriage drive up and a man step out who, he was sure, could be no one else but the doctor. Albert stood close to the gate so that he could note the expression on the physician’s face when he came down, for he hoped that the doctor’s facial expression would mirror the condition of the patient. He stood stock-still for a few minutes and then all about him again began to rock. Soon he noticed that his eyes had closed; and when he opened them again it seemed as if he had been dreaming for hours. He could believe that she was very ill—but dangerously ill? No. So young, so pretty, so beloved. And suddenly the word “typhoid” again flew through his mind. Then he pictured her name in print, with her age and these words: “Died from typhoid on August 20.” But that was impossible, absolutely impossible—now that he had pictured it, it must be impossible—that would be really too strange if he should see it in print in a few days. He believed he had defeated fate. The doctor came out. Albert had almost forgotten him—now he was so choked up that he could not speak. The doctor’s expression was dispassionate and serious. He gave the driver an address, stepped into his carriage and drove off. Why didn’t I ask him, thought Albert—but then again he was glad that he had not. In the end he might have heard very bad news. But now he could go on hoping. He walked slowly away and firmly made up his mind not to return for at least an hour. And suddenly he pictured how she would look when she came to him after her convalescence. The picture was so vivid that he was astonished. He even knew that on that day there would be a very fine rain. And she would wear a raincoat which would slip from her shoulders as she rushed towards him. And then she would weep and weep, and finally whisper: “Now you have me again—at last I’m with you.” Suddenly Albert started. He knew that that would never, never happen. Now fate had beaten him! She would never come to him—five days ago was the last time he had seen her, and he had let her go for good, and he had not

known. And once more he rushed through the streets, his thoughts all in a whirl. He was again in front of her house. The gate was still open and lights were burning in the dining room and bedroom. Albert ran away. He realized that had he remained a moment longer he would have had to fly up the stairs—to her—to her bedside. And then he saw how her husband, who would understand all, would hurry to her as she lay there motionless, and cry in her ear: “Your lover is here, your lover is here!” But she would be dead. He had bad dreams all that night and spent the next day in somber fatigue. The messenger’s report was, “Condition unchanged.” He lay on his lounge all afternoon and did not understand why he was doing it. Everything was indifferent to him, but he was rather pleased that he was so tired. He slept a great deal, but when it grew dark he jumped up in a sort of astonishment as if only now for the first time things appeared clear to him. And a terrible desire for certainty seized him. Today he would speak to the doctor himself. He hurried to her house. One of the maids was standing in front of the door.

He walked up to her, and wondering at his remarkable calmness, he asked innocently: “How is your mistress today?” The maid answered: “She’s pretty sick. I guess she’ll never get up again.”

“Ah!” murmured Albert, and then he added, “that’s very sad.”

“It certainly is too bad,” said the maid, “and such a young and pretty woman.” With that she disappeared in the doorway.

Albert watched her go. She did not suspect anything he thought; and at the same moment the idea of going right into the house flew through his head. The doctor drove up. Albert bowed to him, and received a cordial recognition in return. That pleased him, for now he was better acquainted with him, and could sooner question him when he came down.

He stood motionless, and it made him feel good to think that the doctor was with her. The physician was gone a long time. There was certainly some hope left, thought Albert, otherwise he would not stay up there so long. Or perhaps she was in her last agony. Or—ah, no, no, no! He tried to banish all thoughts from his mind, but it was useless. Suddenly he seemed to hear the doctor’s voice—he even understood the words: this is the crisis. And unconsciously he gazed up at the closed windows. He then wondered, whether under certain conditions, as, for instance, when one is excited and one’s senses are keener, one could not hear words, even through a closed window. But of course he had heard, not in his imagination—he had really heard. At that moment, however, the doctor came out of the house. Albert stepped towards him. The physician, probably taking him for a relative, and reading the unasked question in his eyes, shook his head. But Albert refused to understand him. He began to talk.

“May I ask, doctor, how—” The physician, who had already one foot on the carriage step, shook his head again. “Very low,” he said, looking at the young man. And then, “You are her brother, aren’t you?” “Yes,” said Albert. The doctor looked at the young man compassionately, stepped into his carriage and drove off.

Albert watched the carriage go down the street as if his last hope was going with it. Then he left. He said almost senseless things softly to himself, and his teeth chattered. But what am I going to do today? It is too late to go out into the country, it is too late to go out into the country. It’s too late, it’s too late. Yes, I am sad! But am I sad? Am I in terrible grief? I have no sensations, I have no sensations. Why, I could go out into the country, or go to the theatre. But no, I only think that—that’s all madness because I am so sad. I must have experienced something very much like this before—but when, when? Perhaps in a dream? Or am I dreaming now? But now I’ll go home as usual, as if nothing had happened, as if not the least thing had happened. But what am I saying! I’ll not remain at home, I’ll run away again in the middle of the night, to her house, to the house of my dying love. And his whole body trembled.

Suddenly he found himself in his room, and he could not remember how he had got there. He lighted a light and sat down on his lounge. I know how it is, he murmured to himself: pain is knocking at the door and I won’t let him in. But I know that he is there because I can see him through the little window. Ah, how stupid, how stupid. And so my beloved one is going to die—yes, she is going to, she is going to. Or have I perhaps still some hope left and for that reason am so calm? But no, I am quite sure of it. Ha, and the doctor took me for her brother! What if I had answered him: No, I am her lover; or, I am her Celadon. I am her heart-broken Celadon.

Great God! he suddenly shrieked, and started pacing his room. I have opened the door! I have let pain in! Oh, Anne, Anne, my sweet, my only, my lovely Anne! And I cannot be with you. And just I, the only one who really belongs to you. Perhaps she is not unconscious at all! And she is yearning for me—and I cannot go to her—cannot go to her. Or perhaps in her last moments she will say: Tell him to come—I want to see him once more. And what would he do then?

After a while the whole picture stretched out before his eyes. He saw himself hurrying up the steps. Her husband received him and led him into the room of the dying woman, who greeted him with smiling eyes—he leaned over her, she threw her arms about him, and she breathed her last in his embrace. Now her husband stepped up and said: Now go again. We will probably have more to say to one another at some later date. But that is not the way of life. It would have been the nicest way, however, to see her again,

and to feel that she loved him to the very end! But he must see her again, no matter how—for of course he could not let her die without having seen her once more. That would be terrible. But what was he to do? It was almost midnight. By what excuse could I go to her, he asked himself. But do I need any excuse—now that death—but even if she—dies—have I the right to betray her? Have I the right to defame her character to her husband and family?—But I could pretend that I was mad. Ha—I can sham wonderfully. Oh, God!—what an idea! And if one plays the rôle too well and is put into an asylum for the rest of one’s life. Or if she should get well again and declare me an insane man whom she had never known or even seen—! Oh, my head, my head! He threw himself on his bed. Now he was conscious of the night and quiet about him. Now, he said to himself, I’ll think things over quietly. I want to see her once more—yes, of course—now that is settled.

His thoughts ran on: he saw himself going up the steps of her house in a hundred disguises: as the doctor’s assistant, as a drug-store clerk, as a servant, as a beggar, and finally, as an undertaker, wrapping her in her winding sheet and laying her in her coffin, and still not being allowed to recognize her.

He awoke at dawn. A light rain was falling, and he shivered as he lay, entirely dressed, on his bed. The wind had blown a few raindrops into the room.

Autumn is here, thought Albert. Then he arose and looked at his watch. So I slept five hours after all! In that time much can have happened. He trembled. It’s queer! I suddenly know exactly how to act. I’ll go to her door with my coat collar turned up, and—ask—*myself*.

He poured out a glass of brandy and gulped it down. Then he went to the window and looked out at the wet streets. It’s still very early. Those are a lot of people who have to work as early as seven. Yes, and today I also have work to do at seven. “Very low,” the doctor had said yesterday. But no one has ever died from that. And yesterday I continually had the feeling that she—but I must go, I must go. He put on his coat, took an umbrella and went out.

He took small, slow steps. It was very hard for him to have to go himself. What should he say?

He was coming nearer; now he was on her street and saw her house in the distance. It seemed strange. He had never seen it before at this hour of the day. Yes, on days like this one dies. If Anne had only said good-bye to him on the day he had last seen her, he might have already forgotten her. Albert was very tired and unnerved. He almost passed her house without noticing it.

The gate was open and the milkman was just coming out. Albert felt very calm as he walked through the gate. Suddenly, as he was about to go up the steps, the entire consciousness of all that had happened and what was about to happen came to him. So

these were the steps—he had never seen them before. Both doors stood open. He could see the reception room, but it was empty. He opened a small door which led into the kitchen. No one was there either. He stood for a moment undecided. Now a door, which probably led to the living quarters, opened, and a maid came out quietly. She did not notice him and Albert approached her.

“How is your mistress?” he asked.

The maid looked at him thoughtlessly.

“She died a half hour ago,” she said, and disappeared into the kitchen.

Albert felt as if the whole world had suddenly become as quiet as death; he was sure that at this moment all hearts had stopped beating, and that everything on earth had stopped. He felt how the whole world had suddenly ceased living and moving. So this is death, he thought—I did not understand it then yesterday anyway.

“Pardon me,” said a voice next to him. It was a gentleman all dressed in black, who wanted to get into the reception room, the door to which Albert was blocking. Albert stepped aside and let the gentleman pass. The latter paid no more attention to him, but stepped into the sitting room and left the door half open, so that Albert could perceive what was going on in the room. It was almost dark, as all the shades had been drawn. He saw some people rise and greet the newcomer. He heard them whispering. Then they disappeared into the next room. Albert remained standing at the door and thought: She is lying in there. And it is not a week that I held her in my arms. And I cannot go in there. He heard voices on the staircase. Two ladies came in and passed him. The younger had red eyes. She looked like Anne. It probably was her sister of whom she had spoken. An elderly woman came out to meet them; she threw her arms about them and sobbed softly. “A half hour ago,” she said, “quite suddenly.” Tears choked her voice. The three women went into the next room. No one paid any attention to him.

I can't keep on standing here, thought Albert. I'll go down and return in an hour. In a few moments he was in the street. The bustle of the day had already begun and many people were in the streets.

In an hour there will be more people up there and I will not be noticed at all. How certainty consoles! I feel better than yesterday, in spite of the fact that she is dead. A half hour ago. In a thousand years she will be no further away from life than she is at this moment. And yet the knowledge that only a half hour ago she was breathing makes me think that she must still know something of life, a something that we living people cannot understand—and perhaps that intangible moment in which we pass from life unto death is our poor eternity. Yes, and now there will be no more

waiting in the afternoon. I'll never stand at the little window any more, never, never. And now all of these hours appeared to him as an unspeakable happiness. A few days ago he had been so happy,—yes, happy. Away, away.

I'll go away! It is the only thing left for me to do. Can I still go to my room! I shall have to weep. For days I shall weep and weep and weep.

He passed a restaurant. He realized that he had not had a bite to eat since yesterday, so he went in and breakfasted. When he left it was after nine. Now I can go back. I must see her again—but what will I do there? Shall I be able to see her—yes, I must see my darling Anne once more. But will they let me go in to her? Of course, there will be many people there and all the doors will be open.

He hurried there. The maid was standing at the gate and nodded to him as he passed her. He ran ahead of two gentlemen who were also going up the steps. There were some people in the reception room and all the doors stood wide open. Albert stepped in. There were about twelve people standing and sitting around; they spoke only in whispers. The old lady he had seen before lay huddled up in the corner of a dark-red sofa. When Albert came to where she was sitting she looked up at him; he stood still and gave her his hand. She nodded her head and again began to weep. Albert looked about him. The door that led into the next room was closed. He turned to a gentleman who was standing at a window gazing into the street. "Where is she?" he asked. The gentleman pointed to the right. Albert softly opened the door. He was blinded at first by the strong light. He found himself in a small room, hung with white and gold tapestries and furnished in light blub. The door to the next room was ajar. He stepped in. It was her bedroom.

The shutters were closed and a lamp was burning. The body lay stretched out on the bed. A sheet covered it up to the lips. At her head, on a small table, a candle was burning and threw its light on her ashen-gray features. He would not have recognized her if he had not known it was she. Only gradually the resemblance came to him; only gradually it became Anne, his Anne, who lay there. And for the first time tears came to his eyes. A hot, burning pain was in his breast. He could have cried out, knelt down, and kissed her hands. Only now he noticed that he was not alone. Some one was kneeling at the foot of the bed, and had buried his head in the sheet, and was holding one of the hands of the dead woman in both of his. In the moment when Albert approached the foot of the bed the man raised his head. What shall I say to him? But already he felt that the man had grasped one of his hands and was saying in a sobbing voice: "Thanks, thanks!" And the weeping man turned away again and sobbed. Albert remained standing for

a while and he looked at the corpse with a cold interest. He could not weep now. He would have appeared ridiculous to himself if he had remained here to weep with the man at the bedside. And he knew that some day this meeting would appear both comic and horrible to him.

He turned to go. He stopped at the door and looked back. The flickering of the candle made it appear as if a smile was playing on the dead woman's lips. He nodded to her as if he were saying good-bye and as if she could see him. Now he wanted to go, but he felt that she was holding him there with her smile. And it suddenly became a strange, scornful smile, which seemed to speak and which he could understand. And the smile said: "I loved you, and you stand there like a stranger and will not acknowledge me. Tell him that I was yours, that it is your right to kneel at my bedside and to kiss my hands. Tell him! Why don't you tell him?"

But he did not dare. He held his hands before his eyes so that he could no longer see her smile. He left the room on tiptoe and closed the door. He went trembling through the light salon, pressed by all the people in the sitting room, hurried out into the reception room and down the stairs. As he left the house his step became quicker, and ashamed he hurried through the streets; for he felt that he could not mourn like the others. His dead Anne had sent him away, because he had not acknowledged her.

## THE DEAD ARE SILENT.

He could not bear sitting in the carriage any longer; he got out and walked up and down. It was already dark; the few street lamps in this quiet side street flickered in the wind. It had stopped raining, and the sidewalks were almost dry; but the streets were still wet, and here and there a puddle had formed.

It's strange, thought Franz, how here, but a hundred feet away from the Praterstrasse, one can imagine oneself in a little Hungarian town. In any case, it was safe here; for in this street she would not be liable to meet any of her acquaintances.

He looked at his watch. Seven o'clock, and night had already fallen. An early autumn this year! And the cursed rain!

He pulled up his collar and walked up and down more quickly. The panes in the street lamps rattled. "A half hour more," he murmured to himself, "and if she's not here then, I can go. Ah, I almost wish that that half hour were up." He remained standing at the corner; for here he had a commanding view of the two streets, on either of which she might come.

Yes, today she'll come, he thought, as he held on to his hat, which threatened to blow away. Friday—Faculty meeting—then she'll dare come, and will even stay longer. He heard the ringing of the horse cars; and now the church bells began to ring. The street became more lively. More people passed and it seemed to him that they were mostly shop-girls and clerks. All of them walked quickly, and seemed to be fighting the storm. No one paid any attention to him; only two shop-girls gazed curiously up at him. Suddenly he saw a familiar figure hurrying toward him. He went quickly to meet her. Not in a carriage? Was it she?

It was; and as she became aware of him, she walked more slowly.

"You come on foot?" he asked.

"I discharged my carriage before we reached this street, because I think I've had the same coachman before."

A man walked past and gave her a cursory glance. The young man stared at him, almost threateningly. He hurried on. The woman followed him with her eyes.

"Who was it?" she asked, frightened.

"I don't know him. You'll meet none of your acquaintances here, so you can rest easy. But come more quickly, and get into the carriage."

"Is it yours?"

"Yes."

"Is it open?"

"An hour ago the weather was ideal."

They hurried to the waiting carriage, and got in.

"Driver!" called the young man.

"Where has he gone to?" the young woman asked.

Franz looked all about. "It's unbelievable," he cried, "I don't see the fellow anywhere."

"For heaven's sake!" she cried softly.

"Wait a minute, dear; he must be here."

He opened the door of the little inn; the driver was sitting at a table with some other people. Now he rose quickly.

"Right here, sir!" he cried, and finished his glass of grog standing up.

"What in the deuce has got into you, to keep us waiting like this?"

"Excuse me, sir. But I'm right with ye now."

Swaying a little from side to side, he hurried to the carriage.

"Where d'ye want to drive, sir?"

"The Prater!"

The young man got in. His companion lay huddled up in the corner.

Franz took both of her hands in his. She remained immobile. "Well, won't you at least say good evening to me?"

"Please let me alone for just a few moments. I'm still quite out of breath."

He leaned back in his corner. Both were silent for a while. The carriage had turned into the Praterstrasse, had passed the Tegethoff Monument, and in a few seconds was flying down the dark Praterallee. Suddenly Emma threw her arms about her lover. He quickly raised the veil that separated her lips from his, and kissed her.

"At last I'm with you!" she said.

"Do you know how long it has been since we have seen one another?" he asked.

"Since Sunday."

"Yes, and then only from afar."

"Why, what do you mean? You were at our house."

"Well, yes—at your house. But this can't go on. I'm never going to your house again. But what's the matter with you?"

"A carriage just passed by."

"Dear child, the people who are driving in the Prater today aren't really going to bother about us."

"That I believe. But one of our friends might see us."

"That's impossible. It's too dark to recognize any one."

"Please let us drive somewhere else."

"As you wish."

He called to the driver, but the latter did not seem to hear. Then he leaned forward and touched him with his hand. The coachman turned around.

"You're to turn back. . . . And why are you whipping your horses like that? We're in no hurry, do you hear! Drive to the—"

you know, the street that leads to the Reichs bridge.”

“Yes, sir.”

“And don’t go driving like mad. There’s no sense in that.”

“Excuse me, sir, but it’s the weather that makes them horses go so wild.”

They turned back.

“Why didn’t I see you yesterday?” she suddenly asked.

“How could you?”

“Why, I thought that my sister had invited you also.”

“She did.”

“And why didn’t you come?”

“Because I cannot bear to be with you when others are around. No, never again!”

She shrugged her shoulders.

“Where are we?” she then asked. They were driving under the railroad bridge into the Reichsstrasse.

“That’s the road to the Danube,” said Franz. “We’re on the way to the Reichs bridge. You’ll meet none of your friends here,” he added in a jesting tone.

“The carriage is swaying terribly.”

“That’s because we’re driving over cobblestones.”

“But why does he drive in such zigzags?”

“You think he does!”

But he himself thought that they were being tossed about much more violently than was necessary. He did not, however, want to alarm her.

“I have some serious things to talk to you about today, Emma.”

“Then you’ll have to begin right away, because I have to be home by nine o’clock.”

“All can be settled in two words.”

“My God, what’s that?” she suddenly cried. The carriage had been running in the car tracks, and now, as the coachman was trying to get out, it hung for a moment at such an angle that it almost overturned. Franz seized the driver by his cloak, and cried: “Will you stop! Why, you’re drunk!”

With effort the horses were brought to a standstill.

“But, sir—”

“Come, Emma, let us get out here.”

“Where are we?”

“At the bridge already. It’s not so stormy now, so let us walk a bit. We can’t really talk in a carriage.”

Emma lowered her veil and followed.

“You don’t call this stormy!” she exclaimed, as a gust of wind whirled about her.

He took her arm. “Follow us,” he called to the driver.

They walked on ahead. When they heard the water rushing below them, they stopped. It was pitch dark. The broad river

looked like a boundless expanse of gray. In the distance they saw red lights, which appeared to sway over the river and reflect themselves on its bosom. The lights on the bank which they had just left seemed to be dissolving themselves into the water. Now faint thunder, which came nearer and nearer, was audible. Both looked at the spot where the red lights shone. Trains with lighted windows came out of the night and disappeared again. The thunder gradually subsided, and, except for an occasional gust of wind, quiet reigned.

After a long silence, Franz said: "We ought to go away."

"Of course," Emma answered softly.

"We ought to go away," Franz repeated with animation. "I mean far away."

"It can't be done."

"Because we're cowards. That's why it can't be done."

"And my child?"

"I'm positive he'd let you take him."

"And how shall we do it?" she asked softly. "Steal away in the dead of night?"

"No, certainly not. All you have to do is simply tell him that you can't live with him any longer because you belong to another."

"Are you out of your mind, Franz?"

"If you prefer, I'll spare you that, too. I'll tell him myself."

"You'll not do that, Franz."

He tried to see her face, but all he noticed was that she had lifted her head and had turned it toward him.

He was silent for a while. Then he said quietly: "Don't be afraid. I'll not do it."

They were now approaching the other shore.

"Don't you hear something?" she asked. "What is it?"

"It comes from over there."

Slowly it came from out of the night, a small red light. Soon they saw it shone from a lantern tied to the front part of a peasant's cart. But they could not see whether any one was in the wagon. Right in back of it lumbered two other carts. On the last they made out a man in peasant's dress, who was lighting his pipe. The wagons drove by. Then they heard nothing but the slow movement of the carriage, which kept about twenty paces ahead of them. Now the bridge gradually sank to the level of the other shore. They saw how the street ran on, between rows of trees, into the night. On both sides of them lay meadows, which looked like deep abysses.

After a long silence Franz suddenly said: "Well, this is the last time."

"What?" asked Emma in a worried tone.

"That we'll be together. Stay with him. I'll say good-bye to you."

"Are you in earnest?"

“Absolutely.”

“Now you see that it is always you who spoil the few hours we spend together, and not I.”

“Yes, yes; you’re right,” said Franz. “Come, let’s drive back.”

She held his arm more firmly. “No,” she said tenderly, “not now. I’m not going to let you send me away like that.”

She drew him down toward her and kissed him. “If we kept right on this road where should we get to?”

“Prague, my dear.”

“Well, we won’t go that far,” she replied, smiling. “But let’s go on a bit further, if you don’t mind.”

“Hey, driver!” called Franz.

The carriage rolled on. Franz ran after it. Now he saw that the driver had fallen asleep. By calling loudly enough, Franz finally succeeded in waking him.

“We’re going to drive a little further along this straight road. Do you understand me?”

“Yes, sir; all right, sir.”

They stepped in; the coachman whipped up the horses, and they raced down the muddy road. The couple in the carriage were folded in each other’s arms while they were tossed from one side to the other.

“Isn’t this glorious?” Emma whispered, with her lips almost touching his.

At this moment it seemed to her as if the carriage had shot up into the air. She felt herself hurled out; she tried to seize hold of something, and only clawed in the air. It seemed to her that she spun round and round in a circle at such a speed that she must close her eyes. Then she felt herself lying on the ground, and a terrible heavy quiet hung over her, as if she were all alone, far away from the world. Presently she heard noises: horses’ hoofs pawing the ground near her, and a soft whinnying; but she could see nothing. A terrible fear gripped her; she cried out, and her fear became greater, for she could not hear her own voice. All of a sudden, she knew exactly what had happened: the carriage had hit something, probably a milestone, had overturned, and they had been thrown out. Where was Franz? She called his name. And she heard her voice—very vaguely—but she heard it. There was no answer. She tried to rise. She was able to sit up, and as she put forth her two hands she felt a human body next to her. And now, as her eyes had become accustomed to the darkness, she could see more clearly. Franz lay on the ground, motionless. She touched his face with her hand, and felt something warm and damp flowing over it. She caught her breath. Blood! Franz was wounded and unconscious. And the driver—where was he? She called to him. No answer. She was still sitting on the ground. Nothing had happened to her, she thought, although she felt pains in all parts of

her body.

“Franz!” she called.

A voice close by answered:

“Where are ye, miss? And where’s the gentleman? Nothing’s happened, has it? Wait a minute, miss; I’ll light one of the lamps so as we can see better. I don’t know what’s got into them horses today. It ain’t my fault, as true’s I’m living.”

Emma had risen by this time in spite of her pains, and she was relieved to find that the coachman was not injured. She heard him open the lamp and strike a match. In terrible fear she waited for the light. She did not dare touch Franz again, who lay stretched out on the earth.

A ray of light came from the side. She saw the carriage, which, to her surprise, was not quite overturned, but was lying up against the main drain, as if one of the wheels had come off. The horses were standing stock still. The light came nearer; she watched it as it crept over a milestone, over the stone heap, then on Franz’s feet, on his body and, finally, on his face, where it remained. The driver had placed the lamp on the ground beside Franz’s head. Emma knelt down, and when she saw his face, it seemed as if her heart stopped beating. His face was pale; his eyes were half open, and only the whites were visible. From the right temple trickled a small stream of blood, which, passing over the cheek, lost itself under the collar. His teeth had bitten into his lower lip.

“It isn’t possible!” Emma murmured to herself.

The coachman was also on his knees, staring at the face. Then he took hold of the head with both of his hands and raised it.

“What are you doing?” screamed Emma, and recoiled from the head, which seemed to rise of its own accord.

“It looks to me, miss, like an awful accident.”

“It isn’t true,” said Emma. “It can’t be true. Did anything happen to you? And me—”

The driver slowly lowered the head of the unconscious man into Emma’s lap. She trembled.

“If only somebody’d come . . . if only them peasants had come a quarter of an hour ago—”

“What shall we do?” Emma asked, her lips trembling.

“Yes, miss, if that there carriage only weren’t broken—But now we’ve simply got to wait till some one comes.” He went on talking, but Emma was not listening. She regained control of her thoughts, and knew how to act.

“How far is it to the nearest house?” she asked.

“Not far, miss. We’re almost in Franz Josefsland. We’d see the houses if it was light. It’s only about five minutes away.”

“Well, you go and get help. I’ll stay here.”

“Yes, miss. But I think it’d be better if I stayed here with you. It won’t be long ’fore somebody is sure to turn up.”

“Then it may be too late. We need a doctor.”

The driver looked at the face of the motionless man; then he looked at Emma, shaking his head.

“That you can’t know,” cried Emma, “nor I either.”

“Yes, miss . . . but where’ll I find a doctor in Franz Josefsland?”

“From there some one can go to the city, and—”

“D’ye know what, miss: they’ve probably got telephones there, and I could call an ambulance.”

“Yes, that’s the best thing to do. But hurry up, for heaven’s sake! And bring help and please go now this minute. Why, what are you doing?” The driver was looking at the pale face in Emma’s lap.

“Ambulance—doctor! It’s too late for them to do any good!”

“Oh, please go now! For God’s sake, go!”

“I’ll go all right. Only, don’t get scared here in the dark, miss.”

He hurried off down the street and Emma was alone with the inanimate body in the dark street.

It wasn’t possible—that thought kept going through her head. Of a sudden she seemed to feel some one breathing right next to her. She leaned over, and looked at the white lips. No, there was no breath coming from them. The blood on the temple and the cheek had dried. She looked at the eyes, and trembled. This was death! There was a dead man on her lap! And with shaking hands she raised the head and placed it on the ground. A terrible feeling of abandonment came over her. Why had she sent the driver away? How foolish of her! What should she do here on the highroad with a corpse? If any one should come along. . . What would she do if any people came along? She looked at the dead man again. The light of the lamp seemed to her kind and friendly, for which she ought to be thankful. She gazed at it so long that her eyes blinked, and everything began to dance before her. Suddenly she had the sensation of being awakened. She jumped up! She couldn’t be found here with him! What was she waiting for?

Voices were now audible in the distance.

“Already?” she thought. She listened, fearfully. The voices came from the direction of the bridge. Those could not be the people whom the coachman had gone to get. But whoever they were, they would certainly notice the light—and that could not be, for then she would be discovered.

She kicked the lamp over. The light was extinguished. Now she was in total darkness. She did not see him any more. The voices came nearer. Only the white stone heap was visible now. She now began to tremble in her whole body. Not to be discovered there—that was the important thing! She was lost if any one found out that she had had a liaison . . . But the people passed on. . . . And now . . . She would have to go to the police station,

and everybody would find it out—and her husband—and her child!

Then she realized that she had been standing as if rooted to the ground, that she could go away, that by staying she would only bring unhappiness upon herself. She took a step. Soon she was in the middle of the street. She looked ahead and saw the outlines of the long, gray road. There—there was the city. She could not see it, but she knew the direction. Once more she turned around. She could see the horses and the carriage; and when she tried very hard, she could make out something that looked like the outline of a human body stretched out on the ground. . . . With all her might she tore herself away. The ground was wet, and the mud had sucked in her shoes. She walked faster . . . she ran back—into the light, the noise and the people! The street seemed to run toward her, and she held up her skirt in order to keep from falling. The wind was at her back, and it seemed to be driving her ahead. She remembered that she was fleeing from living people who must now be at the spot, and also looking for her. What would they think? But no one could possibly guess who the woman was with the man in the carriage. The driver did not know her, and he would never be able to recognize her if he saw her. It was very wise that she did not stay; and it was not wrong of her to have left. Franz himself would have said that she was in the right.

She hurried toward the city, whose lights she saw under the railroad bridge at the end of the street. Just this one lonely street and then she would be safe. She heard a shrill whistling in the distance; growing shriller, drawing nearer. A wagon flew past. Involuntarily she stopped and watched it. It was the ambulance, and she knew its destination. “How quick!” she thought. It was like magic. . . . For a moment she had the most terrible feeling of shame she had ever experienced. She knew that she had been cowardly. But as the whistling grew fainter, a wild joy seized her, and she rushed on. People came toward her; she was not afraid of them any more—the worst was over. The noise of the city became more audible, and there was more light; already she saw the rows of houses on the Praterstrasse, and it seemed to her as if she were being expected there by a crowd of people in which she could disappear without leaving a trace behind her. As she came under a street lamp she was calm enough to look at her watch. It was ten minutes of nine. It seemed to her as if she were entirely forgiven, as if none of the blame had been hers. She was a woman—and she had a child and a husband. She had done right: it was her duty. Had she stayed she would have been discovered. And the newspapers! She would have been ostracized forever! . . . There was the Tegethoff Monument where many streets meet. There were very few people abroad, but to her it seemed as if the whole life of the city were whirling about her. She had time. She knew that her husband would not be home till nearly ten—she even had

time to change her clothes! She looked at her dress: it was covered with mud. What would she tell her maid? It went through her head that a full account of the accident would be in all the morning papers. And it would tell of the woman who was in the carriage at the time of the accident, and then could not be found. These thoughts made her tremble again—an imprudent thing, and all her cowardice had been for nought. But she had her key with her; she need not ring the bell. She would be quiet and no one would hear her. She got hurriedly into a carriage. She was about to give the coachman her address, when she thought that that would be unwise, and she gave him the name of the first street that came into her head. She had but one wish: to be safe at home. Nothing else made any difference. She was not heartless. Yet she was sure that days would come when she would doubt, and perhaps that doubt would ruin her; but now her only desire was to be at home, dry-eyed, at the table with her husband and child. The carriage was driving through the inner city. She stopped in a side street off the Ring, got out of the carriage, hurried round the corner, got into another carriage, and gave her right address to the driver. She was incapable of even thinking any more. She closed her eyes, and the carriage began to shake. She was afraid of being thrown out as before, and screamed. Then the carriage came to a stop in front of her home. She hurriedly got out, and quickly, with soft steps, passed the porter's window so that she would not be noticed. She ran up the stairs, softly opened the door . . . through the hall into her bedroom—it was done! She turned on the light, tore off her clothes and hid them in a closet. They would dry overnight—tomorrow she would brush them herself. Then she washed her hands and face, and put on a dressing gown.

Then the doorbell rang. She heard the maid going to the door. She heard her husband's voice, and she heard his cane rattle in the umbrella jar. She felt that she must be strong or all would have been in vain. She hurried into the dining room so that she entered at the same moment that her husband did.

"You're at home already?" he asked.

"Surely," she answered. "I've been here quite a while."

"The maid didn't see you come in." She smiled without trying. But it tired her to smile. He kissed her on the brow.

Their little boy was already at the table. He had had to wait long and had fallen asleep. His book was on the plate, and his face rested on the open book. She sat down next to him, her husband opposite. He picked up a newspaper and glanced through it, then put it down and said:

"The others are still at the meeting, discussing things."

"What?" she asked.

And he started to tell her of the meeting. Emma pretended that she was listening, and kept nodding her head.

But she heard nothing; she did not know what he was speaking about. She felt as one who had wonderfully escaped from some terrible danger. As her husband talked, she moved her chair nearer to her son, and pressed his head against her breast. A feeling of great weariness crept over her. She could not control herself; she felt that sleep was overpowering her, and she closed her eyes.

Suddenly a thought flashed through her mind that had not occurred to her since she picked herself up out of the ditch. If he were not dead after all! If he should say to the doctors, "There was a woman with me, and she must have been thrown out also." What then?

"What is the matter?" asked the professor earnestly, as he looked up.

"Why . . . why—the matter!"

"Yes, what is the matter with you?"

"Nothing!" She pressed her boy close to her breast.

The professor looked at her for a long while, silently.

"Do you know that you began to doze, and suddenly cried out?"

". . . Really?"

"Yes, as if you had had a bad dream. Were you dreaming?"

"I really don't know. . . ."

She saw her image in the mirror, smiling horribly. Her face was all drawn. She knew that it was herself, but she shrank away from it. Her face had become fixed and she could not move her mouth. She tried to cry out. Then she felt two hands on her shoulders, and she noticed that the face of her husband had come between her and the mirror; his eyes, questioning, threatening, sank into hers. She knew that if she did not stand this last test, all was lost. She felt that she was regaining her strength; she had entire control of herself, and she knew that she must make use of this valuable moment. She took her husband's arms from her shoulders, drew him toward her, and gazed at him, gaily and tenderly.

As she felt her husband's lips on her brow she thought: "Surely . . . a bad dream. He must be dead . . . *and the dead are silent.*"

"Why did you say that?" she suddenly heard her husband ask.

"What did I say?" And it seemed to her as if she had told the whole story aloud, and once more she asked, as she faltered under his stern gaze:

"What did I say?"

"The dead are silent," he repeated, very slowly.

"Yes . . ." she said. "Yes . . ." But she read in his eyes that she could not hide anything more from him.

They gazed at each other for a long time.

"Put the boy to bed," he said to her. "I think you have

something more to tell me.”

“Yes,” she answered.

She knew that in a few minutes she was going to tell this man, whom she had deceived for years, the whole truth. And, as she slowly went out through the door with her son and felt her husband’s eyes upon her, a feeling of quiet stole over her, as if everything was going to be put to rights again. . .